Quo vadis Europe?
A strategic compass for the EU’s path to the future

The German EU Presidency: a critical view from the European Parliament
Nicola Beer MEP, Vice-President European Parliament, Brussels/Strasbourg

A European war college, an opportunity for European defence?
Brig Gen Jean-Marc Vigilant, Commander War College, Paris
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Donald Trump’s presidency was characterised first and foremost by his extravagant personality and his populism, but it also wrought a profound change in American politics.

Today, populism is a feature of all democracies and the 46th President-elect, Joe Biden, would do well to cultivate a moderate populism if he is to “restore the soul” of his people, as he put it in his victory speech on 7th November. But Joe Biden will only succeed in unifying his divided nation if he can first unify his divided party and stop it from tearing itself apart in fratricidal feuding.

Internationally, the new President will pursue moderate unilateralism and will start by rolling back the isolationist policies of his predecessor in many areas. There can be no doubt however that the USA will remain the master of its decision making, less provocatively but with continuity and the familiar single-mindedness in implementation.

Biden will also wish to adopt some of the more messianic tendencies within his party, that aim to infuse American foreign policy with democratic and western values, last attempted by George. W. Bush two decades ago. As he seeks to bring a lasting cure to America’s internal divisions, such a stance could help fill the vacuum left by Trump’s ethically objectionable attitude towards despotism and dictators.

Around the world, there are expectations of a reset of US foreign policy. Europe has warmly welcomed Biden’s election and hopes for an improvement in transatlantic relations. But how will Europe fit in to the new scheme of things? It must have no illusions that America will want to exert its leadership and that it sees China as its principal adversary. America will press for greater European solidarity on trade with China and on defence and security within NATO. It remains to be seen what attitude Biden will adopt towards Europe’s increased efforts to develop its own defence capabilities within NATO. But he would be well advised to take heed of the French President’s unequivocal statement in his speech of 7th February 2020 that a European defence capability should eventually become a powerful pillar within the NATO Alliance. Europe must be resolute in showing the USA how and to what extent it wishes to shape the future of NATO. There should be no taboos and even NATO’s command structures should be reviewed to fit Europe’s role and importance.

As a primus inter pares, France, as a nuclear power, could take the lead in forging a coalition of European nations of military and geostrategic relevance and discuss, one to one with the USA, the future shape of the transatlantic alliance. For its part, Germany should come off the fence by increasing its defence spending within NATO and the EU.

Whether Joe Biden will have time enough to reconcile the 70 million Trump voters is a question that can only be answered if and when he is able to unite a reformed Democratic party behind his banner.

As President, Joe Biden will face the challenge of being a healer and a reformer at the same time. And the sooner the better, so as to prevent his country from becoming even more divided. A foreign policy success could help him in this task and Europe’s outstretched hand is there to be grasped.
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European capabilities and cooperation

The European – Security and Defence Union is the winner of the 2011 European Award for Citizenship, Security and Defence, and was awarded in 2019 the Jury’s Special Prize of the same competition.
At the European Council of 10th-11th December, EU leaders welcomed the positive announcements on COVID-19 vaccines and the common advance purchase agreements by the Commission. They highlighted the importance of preparations for the timely deployment and distribution of vaccines to ensure they are made available in good time and in a coordinated manner. The heads of state and government agreed to enhance the sharing of experiences and plans, and they underlined the need to pursue work to increase resilience in the area of health. They invited the European Commission to present a proposal for a Council recommendation on a common framework for rapid antigen tests and for the mutual recognition of test results. A coordinated approach to vaccination certificates should also be developed. The EU will promote ways to reinforce international cooperation, including through a possible international treaty on pandemics within the framework of the World Health Organization in order to better anticipate and manage potential future pandemics.

Council results: https://bit.ly/3mq7HO4

With the death of Valéry Giscard d’Estaing on 2nd December at the age of 94, the world has lost a great European. As the President of France from 1974 to 1981, he was a liberalising moderniser of his country and its society. As a convinced European, he made the European Union more democratic through the introduction of universal suffrage for elections to the European Parliament and politically more effective by creating the European Council.

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On 15th November, Prince Charles spoke of Germany and the UK’s shared values in a historical speech at the German Bundestag in Berlin on the occasion of Germany’s Day of Mourning. During his speech, he made direct reference to Brexit, saying: “The UK has chosen a future outside the European Union, and the relationship between our countries is evolving once again. Its shape is a matter negotiated between our governments and its essence is defined by the enduring connections between our people.” The Prince of Wales added: “It is, therefore, my heartfelt belief that the fundamental bond between us will remain strong: we will always be friends, partners and allies”. Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall had earlier been greeted by the President of Germany, Walter Steinmeier and his wife Elke Budenbender.

The deep understanding that he developed with the German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, led to their joint initiative that paved the way for European monetary union and a more orderly global economy. They also promoted together the Helsinki Process (Charter 1974) which culminated in the creation, for the benefit of both East and West, of the ‘Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe’ (CSCE), a platform for human rights, democratic development and arms control. At the beginning of the new millennium he chaired the Convention on the future of the European Union, which should have led to a European constitution. Ultimately however, he was unable to overcome the resistance of some heads of government. In 2003, he was awarded the prestigious Charlemagne Prize. France and Europe have lost a great citizen!
Cybersecurity

New EU Cybersecurity Strategy

(Ed/nc) On 16th December, the European Commission and the EU High Representative Josep Borrell announced a new EU Cybersecurity Strategy in answer to the challenges of geopolitical competition in cyberspace, and the increased cyber threat landscape in a post-Covid-19 world. The new Cybersecurity Strategy covers five policy domains: enhancing international security; strengthening the EU’s cyber diplomacy toolbox; stepping up cyber defence coordination and cooperation and building cyber defence capabilities; strengthening and expanding international partnerships and exchanges, and increasing the EU external cyber capacity building.

More information: https://bit.ly/3gUMXwL

See also the article on cybersecurity by Jean-Louis Gergorin and Léo Issac-Dognin (pp.15-16)

Climate change and defence

A Roadmap for EU actions

(Ed/nc) On 11th December, a virtual event entitled “Climate change, Defence and Crisis Management: from Reflection to Action” put the focus on the implications of climate change on EU crisis management and defence. During the event, which was co-organised by the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the European External Action Service (EEAS), EU High Representative/ Vice-President Josep Borrell presented a Climate Change and Defence Roadmap for EU actions contributing to the wider climate-security nexus. The Roadmap puts forward a set of concrete actions aimed at raising awareness of the effects of climate change on crisis response, security and defence. It focuses on new challenges, such as ensuring that military equipment remains effective in extreme weather conditions and providing more energy efficient technologies for missions and operations. The objective is also to build strong cooperation with international partners to tackle security and defence issues derived from climate change.


See also the article on European security and defence by HR/VP Josep Borrell (pp.8-9)

Terrorism

EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda

(Ed/nc) On 9th December, the European Commission presented a new Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU. The agenda is aimed at better supporting Member States in their fight against terrorism and violent extremism and to boost the Union’s resilience to terrorist threats. The Commission also proposed to revise the mandate of the EU Agency for law enforcement cooperation, Europol, to deliver better operational support to Member States’ investigations against terrorist networks. The key objectives are:
• identifying vulnerabilities and building capacity to anticipate threats;
• preventing attacks by addressing radicalisation;
• promoting security by design and reducing vulnerabilities to protect cities and people;
• stepping up operational support, prosecution and victims’ rights to better respond to attacks;
• a stronger mandate for Europol.

Agenda: https://bit.ly/3gP4eaR

Appointment

New OSCE Secretary General

(Ed/hb) German EU diplomat Helga Schmid, currently Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) since 2016, was nominated on 4th December to take over a new leadership role as Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) with its 57 Member States. The OSCE has a staff of over 3,000 and a broad mandate that includes arms control, counter-terrorism, human rights and environmental activities. Ms Schmid is known worldwide as a strong negotiator since she sealed the nuclear deal with Iran in 2015. Among the burning security issues to monitor, she will have the fragile truce in eastern Ukraine, peace and democracy-building missions in the Balkans and assuring the recent peace deal in Nagorno-Karabakh. The EU has nominated the Italian Stefano Sannino, currently Helga Schmid’s deputy, to succeed her as Secretary General of the EEAS.
Towards a Strategic Compass for the EU

Concrete solutions for concrete challenges

by Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Brussels

The urgency of the EU’s security and defence initiatives is not diminishing. On the contrary: recent events in Mali, Libya, Ukraine and Nagorno-Karabakh confirm how deeply unstable countries and regions in our direct vicinity are. At the same time, direct threats like terrorism, hybrid threats and cyber-attacks are growing as well. Moreover, we see more geopolitical competition between major powers at the global level, exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis. These challenges affect our security and strategic position and compel us to become more resilient and more effective in security and defence.

We have achieved a lot

From the beginning of my mandate, I have placed the strengthening of our Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) at the very heart of the EU’s work. Since then, we have already achieved a lot.

First, we have made progress in the implementation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). PESCO is a decisive contribution for the development of Europe’s capacity to act autonomously. And it is key to allow us to react effectively to the most demanding circumstances. Member States are already working together on 47 projects to deepen and boost European defence cooperation, with 26 of them expected to become fully operational by 2025. With the first PESCO strategic review just concluded and the agreement recently reached on the conditions for the participation of third states in PESCO projects, we are consolidating PESCO as the key framework for defence cooperation at EU level.

Second, our CSDP missions and operations are contributing to build stable societies around the world, helping our partners abroad to plant the seeds of peace and stability. This, in turn, has a positive impact on the security of the European Union and its citizens. In 2020 the EU launched the military operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI in the Mediterranean to contribute to enforce the UN arms embargo on Libya and work towards a peaceful solution of the conflict. We have also deployed a new civilian advisory mission, EUAM RCA, to support the reform of the internal security forces in Central African Republic.

Third, our global partnerships are developing too. Our cooperation with NATO constitutes an integral pillar of the EU’s CSDP. By reinforcing our capabilities in the area of security and defence, Europe is doing its homework in strengthening the transatlantic alliance. And we remain committed to further strengthening our cooperation with the United Nations.

Fourth, we are strengthening our tools to counter hybrid threats, including disinformation and cyber-attacks. With the imposition of the first targeted measures under the cyber sanctions regime on 30th July, the EU has shown its determination to prevent, deter and respond to continuing and increasing malicious behaviour in cyberspace. Before the end of the year, we will further strengthen our cybersecurity with the adoption of an ambitious cybersecurity package.

Improving the Union’s ability to act

To give new impetus to our security and defence agenda, we are now working on a Strategic Compass. The first step in the development of the Strategic Compass is a comprehensive analysis of threats and challenges. Based on input from EU national civilian and military intelligence, this analysis maps the key trends, challenges and vulnerabilities that the Union faces in the medium term. This intelligence-led document provided a substantive basis for the discussion defence ministers had in November to start elaborating the Compass.

Following the threat analysis, we will engage in a strategic dialogue with Member States to assess the implications for our policies. This dialogue should enable Member States to reinforce their common understanding of the security threats we collectively face, or, in other words, to enhance the European security and defence culture.

The role of the Strategic Compass

The Strategic Compass should address the growing need, in a volatile world, to be able to act as a security provider. Enhanced engagement through CSDP missions and operations, with more robust and flexible mandates, is key. We also need to have strong civilian and military command and control structures. The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) has already been mandated to become capable...
to plan and conduct an executive military operation (approximately 2500 troops), in addition to the training missions. The question is, however, whether this structure should be further strengthened to meet the EU’s level of ambition set in 2016. Member States’ contributions, both to missions/operations and to the MPCC, are currently lagging behind. The Compass should address this issue and its underlying causes. We must ensure that our operational engagement is in line with our political decisions. The Compass could be used to work on incentives to make it easier and more attractive for Member States to contribute, for example by making the mandates of missions and operations more flexible, by extending the financing of common costs and further operationalising the integrated approach. The European Peace Facility, which should become operational at the beginning of next year, will already be a good step in the right direction.

Better protect the Union and its citizens
We also need to strengthen our resilience. This is why the Compass should help strengthen the EU’s position in strategic domains such as cyber, maritime security and space. It could also address disruptive technologies affecting security and defence, such as Artificial Intelligence or quantum technologies that support an innovative Europe’s Defence Technological and Industrial Base.

Strengthening our capabilities through cooperation
If we want to enhance our ability to act and protect ourselves better, we need the right capabilities. Defence cooperation has been on the agenda for many years and the European Defence Agency (EDA) plays a significant role in this regard. Yet, the EU still lacks critical military capabilities. This is why initiatives like PESCO, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence and the European Defence Fund are so important. By enabling and supporting cooperation, they help Member States develop jointly and more efficiently the defence capabilities Europe needs. The Compass should further guide the existing EU capability planning and development instruments by setting clear goals and objectives that help overcome critical shortfalls. It is ultimately for Member States to embed these tools in their national defence planning and make defence cooperation the norm.

Working proactively with our partners
In a world of disorder, the EU needs partners. To cope with the evolving security context the Compass should help to promote a more strategic approach to partnerships. It should identify concrete ways in which the EU’s cooperation in peace, security and defence with partner countries and organisations, notably with the UN, NATO and the OSCE, as well as the African Union and ASEAN, can be reinforced. This should contribute to the overall aim of the EU to promote multilateralism, including in the area of security and defence.

In conclusion....
I know that I am putting forward a very ambitious approach to the Strategic Compass, but we live in challenging times and we need to find common answers to the questions that I raised. Together with the Member States and the support of the EDA and the European Commission, we will address these challenges in the months to come with a focus on concrete solutions.
A critical view from the European Parliament

Is the German presidency succeeding to consolidate the Union and reinforce the European institutions?

by Nicola Beer MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Strasbourg/Brussels

Big plans lie ahead. They set the EU’s direction for the next six months. As a German pacemaker on the European stage, they create a stronger, united Europe. The German Council presidency started with great expectations to fulfil its six-month mandate. The pandemic made this a historic challenge and Germany missed the chance to give the EU a kickstart for the development of a broader and strong vision of Europe’s future.

Covid-19 overshadows the agenda
Politics gained a completely different dimension. The need to make decisions of enormous importance within a truly short time and on the basis of limited data became one of the most challenging political stunts for decision makers and hence for the German presidency. Agreed.

Taking stock, we should consider the coronavirus. Anything else would be dishonest. However, presidential political work is not to be assessed exclusively under the pandemic angle. The EU had a lot on its plate: adopting the EU budget with success; anchoring the recovery plan in the multiannual financial framework; finding a way to common migration politics; providing the conference for the future of Europe with an ambitious mandate.

According to that benchmark, Europe should have become more resilient, more capable of action, upgraded in terms of foreign policy, economically outstanding, setting the ground for a Europe of innovators.

The pandemic has plunged Europe into one of the greatest existential crises since the end of World War II.

The danger of erosion is alarming, but the base problem occurred before: the lack of a common vision for the future and for the reforms of EU institutions, its competences and working procedures.

For years, the EU has lacked a coherent common policy for asylum and migration including an effective protection of EU borders. The EU Commission presented a new proposal for asylum and border protection. Unfortunately, the budget the presidency proposed for the framework of the next seven years cuts Frontex’s money to do so. Typical for the presidency: contradictory, without political ambition and vision.

Solidarity – towards a debt union?
The EU reached an agreement to quickly support the programmes for short-time working, for health systems and credits for Member States, as well investments of the European Investment Bank to save societies and economies from collapse and even, under the German presidency, a €750bn aid package in order to manage recovery after the crisis. Rightly so.

One should call it a success that EU Member States succeeded in setting up this historic aid programme, but it has not been without new lines of conflict: the south of Europe celebrated Germany for having “finally” given up resistance to common debt, while some EU states from the north were stigmatised as the so called “frugal four”. Beyond this, an essential debate came up: to take on common debt or not.

Let us be frank: the coronavirus aids are supposed to be measures
of emergency. Now, a few months later, abuse is looming. Some voices are already talking about a steady aid programme. That would be tantamount to creating a debt union and the presidency would have been involved in taking that wrong path.

Foreign policy – still disappointing
In foreign policy, the expectation was not less great. The German presidency wanted to make the EU stronger together. More relevant in terms of foreign policy. The president of the EU-Commission Ursula von der Leyen set the tone: the EU should become a geopolitical union. But a geopolitical union means being a player and not being driven. Germany failed to take a tougher stance on China. While its aggressive policy towards the opposition in Hong Kong came to a head with the entry into force of the Hong Kong security law, Germany still chose to do business as usual with Beijing. I am convinced that the policy of appeasement with China, as well as the change of approach in trade, have reached their limits regarding Beijing’s attitude towards the Uyghurs, Tibet, Hong Kong and most recently Taiwan. We have reached a dead end and need a coherent common strategy towards China on the base of trade and human rights. Europe will be implausible if it does not now let China feel concrete headwinds. A strong signal would have been to cancel the summit. Again, a missed opportunity. Furthermore, a geopolitical union means having the right tools for it. The German presidency promised to kickstart a reform debate within the EU. The conference on the future of Europe should have been the framework for debating urgently needed reforms on several levels. Although it was planned for May 2020, at the time of writing, the sheer existence of it is in total limbo: a disappointment, which cannot be explained by the pandemic.

The EU needs to be storm proofed
Covid-19 in particular shows how fragile the EU is in its foundations, and not only when it comes to massive pressure. Precisely for this reason, it is in everyone’s interest to reform the EU from the ground up and make it truly stormproof. In addition to more majority decisions, this also includes the EU Parliament’s right of initiative. The only institution with democratically elected representatives needs a serious upgrade in setting the political agenda for the EU. An example of a strong EU Parliament during the crisis is the persistent negotiation with the Council to effectively link the EU budget with an instrument for the rule of law. The EU Parliament was able to show what can be achieved for a more democratic and robust Union with a view to common values. The German Council presidency finally struck a last-minute compromise aiming to restore the common understanding that we all share the same values as defined in article 2 of the treaty, that a working rule of law mechanism is vital for the functioning of the EU and can be subject to judicial review. Rightly so. There was no room left to play one more time the wrong cards.
The period from 2017–2020 will be remembered as an especially difficult one for transatlantic relations, and one in which favorable European views of the United States reached all-time lows or matched their Iraq War nadirs. It is self-evident that some of this disapproval should be attributed to the Trump Administration’s often dismissive, sometimes disdainful attitude toward its erstwhile European allies. While public spats were the most visible source of European exasperation with the United States under President Trump, however, they were arguably exceeded by US allies’ frustration over the erratic and inconsistent nature of decision-making in Washington.

The reasons for the transatlantic divide

Yet it would be a mistake to chalk the transatlantic divide up entirely to the Trump administration’s eccentricities. To a great extent, European approval of the United States appears tied to US domestic politics. The Trump administration’s policy decisions that Europeans cared most about – the US withdrawals from the Paris climate accord and the Iran nuclear agreement, for example – reflected longstanding political divides in the United States more than anti-Europe animus.

Most importantly for Europe, however, some of the Trump administration’s disagreements with Europe reflect shifts in American national security strategy that are almost sure to persist under President-elect Joe Biden. Trump’s demands, for example, that European members of NATO boost their defense spending echoed similar complaints by Barack Obama, and will almost certainly be carried forward by Biden. Likewise, American discomfort over projects like the Nordstream pipeline, or technology and infrastructure cooperation with China, appear unlikely to ease with Biden’s election. These concerns reflect Washington’s broad focus on strategic competition with Russia and China, a trend which has been long in building but was given its clearest articulation by the Defense Department under Secretary James Mattis. This emphasis on great-power rivalry has led Washington to question legacy commitments – introspection from which NATO has not been spared – seek to establish or strengthen relationships elsewhere, and demand more of allies as it seeks to shift its resource allocations. Under President Trump, however, Washington’s efforts to recruit Europe to partner in this policy shift were transactional and confused. The US sought to persuade Europe to join it in limiting Chinese economic inroads while decrying Europeans as “worse than China” on the issue. Likewise, European NATO members increased their defense spending and Washington stepped up its own defense investment in Europe, but they did so absent any high-level meeting of the minds or evident progress among leaders at dysfunctional NATO summits.

Need for a concerted strategic dialogue

Europe and the Biden administration together will need to replace this haphazard engagement with a concerted effort at strategic dialogue, seeking if not to develop a common agenda then at least to reach a clearer understanding of one another’s perspectives and opportunities both for collaboration and for the division of labor. Fortunately, they will have a solid foundation on which to build – there is greater bipartisan consensus on national security strategy than Washington’s fractious politics would indicate, and European states themselves have not only made greater investments in their own defense but have demonstrated an increased willingness to use their capabilities in the Middle East, Africa, the Mediterranean, and further afield, as well as an alertness to the dangers posed by revisionist powers. The frame of reference for a renewed transatlantic strategic dialogue should be about division of labor and how an increasingly focused United States and an increasingly capable Europe can cooperate to address mutual threats as well as support each other to defend and update an international order conducive to freedom and prosperity.
Trade deals do not only have an economic impact. They also have a geopolitical aspect, cultural outcomes and often prepare a reordering of regional alignments, mostly creating stability.

On 15th November 2020, the fifteen countries of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) held a solemn virtual signing ceremony, creating the world’s largest free trade area stretching from the southern borders of Kazakhstan in the North to the South Pacific, including New Zealand. Negotiations over the RCEP started in 2012 and were concluded by the ten ASEAN countries as well as Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. Members of the RCEP make up nearly a third of the world’s population and account for nearly 30% of Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The deal excludes the United States because of its withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations at the initiative of the newly elected US President in 2017, expressing his doubts on globalisation which might not be advantageous to his country. The remaining members went on multilaterally in form of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific-Partnership (CPTPP). The RCEP also shows that globalisation is not dead and China’s Premier, Li Keqiang, praised the RCEP deal as “a victory of multilateralism and free trade”!

India, also party to the negotiations, pulled out last year on somewhat nationalistic decision, but the RCEP is keeping its door open for India, whereas it is closed for the US – at least for the time being.

First impressions of the RCEP

There is no doubt that the RCEP will boost economic integration and influence member countries’ future trade policies. The Pact includes commitments in goods, services, investment, competition and last but not least, e-commerce. Standards, intellectual property rights and dispute settlement mechanisms have also been agreed.

All in all, the pact is a significant achievement between countries which are extremely diverse in nearly all areas, but they were showing a high level of flexibility in the negotiations. An example is that tariff schedules extend to at least 20 years. In another important area however, they stood shoulder to shoulder by agreeing on one single set of rules of origin for all goods. This is the first time that China has signed up to a regional multilateral trade pact, having already some bilateral trade agreements in the region. And the RCEP is also the first trade pact that includes China, Japan and South Korea.

The main effect of this regional pact is to have woven the various trade agreements of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with the five other countries of the Indo-Pacific region into a single framework.

The western world mostly sees the pact as an extension of China’s influence in the region and likely to boost the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of RCEP Member States.

The European Union’s first impression of the RCEP was expressed by the EU High Representative/Vice President of the Commission, Josep Borrell, who said: “The Indo-Pacific region is of strategic importance to us. We must enhance our engagement to make sure our voice is heard and the overall structure of regional cooperation remains open and rules-based.”

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1 The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was founded on 8th August 1967 and has actually 10 members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and 2 Observers (Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste). Objectives: economic growth and to stimulate regional peace and stability based on the rule of law and the principle of United Nations.

2 The CPTPP is a trade agreement between Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam, which entered in force on 30th December 2018. The treaty evolved from the Trans-Pacific-Partnership (TPP) which never entered in force because of the withdrawal of the US in 2017.
The European: Mr Schott, your country, France, has been suffering terrorist attacks since 2015. In November, society was struck with horror after the decapitation of a school teacher by a radical Islamist. Samuel Paty had explained to his pupils that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are essential marks of democracy, illustrating his ideas with the caricatures on Mohammad, which led to the brutal murders of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo journalists by Islamists five years ago. How can a society stand firm against such a permanent threat in the long run?

Cyrille Schott: Through Samuel Paty’s horrific murder, it is the schools of the French Republic that are attacked. These schools constitute the melting pot of the nation, through the knowledge and values transmitted to young people, particularly freedom of thought and expression.

If France has been particularly badly struck, this terrorism threatens the whole of Europe, as the recent attacks in Dresden and Vienna have shown. The terrorist threat today comes less from organised groups, but can take shape anywhere, by isolated and easily influenced individuals, exceedingly difficult to identify before the act. This causes our fellow citizens a diffuse fear, amplified by the fears associated with the health crisis. However, we ought not to underestimate the resilience of our societies. Our democracies are much stronger than authoritarian regimes where public debate is excluded. What is important is that our societies remain united on the essential, the will to live together. Our countries, despite their imperfections, represent the greatest space of freedom, prosperity and social justice in the world.

The European: President Emmanuel Macron held after this tragic event a rigorous speech on freedom of expression and democracy, underlining that caricatures and critiques on religions must be allowed. Was he right to give this speech which didn’t diffuse the situation, but was a strong sign that France will not give in to the pressure of radical Islamists?

Cyrille Schott: First, we must fight terrorism with the utmost rigour. The intelligence, security and justice services must get the legal, material and digital tools to fight; they must coordinate closely. Recent meetings of European leaders are in line with this.

Secondly, we must prevent separatist discourses and encourage an Islam from Europe, instead of an Islam in Europe; France and Germany announced measures in this sense. The difference is that Islamic theology can be studied in German universities, whereas in France, laïcité requires that other structures be used, more difficult to create and control. In its fundamentals, however, the approach is similar. The same goes for the training of imams in Europe, instead of bringing them from abroad. Finally, our leaders must act to maintain, in speech and action, the unity of the national community. Fellow citizens of Muslim culture or religion are part of it. The vast majority aspire only to peacefully hold their place in our society. Economic and social policies must also be implemented to prevent people in certain neighbourhoods from being discriminated against, or foreigners who enter legally, particularly under the right to asylum, from having insufficient opportunities for integration.

The European: Mr Schott, can we agree on a common appeal to never sacrifice, out of fear or laxness, the smallest grain of our freedom to totalitarian Islamism?

Cyrille Schott: Our freedom is an inalienable right. It cannot be abandoned in the face of totalitarianism, whatever it may be!
Cybercrime entered a new chapter in 2020. What was once an emerging threat is now a full-blown risk to economic activity across the globe. Europe is a top target due to the combination of its considerable wealth and relatively high level of digitisation.

The pandemic has added fuel to the fire. Ransomware attacks, whereby hackers encrypt their target’s data and threaten to delete it unless a ransom is paid under short notice, have become the primary concern. Recent reports by agencies such as France’s ANSSI indicate that the number of incidents is projected to quadruple in 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has added fuel to the fire: a climate of fear and uncertainty, in addition to the increased reliance on digital infrastructure, has made it easier than ever for hackers to trick victims into infecting their systems. Not to mention the widespread availability of packaged ransomware tools across the dark web, or what criminals and law enforcement now call a ‘malware-as-a-service’ model.

Cybercriminals are becoming more confident, and they have every reason to. The average ransomware payment asked of SMEs has doubled in a year, now reaching over 6000 € per target. In the case of larger corporations, a single attack can bring in several million euros in the space of days to top cybercriminals. While the upside is high, operational costs are low and downside risks are limited. Criminals have little to lose: their attacks may be blocked, but there has yet to be significant consequences for most of them. If anything, criminals have been among the greatest beneficiaries of the digital revolution: they can attack thousands of targets at the click of a button, all while staying in the shadows.

Cybercriminals have become indiscriminately in their attacks, targeting everything from large corporations to small suppliers, universities and public service providers, with a marked focus on healthcare facilities. Last May, Europe’s largest private hospital operator Fresenius, also a key provider of dialysis kits in high demand during Covid-19, was hit with a particularly sophisticated ransomware that significantly disrupted operations on a global scale.

The golden age of cyberpiracy
Taking into account both the costs of ransoms paid and the cost of IT downtime, security experts estimate that the total cost of ransomware in 2020 will range from $1.1 to 4.3 billion in Italy, $1 to 4 billion in Germany, and $830 million to 3.3 billion in Spain. Existing data makes it difficult to obtain precise ranges, but even with conservative parameters, the economic and social costs are daunting. Such widespread activity cannot happen without certain forms of state passivity, and in some cases state sponsorship.

The EU should leverage its economic and diplomatic power

Ransomware is becoming a systemic threat to Europe’s economy

by Jean-Louis Gergorin, former Executive VP for Strategy of EADS, and Léo Isaac-Dognin, Director for Digital Trust, Capgemini Invent, Paris

Jean-Louis Gergorin and Léo Isaac-Dognin are co-authors of “Cyber, la guerre permanente” (2018, Editions du Cerf)
Private cybersecurity firms and law enforcement converge on the idea that the most significant ransomware threats, including Ryuk and Dridex, are run by criminal enterprises, with significant operations running out of non-European Union countries – Russophone countries in the case of the aforementioned malwares. The situation resembles the conditions that led to the “golden age” of piracy of the 16th century, where pirates blossomed across the Atlantic and were systematically instrumentalised, if not directly mandated by states like Britain, France or the Netherlands to weaken enemies, in particular Spain, the wealthiest power of the time.

Three centuries ago, piracy ceased once global powers of the time decided it was hampering economic development. Today, Europe cannot become an area with security standards and policy that do not match its prosperity, where pirates feel that they roam and loot freely.

European law enforcement agencies have made remarkable strides in moving online to tackle organised crime in the physical world, particularly drug and human trafficking, and to a lesser extent child pornography, but they need help in tackling “pure” cybercrime. On 20th November, the UK formally confirmed it has set up a National Cyber Force that will work closely alongside intelligence agencies, most notably the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), as a new unified command to tackle cyberthreats through offensive cyber-operations, including against criminals. EU Member States should take stock of this approach, both by considering all means to deprive cybercriminals of the sanctuaries constituted by countries not signatory to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, and by pursuing greater information sharing between cybersecurity agencies, intelligence, and key industrial partners.

Trade relations can be a powerful tool

EU leaders and policymakers also need to rise to the challenge. Individual travel bans and asset freezing, as recently enacted by the EU against Russia, China and North Korea-based actors already sanctioned by the US for cyber-attacks dating back to 2017-2018, will not deter seasoned cybercriminals. Will Member States and EU institutions remain silent while businesses and critical infrastructure are attacked daily? The Union should leverage its economic strength and make known that trade relations with third party states will henceforth take account of their efforts to tackle cybercrime within their borders, linking trade terms to targets in cybercrime reduction, and helping states that do not have the means to tackle them independently. Western leaders must bring this topic to the table in their discussions with global counterparts. The urgency and scale of the issue justifies that the Council appoint an EU Cybersecurity Coordinator to coordinate strategy, intelligence sharing, defence policy and align Member State positions on the matter.

One decade ago, Europe took a strong stand in tackling piracy in the gulf of Aden, directly contributing to the drastic reduction of incidents in the region by setting up the EU NAVFOR mission in 2008, garnering the cooperation of partners such as the US, China and India, and working within the region to tackle the economic conditions that lead to piracy. Similar steps need to be taken to tackle cyberpiracy.

2 https://ibm.co/34nmAdV
4 https://bit.ly/3gVfItf
5 https://bit.ly/3ntbnAa
Will the European Union emerge stronger from the crisis and be willing and capable to take on more responsibility for global security and peace in the future? How will the widely discussed Strategic Compass, initiated under the German EU Presidency, contribute to a clear concept of what European defence really means? And in which way could national forces be restructured to make them rapidly available for civilian but also military EU operations? The authors in this chapter give their view on these burning questions.
Security and defence, both interdependent sides of the same coin

It is the crisis that ultimately moves the lines

by Cyrille Schott, Préfet (h.) de région,
Member of the Board of EuroDéfense
France, Paris

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ecurity occupied the minds of Europe’s founding fathers: “Never again war!” However, they pragmatically focused on the economy, creating the European Coal and Steel Community, followed by the European Economic Community in the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) leading to the handing over, through NATO, of the defence of Europeans to the United States, means that the project of European defence cannot then succeed. Europe is moving forward in peace, with America protecting. When the iron curtain collapsed, western and eastern Europe met again. The Community becomes the European Union (EU) in 1992. If we believe then in the “end of history” and the triumph of liberal democracy, war reappears at the gates of the Union: in former Yugoslavia, in the Caucasus, in Ukraine. And Europeans perceive the rise of threats: in the east, there is concern about the Russian attitude, in the south we feel the terrorist threat, the worrying destabilisation of the Middle East and Libya, Turkish aggressiveness, the fear of new waves of migration, the fear of cyber-attack is everywhere. Europe is discovering an America looking towards the Pacific and preferring to discuss with each of the European nations in isolation, in a position of weakness, and not with the global economic power that forms a united Europe. The other continent-states, China, Russia, would also like to deal with a fragmented Europe. With Donald Trump not hesitating to call it a commercial “enemy”,

the Union can no longer claim to be progressing in the shadow of the American umbrella. For the “miracle of peace” to continue, we must now have “a Europe that protects”. The issue of security and defence is gradually at the heart of the European agenda.

Significant progress in internal security

Internal security is progressing. The implementation of the Schengen Convention, signed in 1985, was a decisive step. The decision to open internal borders to the free movement of people was accompanied by “compensatory measures” to combat crime: the development of police, customs and judicial cooperation; the creation of a database of persons and sought objects. Schengen cooperation will be a laboratory for European integration in the field of security. After Schengen, the Maastricht Treaty created in 1992 the “justice and home affairs” pillar, which is based on intergovernmental cooperation, the Amsterdam Treaty, in 1997, establishes the “area of freedom, security and justice”, and the Treaty of Lisbon, in 2007, marks another major moment, by abolishing the pillar structure and thus generalising the Community method and giving some power to the supranational institutions in this area.

Cooperation between police forces is now close and is based on the Europol agency, created in 1995. Europol has more than 1,000 staff, welcomes 220 liaison officers and supports more than 40,000 cross-border investigations annually. Cooperation in criminal matters has continued to grow, with the assertion
of the Eurojust agency created in 2002, the mutual recognition of court decisions, and effective instruments, such as joint investigation teams or the European Arrest Warrant, in force since 2004. The European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) has been connecting databases containing criminal records since 2012. The Schengen Information System (SIS) contains 91 million records at the end of 2019, relating to persons or stolen and searched objects, and has been accessed 6.6 billion times. Frontex, which has been in operation since 2005 and became, in response to the migration crisis, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in 2016, must have within a few years a contingent of 10,000 border and coastguards in order to help European countries with border control and migration management.

Advances in defence
Defence, for its part, has made progress. Since the Maastricht Treaty and the Petersberg Declaration in 1992, Europe has had a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). In 1999, after the Franco-British summit in Saint-Malo, the foundations of a European defence policy were laid, with the first two military operations launched in 2003. Thus, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which in 2009 with the Lisbon Treaty became the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the armed branch of the CFSP, was born. In 15 years, nearly 80,000 men have been engaged in EU operations. 36 military, civilian and civil-military missions have been deployed, 17 of which are currently underway on three continents: six are military, such as the naval operation against piracy on the Somali coast, 11, like Eulex in Kosovo, are civilian, police and support to the security forces or the rule of law, border assistance. These so-called ‘low-spectrum’ operations, however, correspond to a limited commitment and are not the expression of a genuine European defence, capable of taking strong action to protect Europe or its interests in the world. Concerning the defence of the continent itself, most Member States see it continuing to be based on NATO and American commitment. Since Brexit, important new developments have emerged: the creation of a Military planning and conduct capability (MPCC); the coordinated annual review on defence (CARD); the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) to develop the capabilities of Member States’ armies; the European Defence Fund (EDF), which introduces defence into the European budget; and finally the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) – outside of institutions – to strengthen operational cooperation between partner states and the UK.

The two sides of sovereignty
Although the civilian and the military may have been linked in external operations, this brief reminder reveals two parallel but separate paths. The awareness of the link between internal and external security, between security and defence, however, is growing and is expressed in the most recent texts of the Union. Thus, in 2016, in A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy, it is written: “The European Union will promote peace and guarantee the security of its citizens and territory. Internal and external security are ever more intertwined.”

In July 2020, in the Communication from the Commission on the EU security union strategy, which follows the programmes and the EU internal security strategies, agreed in the wake of the 1999 Tampere Declaration, it is said:

“The Union must focus on the development of the instruments that will enable it to assert its strategic autonomy.”

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Photo: private

Cyrille Schott
is a retired French regional prefect. Born in 1950, he earned an MA in history from the Sorbonne (Paris), and holds a diploma from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques of Strasbourg and from the French national administration school ENA. From 1982-1987, Mr Schott was an advisor to the office of President Mitterrand. Thereafter he started his prefectural career in Belfort, followed by five appointments as a departmental prefect and two as a regional prefect. After his appointment as a Chief Auditor in the Cour des comptes (audit office), he ended his career as the director of the National Institute for Advanced Security and Justice Studies (INHESJ). He is a reserve colonel.
This strategy also includes other dimensions, such as diplomacy, humanitarian aid, development cooperation, climate action, human rights, economic support and trade policy, all of which fall within the EU’s toolbox for world security and peace, on which its own security depends.

Nevertheless, the Union must focus on the development of the instruments that will enable it to assert its strategic autonomy, as envisaged in the Global Strategy, and to develop an even more effective internal security policy. However, if Member States have agreed to create federal institutions, such as the European Central Bank (ECB), or federal policies, such as foreign trade, they confine themselves to security and defence cooperation, sometimes enhanced, without going so far as to create an European police or army. It is true that wanting to move too fast in these areas would lead to intense divisions between Europeans, or even to the failure of their Union. It is the crisis that ultimately moves the lines, as we saw recently with the decision to launch European loans in response to the economic crisis generated by the pandemic.

The challenges of our time and the pressure emanating from the continent-states lead us to consider the question of sovereignty beyond states’ national framework, in that of their Union. If France once wanted to impose its sovereignty against the Holy Roman Empire, today it is towards these continent-states that sovereignty must be asserted, and it can only be asserted at the European level. But the one who speaks of European sovereignty cannot avoid considering its instruments, an army and a police force, within the framework of a democracy that respects civil liberties, based on a common justice system. It is in this direction, far from being accomplished, that defence and security will appear as two sides of the same coin, that of sovereignty.

European defence needs a solid and realistic foundation. Europeans must stop advocating utopia that sound great but mean little – and are an excuse for doing nothing. Nuclear deterrence is a subject that must be considered dispassionately.

Starting on 1st January 2021, France will be the only Member State of the European Union with a nuclear capability and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Can France establish a credible deterrence and guarantee the protection of the EU with its voluntarily very limited stockpile of nuclear weapons?

President Macron – in line with his predecessors – remains faithful to Charles de Gaulle’s doctrine of nuclear deterrence. In his speech on 7th February, 2020 at the Ecole Militaire in Paris, the same forum from which General de Gaulle expounded his doctrine of the French nuclear deterrence on 3rd November 1959, Macron declared that he is in favour of a strong and autonomous “European defence” in which France must shoulder its responsibilities and play its role. No more, no less!

The President extended a hand to his European partners, inviting them to participate in a detailed strategic dialogue, but he was also careful to emphasise that the credibility of a nuclear deterrent depends on its capacity for an immediate and strategic response to an imminent attack. Would the extension of the French deterrent to the territory of the EU maintain this principle of immediacy and could it become a target for reprisals?

The way I see it is this:

Firstly: it is high time to engage in a strategic dialogue on the shape of European defence, of which a nuclear deterrent must be a part.

Secondly: France’s nuclear capacity is a deterrent in itself and protects, by its very existence, the EU. This is tantamount to a tacit extension!

Thirdly: an official and written extension might reduce the deterrent’s credibility.

Fourthly: the decision to order a nuclear strike – notwithstanding prior consultations – must remain in the hands of the French President.

During the cold war, our concern was not that the US would order a nuclear strike without hesitation. On the contrary, we could never be sure - just as the Soviet Union wasn’t – that the Americans would engage in mutually assured destruction. Trust is a component of deterrence.

Fifthly: Europe needs a nuclear dimension, the ultimate guarantee of its security. Has the time come for members of the European Union — allies within NATO – to choose between the United States and France? No, not yet! The American nuclear umbrella is still in place, the French nuclear deterrent remains a bonus.
No sooner is the election over than expectations are mounting on both sides of the Atlantic that the President-elect will seek to overcome the upheavals in the transatlantic relationship. Nothing would be better suited to restoring the priority status of the Alliance in transatlantic relations than an early NATO summit.

The extent to which American and European security interests have diverged is illustrated by the Trump Administration’s withdrawal from the INF treaty. This was tantamount to abandoning a founding principle of the North Atlantic Alliance: the strategic unity of the Alliance’s territory with the same level of security for all allies. Russia has been given a free hand to build up a euro-strategic nuclear potential that can threaten Europe but not the American continent.

High expectations in Europe

Europeans justifiably expect President Biden to restore a normal situation among allies and correct the increasing disregard for its security interests by focusing more strongly on the common defence alliance.

It should not however be forgotten that President Biden will of course determine American external and security policies on the basis of American interests and that problems between the US and Europe were apparent before the start of the Trump Administration. The greatest challenges for the new President are the intensification of rivalries between the great powers, primarily with China but also with Russia, and also the need to revert to its role as a global superpower, prepared to take on the challenges of crises and conflicts.

“The greatest challenges for the new President are the intensification of rivalries between the great powers, primarily with China but also with Russia, and also the need to revert to its role as a global power of world order, prepared to take on the challenges of crises and conflicts”.

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American security experts even advocate closer involvement of NATO with US partners in the Indo-Pacific region. German politicians have signalled a willingness to spend more on their own security and increase defence expenditure. President Biden knows only too well however that such promises have been made repeatedly since 2014 but not kept. The precise yardstick is the commitment by all Alliance members to increase their defence spending to 2% of GDP and invest more than 20% of their defence budgets in modern equipment and weapons systems by 2024. If the European member states of NATO were to fulfil these commitments, the Alliance would have a higher European profile, focus more on European security interests and be more evenly balanced in terms of security and defence.

**Europe’s profile in the Atlantic Alliance**

To maintain the transatlantic security and strategic alliance with the USA on a sound and sustainable basis in the future, Europe should strive for greater sovereignty over the basic questions of the continent’s security. For it is only as a close ally of the United States that Europe will be able to assert its political, economic and military interests vis-à-vis the great powers.

**Capabilities:** Strengthening the military of NATO’s European pillar would enable Europe to exert more influence on the Alliance’s conceptual and strategic thinking.

**Structural change:** As a visible token of their greater commitment, Germany and France should appoint, within the future NATO command structure and on a revolving basis, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), a position which has traditionally been held by an American. In exchange, an American could become the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, a position currently held by a French officer.

**Capacity for intervention:** The NATO Response Force (NRF) should have a dedicated command headquarters and would, as originally intended, be trained and equipped according to binding NATO criteria. During their tour of duty in the NRF, national contingents should come under NATO command (NATO Command Forces). The consequence would be much greater interoperability and a substantial improvement in operational readiness and speed of reaction.

**Europe’s profile within NATO**

The result of all this would be to give Europe a higher profile within NATO and send a clear signal about its readiness to take on greater responsibility for its own security. This would be an important and even essential contribution to overcoming transatlantic upheavals and restoring greater unity in security and strategic questions within the North Atlantic Alliance. I am convinced that the United States would welcome proactive overtures on these issues from its European allies. And basically, in this way, the nucleus of a European army, as proposed by President Macron, could emerge, once the political conditions arise.

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**NATO Secretary General congratulates US President-elect Joe Biden**

(7.11.2020)

“I warmly welcome the election of Joe Biden as the next President of the United States. I know Mr. Biden as a strong supporter of NATO and the transatlantic relationship. US leadership is as important as ever in an unpredictable world, and I look forward to working very closely with President-elect Biden, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and the new administration to further strengthen the bond between North America and Europe.

A strong NATO is good for North America and good for Europe. Together, NATO Allies represent almost one billion people, half of the world’s economic might and half of the world’s military might. We need this collective strength to deal with the many challenges we face, including a more assertive Russia, international terrorism, cyber and missile threats, and a shift in the global balance of power with the rise of China. We can only be secure and successful if we face these challenges together.”

source: www.nato.int

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General (ret.) Harald Kujat served as Chairman Military Committee at NATO HQ in Brussels from 2002-2005. Born in 1942, he joined the German Air Force in 1959. Between 1980-1884 he served two German Chancellor’s and was then appointed as Dep Chairman ISM/ NATO. He became in 1998 Director Policy at MOD Bonn and in 2000 German Chief of Defence (CHOD) in Berlin.
It is important to keep the US engaged

Maintaining the rules-based international order in the age of the US-China rivalry

by Professor Hideshi Tokuchi, Senior Fellow, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Tokyo

In 1954, when the then Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida visited west Germany, he emphasised to the Germans that European nations should pay more attention to east Asia as the communist bloc would go on the offensive, striking at the liberal bloc’s most vulnerable point. He concurred with them that as the world was divided into liberals and communists, Japan and west Germany had no other options but to align with the US. Though the Cold War ended a long time ago, his view has not lost its relevance.

The nature of the US-China rivalry

The US-China rivalry has proved to be systemic. It extends to lots of areas including economy, technology, security, values, and ideology. Their confrontation is intensified by the spread of the novel coronavirus. For the US, China’s challenge is similar to the mix of the Soviet Union’s military challenge and Japan’s economic one in the Cold War era. Some Americans argue for the decoupling of China, but this is impossible. Social distancing with China is inevitable, but its isolation is unrealistic as China is fully integrated in the world. Though mutual interests do not much overlap, a number of important areas remain on which the two nations must cooperate, including climate change. China is trying to kick the US out of Asia, but this is also impossible. The US is naturally an Indo-Pacific power.

The US-China rivalry has had a huge impact on the rules-based liberal international order. Although China itself has benefited from the order, it expresses strong dissent to it. The Chinese are more assertive, trying to change the status quo by force and coercion. It is a big challenge for all the responsible members on this planet. The rules-based liberal order is a western idea, particularly the product of the American political system. Thus, its viability depends on two conditions: that American democracy remains sound and that the US stays committed to international affairs and to its leadership role.

One might question whether these conditions will be fully met in the future, particularly because of the impact of three things we see in the US: the deindustrialisation of the society due to the progress of globalisation, the widening gap between rich and poor due to the reduction of social welfare, and weariness in respect of diversity. However, it is no use being too pessimistic. The US public is not necessarily inward-looking. They continue to be interested in international affairs. They will be never complacent about being second. Their resilience will not be dismissed. So what should we do now?

Security cooperation of liberal democracies

The US cannot do much on its own, but we can do even less without the US. The important thing is to keep the US engaged and to help generate an international environment where it can reestablish its leadership role.

Incidentally, the “Quad”, the quadrilateral framework of the US, Japan, Australia and India, the four major maritime democracies, for their diplomatic coordination in the Indo-Pacific, is active in trying to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific. It has been elevated to a minister-level platform. Even the idea of a “Quad Plus” is emerging among some experts in these countries. European democracies will be strong candidates of “Quad Plus” membership.

Neither the “Quad” nor the “Quad Plus” will be an alliance, but it should be a robust coalition of liberal democracies to counter new threats that authoritarian countries have engineered which traditional alliances did not expect to address, such as the political use of economic tools, disruption caused by disinformation, and hybrid warfare under the threshold of armed attack. Advanced democracies in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific must unite to enhance their security cooperation.

“Advanced democracies in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific must unite to enhance their security cooperation.”

Professor Hideshi Tokuchi

is a visiting professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) in Tokyo. Born in 1955, he holds a law degree from the University of Tokyo and a master’s in law and diplomacy (M.A.L.D.) from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He joined Japan’s defence agency in 1979. From 2014-2015 he served as the country’s first ever vice-minister of defence for international affairs after completing several senior assignments in the Ministry of Defence.
A serious look at the Normalisation Agreements, also referred to as the “Abraham accords” signed on 15th September at the White House in Washington between Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain, as well as later between Israel and Sudan, proves that after the celebrations end, some major problems still threaten the stabilisation of the Middle East.

Iran is the most serious threat for Israel
No doubt, Iran is rapidly developing a nuclear bomb to balance Israel’s alleged nuclear arsenal. Iran has no common border with Israel, but Syria and Lebanon are highly active proxies of Teheran, creating a major problem for Israel. Despite the Russian presence in Syria, Israel has not ceased its efforts to foil any results of the new Iran-Syria agreement that was signed in 2020 to allow Teheran to get a stronger foothold in Syria. A central component of the agreement is Syria’s Air Defence System (ADS) aiming at reducing Israeli, Turkish, and American freedom of action in Syrian airspace. This raises concern in Washington with the consequence that the US has increased its aerial patrols over Syria and Lebanon to counter Iranian activity. According to a report from Iran, Teheran will provide Syria with advanced Russian air defence systems, with some based on the S-300 and surface-air missiles like the one used by Iran to shoot down an American Hawk UAV in June 2019.

According to Udi Dekel, a senior researcher at the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), the agreement was signed as a possible withdrawal of US forces from Iraq and eastern Syria looks close. Dekel writes that according to assessments in Damascus and Tehran, such a development would probably allow increased Israeli air strikes along the Iraqi-Syrian border. “This is likely the reason for the need to reinforce Syrian aerial defence capabilities across the entire Syrian space, which currently is unable to intercept and thwart Israeli Air Force attacks against Iranian outposts in Syria”, he says.

A recent incident involving Mehan Air, which is suspected of flying military equipment to the Hezbollah in Lebanon via Damascus, shows the increased tension in the area, where the US and Israel are watching “every small motion in the area”, as said an Israeli source. A few weeks ago, according to Teheran, several passengers on Mahan Air flight 1152 from Tehran to Beirut were injured after their passenger plane was forced to abruptly lower its altitude. The pilot claimed that this was because two American fighter jets dangerously approached his plane in the Syrian air space. A spokesman for the US Army Central Command confirmed the incident but said that only...
one F-15 was involved – not two as Iran claimed. He said the pilot conducted a “routine visual inspection” of the Iranian plane as it passed over a base hosting American forces in the al-Than area of eastern Syria.

The Normalisation Agreement
While in the Syrian-Iranian arena things continue to boil, Israel signed the Normalisation Agreements in the presence of US President Trump with the two Arab countries UAE and Bahrain, and later with Sudan. A major objective of the agreements is to lower Iranian influence in the Gulf states, thus causing great concern in Teheran.

The Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned the Normalisation Agreements between Israel and the Arab states, and even sent implicit threats against UAE leaders. An official statement said that the Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the UAE’s “shameful attempt” to normalise its relations with “the fake, illegal and inhumane Zionist regime”. The fact is that the UAE has the strongest and most effective military force in the Persian Gulf region, and other countries in the region are supported in their homeland security efforts by the US.

In recent years, Sudan has served as a ‘pipeline’ for the transfer of Iranian-made weapons to the Hamas in Gaza. Foreign sources claimed that the Israeli air force attacked and destroyed some of these shipments. The signature of the agreement with Sudan surely intends to cut this pipeline.

Turkey’s aspirations in the region could cause a dramatic change in the situation. Turkey has huge strategic interests in the Middle East and the Gulf region and is playing a multi-pronged game that serves Erdogan’s plans. At the same time Erdogan continues to violate the arms embargo on Libya by sending arms and mercenaries to support the Government of National Accord.

No progress in the Israel-Palestine relations
While the military-to-military relationship between Israel and the UAE is still limited to occasional intelligence sharing on specific issues, it is considered a big “celebration”. However, one party was not included: Palestine, that is loudly condemning the Arab countries for having signed the agreement with Israel. Instead of taking advantage of the momentum, Palestine threatens to cut the defence cooperation with Israel in the West Bank. The Hamas in Gaza, supported by Teheran, continues to launch rockets into Israel and as retaliation, Israeli air force is bombing military facilities.

So, while a new era has begun in the Middle East, many factors may affect it, either in the near future or at a later stage. We are far away from peace in this region.
The Covid-19 pandemic is the most severe global crisis we are facing since World War 2. Fighting it is undoubtedly our current top priority. At the same time, we must not forget about the other global challenges that face us: the steady erosion of the international rules-based and multilateral order, the re-emergence of power politics, a difficult transatlantic partnership as well as conflicts and instability, especially at Europe’s periphery. These developments raise the question of Europe’s future international role as well as its ability to protect its interests and citizens.

An ambitious EU global strategy
In 2016, the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) formulated the goal of strategic autonomy, defined as Europe’s ability to act autonomously if necessary, to respond to external crises, build partners’ capacities and protect its citizens. While the level of ambition derived from the long-term goal of autonomous action is, at least for the time being, a political rather than a concrete military one, the improvement and development of the necessary capabilities remain a key element. Considering that we are facing these challenges together as the European Union, we also need to address them in a joint effort by moving forward to a European Defence Union.

Following the EUGS, the European Defence Union has already made substantial progress through various initiatives. Building on the EUGS’ level of ambition, the revised Capability Development Plan (CDP) of 2018 defined 11 capability priority areas ranging from communication and information, cyber responsive operations, and logistics to ground, air and naval defence and combat capabilities. The CDP is complemented by the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) which analyses EU Member States’ progress in the priority areas laid out in the CDP. CARD is designed as a two-year cyclical process and does not only aim to describe the current state of defence development in relation to the goals but also identifies areas for further cooperation between Member States, evaluates existing initiatives on the European level and analyses Member States’ activities in capability development and their respective defence budgets trends.

Concrete developments and projects
While CDP and CARD provide the long-term orientation framework and evaluation for European capability development, concrete and joint development is facilitated through the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF). With 25 EU Member States participating and 47 projects launched since the activation of the PESCO chapter in the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) in December 2017,
PESCO addresses European capability development in all relevant defence areas: land, air, sea, cyber, space, command, communications, surveillance, enabling capabilities and joint training. The participation within the different projects ranges from 2 to 24 Member States with up to two states having a coordinating role. The EDF, which will be fully implemented in 2021, functions as a complementary instrument by providing European funding for research and development in the area of defence. Following its announcement in 2017, a preliminary EDF has been implemented through the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) with budgets of €90 million and €500 million respectively. Within the EDIDP budget, €37 million are directly awarded to PESCO projects of a European remotely piloted air system (€100 million) and secure defence communication systems (€37 million). Until today, 18 research projects have been launched within the PADR and 16 within the EDIDP, with 24 tendering procedures still ongoing.

Major immaterial shortcomings
The CDP, CARD, PESCO and the EDF mark important steps towards a European Defence Union as they provide viable tools for European defence planning as well as joint research and development. However, besides this material level of European defence cooperation, two major immaterial shortcomings remain.

A continued lack of political will
Firstly, we can observe a continued lack of strong political will and financial commitment to European defence by Member States. The Council proposal for defence funding in the next Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU in July 2020 illustrates this quite well: the Commission’s initial proposal of €11.45 billion for the EDF has been reduced to €7.01 billion, and the budget for Military Mobility as a key enabling capability for deployment has shrunk from €5.75 to €1.5 billion. Additionally, European defence lacks another capability that is essential for achieving the goal of strategic autonomy. While in 2017 the European Military Staff was complemented by the so-called Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) for EU training missions, the EU still lacks a fully-fledged military headquarters to conduct robust military operations. Accordingly, European military operations remain dependent on NATO command structures that significantly weaken the EU’s capability to act autonomously. Especially in light of the current relations with Turkey that seem to be developing towards a strategic rivalry, access to NATO command structures due to a potential Turkish veto cannot be considered a guarantee anymore. Another example of insufficient political will and financial commitment are the EU Battle Groups (EUBG). These quickly deployable intervention forces of 1,500 men have not yet been deployed despite various potential opportunities. Therefore, the concept requires a review during which there should be a thorough analysis of whether or not it still meets the operational requirements of today’s possible scenarios. This review should also strongly consider changing the EUBG from a rotating provision by Member States to a permanent structure within PESCO.

A missing common perspective
Secondly, Europe’s strategic autonomy is additionally weakened by a lack of shared understanding and agreement on the threats and challenges we are facing together as the European Union. Such a common perspective is crucial to define a concrete military level of ambition with a scenario-based definition of capability needs. The first headline goal in 2003, from which the EUBG concept was derived, made a first step in that regard. We need to take that up and move beyond it by clearly defining our strategic interests, prioritising shared threats, developing concrete operational scenarios that reflect Europe’s current security environment and deriving our needs of operational assets from that. The so-called strategic compass that was launched this year marks an important step in that direction. During a two-year process, the strategic compass aims at providing a shared threat assessment from which a concrete level of ambition should be derived. As the concept builds on a repetitive process that is supposed to restart every institutional cycle, the strategic compass possesses the long-term potential to facilitate a European security and defence culture as long as we manage to move beyond the lowest common denominator. With the recent finalisation of the threat analysis in early November, the German Council presidency achieved a solid and promising foundation for the next steps in the process.

Keeping momentum
In the last four years, the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy has made more progress than in its almost 20 previous years of existence. The EU now possesses the structures and instruments to achieve a fully-fledged European Defence Union and become a credible security actor. We have to keep that momentum by maintaining the necessary political and financial commitment as well as by reaching a common understanding of our strategic challenges. Without a clear idea of what we want to achieve in concrete terms, any structures, capabilities and funds become a mere end in themselves.
The idea of a European army remains... an idea

European defence forces versus European army

by Frédéric Mauro, Associate Research Fellow at IRIS, Lawyer at the bar of Brussels

The need for a common defence of the European Union has been acknowledged since the early 1990s, when European leaders realised that they were unable to stop a genocide “two hours by plane from Paris”. Since the Treaty of Nice in 2001, the “progressive framing” of this common defence became so necessary that it was introduced under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the Union’s positive law. The necessity for such a defence became so obvious in the mid-2010s, with the increase of threats and the questioning of the solidity of the transatlantic alliance, that the concept of a European strategic autonomy was pushed into the spotlight. Can the Union – as a commercial superpower – survive without being able to defend itself in the face of great powers playing Member States against each other, as Julius Caesar did with the Celtic tribes?

The EU is unable to defend itself

So, Member States agree on the principle of a common defence, whether they like it or not, but until now they have all decided that it could only be an aggregation of the European (national) defence forces. That is why the Treaty of Lisbon mentions an intriguing “operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets” (article 42.1 TEU), being made clear that those assets “shall be made available to the Union by the Member States” (article 42.3). It is worth noting that the words “operational capacity” echo the “capacity for autonomous action” of the Franco-British declaration of Saint-Malo (1999) and have been carefully chosen to avoid mentioning a European army, explicitly stated in Nice in December 2000: “developing this autonomous capacity (...) does not involve the establishment of a European army”.

22 years after Saint-Malo, the fact is that the EU, as such, does not have any military capacity for autonomous action in the field of crisis management, not to speak of collective defence. In 2016, in the wake of the Global Strategy, European leaders agreed on a common “military level of ambition asserting that the Union must be able to protect itself and its citizens”. Today, we know unequivocally that the EU is unable to defend itself. The headline goals agreed at the Helsinki summit in 1999 for the EU to be able to assemble and project a military force of 60,000 troops (an army corps) is still unachieved. The Member States enrol 1,5 million men and women in national uniforms and thus it would be reasonable to increase the ambition from battle groups to brigades. Nowadays, the EU would be unable to launch successful crisis management operations such as Concordia and Artemis as it did in 2003.

European army – words in the wind

This blatant failure led Juncker and others (Merkel and Macron in 2018) to call for a “European army” in 2015, finding some resonance with public opinion if we give credit to the polls that suggest, one after the other, massive support of European citizens in favour of the idea. The problem is that this idea remains... an idea; nothing more than words in the wind. National establishments, intermediary bodies and all individuals with a vested interest – military, diplomats, industrials, politicians – are in their vast majority against this idea for all sorts of reasons including sheer nationalism, unmanly conformism
and blunt pecuniary benefit under the dogma of inter-governmentalism. The differences between the chiefs and the intermediary bodies is particularly patent in France. The only piece of European legislation that could have led to some sort of convergence, through a capability process modelled on the eurozone concept is the "permanent structured cooperation" better known as PESCO – three words to hide the unutterable one: integration ending up in a "framework" for defence cooperation, "modular" and "inclusive", strictly redundant with the European Defence Agency. The real problem is that the debate on European defence forces versus European army should not be addressed at this stage. A common defence – or call it collective "strategic autonomy" – will only emerge if two elements are coalesced in the right sequence: the "ability to decide" and the "capacity to act". The question of the forces – be they national or integrated – belongs to the second component. Yet, the "ability to decide" comes first: how do we bring Member States in capacity to decide to wage war (or not) without switching to federalism?

Equation with five unknowns
This is an equation with five unknowns. The first is a legitimate and enduring arbitration body where decisions shall be made. The idea of an EU security council proposed at the Franco-German summit of Meseberg in June 2018 is the most promising. Yet, the form remains unclear. Would it be some sort of a select committee of the European Council with only participating Members in this common defence taking part in the votes? That is the solution encompassed by the treaty for PESCO. It does not require treaty change and needs nothing else than political will to be triggered. However, another possibility seems to be supported by the French government: an ad hoc council based on a multilateral agreement. That is to allow bringing the British in again, who have always been the fiercest opponents of a common European defence, remaining highly dependent on the US for all their strategic decisions!

The second unknown is a common strategic culture, which is the goal pursued through the European Intervention Initiative (E21) launched by Emmanuel Macron in 2017. It is important not only to agree on the range of threats that the Union is facing, but also to understand why it might be necessary to send forces on a battlefield. Sharing a common culture is about having the same picture and implementing a decision. It could lead to the loss of lives, although one could disagree with this decision. If Member States are not convinced of being a part of it, they will inevitably be tempted to foil decisions with which they disagree and in doing so, ruin the entire strategy. This leads us to the third unknown: the majority rule. This idea, also floated at the Meseberg summit, is slowly but surely making its way up to the top of the Union’s agenda and delineates the last frontier of European defence. For the time being, very few Member States, if any, accept to surrender their veto. But veto is a power to block, not a power to build. And it is the very reason why the CSDP is inefficient. Nevertheless, as 90% of the decisions having defence implications do not relate to sending troops on mission, one solution might be to restrict the use of the veto to these very few decisions.

The fourth unknown is a common budget. As always money is the sinew of war. The haunting debate within NATO around the 2% metrics, however biased it might be, clearly shows that each Member State is expected to pay its fair share to the common pot. Obviously, this share cannot depend solely on goodwill and astral conjunctions. It must be provided by the European budget itself or, failing that, by an ad hoc budgetary instrument like the European Peace Facility.

Finally, a common defence would need a genuine military chain of command under the EU security council. In this regard the present organisation with the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff must be completely overhauled in order to provide the Union with a military operational headquarters and an efficient defence planning organisation. But this is a well-known unknown that might find a solution with the departure of the British. Solving this equation is a tremendous challenge. It is nonetheless a prerequisite for the question to be worth asking: European defence forces or European army?

2 Frédéric Mauro and Pablo Fernandez-Cras (2020): Is Europe really unable to defend itself? IRIS
4 Marc Endeweld – “Qui pilote vraiment le Quai d’Orsay ? Emmanuel Macron et l’Etat profond” – Le Monde diplomatique September 2020 pages 1, 20 and 21
The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)

New opportunities to overcome the fragmented European defence landscape

by Hartmut Bühl, Publisher, Paris

CARD was initiated by the Council through the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence (IPSD) in November 2016. Four years later, on 20th November 2020, the European Defence Agency (EDA) presented EDA defence ministers the first CARD report developed in close cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS).

A report full of innovations and actionable recommendations. The High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, chairing the EDA meeting, concluded: “For the first time, we have a unique overview of all 26 EDA Member States’ national defence planning and capability development efforts. This is the result of in-depth dialogue with national defence planners at EU level”.

Let’s take stock!
My following analysis of CARD is based on the transparency provided by the EDA during intense discussions in the last weeks with the agency’s CAP Director, Brigadier General Martin Konertz, who is doing a great job with his team: innovative, open for compromise, pragmatic, building confidence and always with the objective in mind!

I also had a discussion at the beginning of November 2020 with the CEO of the EDA, Jiří Šedivý who showed a certain optimism that defence ministers will follow the proposals, notably in the three fields of defence spending, defence planning and defence cooperation, the very auspicious pillar. At the end of our discussion Šedivý said: “It is important that the Union shows its profile, ambitious and solid in defence and open to cooperate with NATO. It is up to us to show the US that Europe is cooperative”.

The 6 CARD Focus Areas

Main Battle Tank (MBT)
CARD recommends the joint development and acquisition of a next generation MBT in the long term (entry into service mid-2030s), and joint modernisation and upgrades of existing capabilities in the short-term. If Member States cooperate in upgrading or collaborate when introducing new ones, a reduction of types and variants by 30% by the mid-2030s can be obtained. 11 countries expressed an interest in cooperation going forward.

European Patrol Class Surface Ship
CARD recommends replacing coastal and offshore patrol vessels within the next decade and develop an EU-wide approach for modular naval platforms. Opportunities for cooperation in joint off-the-shelf procurement, common logistics for similar vessels, common future functional requirements were found with 7 countries expressing an interest in cooperation.

Soldier Systems
CARD recommends modernising soldier systems through joint procurement of existing systems in the short term, including harmonising requirements, developing a user group for Joint Virtual Training & Exercises utilising common IT tools. In the long-term develop commonly shared architecture by mid-2020s for all subsystems using cutting edge technology. 10 countries expressed an interest in cooperation going forward.
And indeed, the Union showed this profile. Let’s have a look at the process which led to the CARD report.

**What is the innovative character of CARD?**

CARD’s innovative character can be described in three fields:
1. A structured in-depth dialogue with national defence planners at the EU level. It has been conducted in bilateral dialogues, identifying common planning objectives and focus areas for collaborative opportunities for future action and investment in capability development, Research and Technology (R&T) and the operational dimension.
2. A comprehensive review and analysis of the European defence landscape across 26 participating Member States (pMS). This represents a 360-degree analysis of Member States’ efforts in defence spending, defence planning and defence cooperation trends across all planning horizons, from short to long term.
3. A comprehensive set of recommendations on how to move from loose ad-hoc cooperation to truly enable permanent and structured cooperation and provide Member States with a systematic, transparent and pragmatic approach for Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) but also the European Defence Fund (EDF).

**What are CARD’s results and recommendations?**

CARD analyses showed that
- the national defence interest remains the prime reference for participating Member States’ (pMS) future defence plans and determines national defence spending, the size and shape of national capability profiles and defence related activities, including the approach towards defence cooperation and the openness to European defence initiatives.

“It is important that the Union shows its profile, ambitious and solid in defence and open to cooperate with NATO. It is up to us to show to the US that Europe is co-operable.”

Jiří Šedivý, EDA Chief Executive

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**Counter UAS/ A2AD**
CARD recommends developing a European capability to counter unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to improve force protection as well as contributing to establish a European standard for Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2AD). CARD concludes that European capability approaches towards A2/AD are clearly at a crossroads, whereby the capability is either developed in a collaborative manner or the capability will not be developed for European forces.

**Defence in Space**
CARD recommends developing a European approach to defence in space to improve access to space services and protection of space-based assets. As an emerging operational domain, more collaboration would contribute to a greater involvement of Ministries of Defence and recognition of military requirements in wider space programmes conducted at EU level.

**Enhanced Military Mobility**
CARD recommends more active participation of all Member States in military mobility programmes, notably air and sea lift transportation, logistic facilities and increased resilience of related IT systems and processed under hybrid warfare conditions by the mid-2020s.
• the European defence landscape consequently continues to be fragmented and lacks coherence in several aspects. The existing capabilities are characterised by a high diversity of types in major equipment and different levels of modernisation and of interoperability, including logistic systems and supply chains.

CARD recommends that the de-fragmentation of the European defence landscape requires coordinated and continuous efforts among pMS over a long period of time in three major areas which are interlinked to the agreed EU Capability Development Priorities:

• Defence spending, for which the positive trend of increasing budgets is recommended.

• Defence planning, for which it is essential that pMS acknowledge the coherence of the European capability landscape as the overarching EU principle to guide defence capability development in terms of commonality and compatible levels of modernisation and innovation.

• Defence cooperation within the European defence initiatives, including PESCO and EDF to lead to more substantial interaction among participating pMS, including dedicated projects in the PESCO framework.

CARD urges that pMS continue to consolidate their national capability profiles until the mid-2020s. The use of identified collaborative opportunities should be increased step by step in this period.

CARD identified the most promising, needed or pressing projects, also in terms of operational value. It recommends:

• 55 concrete collaborative opportunities in capability development to be considered by Member States,

• 56 identified options to cooperate in R&T, notably in the PESCO context. CARD recommends that Member States concentrate capability development efforts on next generation capabilities, including at system and subsystem level, and jointly prepare the future investments within

• 6 focus areas, as part of the EU Capability Development Priorities (ECDP) agreed in 2018: main battle tanks, soldier systems, patrol class surface ships, counter unmanned aerial systems in space, and enhanced military mobility. The nations’ new will for progress

My conclusion is that in this vein, it should be possible to achieve a joint preparation of the next planning horizon for post-2025, to adapt nations’ defence planning in realistic steps over time, and to improve the overall coherence of the European capability landscape. To me, the magic word seems to be ‘realistic’.

I detect that Member States are looking for progress, but that can only be achieved if the EU defence initiatives are systematically considered, related to prioritisation and implementation tools in the national defence planning processes. I am convinced that it is also valuable for the operational dimension to facilitate the closure of gaps in all domains of forces, to increase the joint development of capabilities and to strengthen the availability of deployable and interoperable forces for the Union.

Questions to Brigadier General Martin Konertz, Director CAP (Capabilities, Armament and Planning) at the European Defence Agency (EDA) in the days before the defence ministers’ meeting

The European: Bilateral dialogues with Member States (MS) are a key element of CARD. Do you still see reservations to the CARD process of participating MS which are called to be more NATO minded than others?

Martin Konertz: The bilateral dialogues were an outstanding experience. Of course, MS have their preferences and orientations. But they are all members of the EU and its defence dimension. And this entails the recent EU defence initiatives. My take-away is that all MS appreciate to receive an unfettered overview on the European defence landscape through CARD, including also unfettered advice on options of how to proceed for further improvements.

The European: Defence initiatives are too recent to already deliver a significant and positive effect. Which field will show progress first?

Martin Konertz: De-fragmentation is a task which will accompany us for a long period of time in all areas: defence spending, planning and cooperation. Keeping the political momentum behind the EU defence initiatives is key to success. This would encourage national defence planners to make the best use of these initiatives and apply the related prioritisation and implementation tools in their national defence planning processes more systematically. Operational commitments could largely benefit, if MS could decide to make their already existing forces available to operational engagement.

video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mb9Y2XVs_l4
Nowadays, the new global strategic environment is complex, fast-evolving and unpredictable. In addition to the hybrid security challenges, which blur the lines between war and peace and involve both state and non-state actors, there is now the clear return of power competition in international relations, at the very periphery of the European space. In this framework the European Union will have to develop its strategic autonomy, as recently underlined by the President of the Council of the European Union, Charles Michel, it must also strengthen its defence and security dimension. Even if NATO remains the cornerstone of the collective defence of the Euro-Atlantic area and the crucible of interoperability between allies and partners of the alliance, the EU Member States must continue their efforts to develop their military capabilities. This will contribute both to better burden-sharing within the alliance and to the credibility of European defence.

The development of military capabilities does not rely solely on the procurement of equipment. It also requires the training of personnel, and in particular the training of the senior military leadership who will develop new strategies, imagine new organisations, design new weapons and command systems, and plan and conduct the EU’s military operations. Each Member State is responsible for the training of its officers, who may be called upon to serve in any international organisation.

The development of a European strategic culture is an essential prerequisite for the advent of European strategic autonomy. Initiatives like the European Security and Defence College are already contributing to this by offering an annual high-level course and further training for colonels and senior civil servants to promote the understanding of the Common Security and Defence Policy. Nevertheless, in order to advance the construction of European defence and be more effective in the training of future European military leaders, it would probably be necessary to go further and consider founding an actual European war college. As a complement to national staff and war colleges, such an institution would be a major instrument of human and cultural interoperability between officers from the different Member States. These officers would learn to work together in a European framework and acquire the necessary skills to serve as staff officers in bodies such as the European External Action Service, as well as in NATO and their national headquarters. In addition to planning joint operations in the three traditional physical domains (land, sea, air), these officers would also be trained to develop appropriate responses to threats in the new domains of warfare such as space, cyberspace and information. By learning to integrate and synchronise all military effects in future multi-domain operations, the officers would contribute to the concerted implementation of all EU instruments of power, as part of a truly global approach to crises.

Furthermore, the officers trained in this war college would build a shared awareness of the common and collective interests of the EU. Strengthening mutual knowledge of each other’s historical, geographical and cultural realities would promote understanding of the various approaches and strategic worldviews within the EU. Such a combination of knowledge would be the foundational layer for building a common European strategic culture. By preparing future European military leaders to face tomorrow’s strategic challenges, the creation of a European war college would give additional impetus to the construction of European defence, as well as better visibility and increased legitimacy for officers from Member States within the European institutions. It is also on this condition that European strategic autonomy will really thrive.

Brigadier General Jean-Marc Vigilant

is the Director of War College in Paris. He is a graduate of French Air Force Academy and holds a MA in Aeronautical Science. He attended Spanish Staff College, Madrid and NATO Defence College, Rome. He held several joint positions in France and also abroad, both as exchange officer to the Spanish General Directorate for Defence Policy, and as Executive Assistant to the NATO Strategic Commander SACT, Norfolk, USA. General Vigilant is a fighter pilot and commanded at all levels in the French Air Force until air base commander. He gained operational experience in Africa, Former Yugoslavia and recently in the Middle East as the French Senior National Representative and Director of Civil Military Operations with Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (CJTF OIR) in Iraq and Syria.
Interview with François Bausch, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Luxembourg

The European: Minister, Luxembourg is rightly recognised for the role it plays in the international community and its contribution to European security by its strong commitment to the EU and NATO. Defence is at a turning point in every country in Europe. Behind the veil of the pandemic, the world is changing and there is much evidence to indicate an acceleration of geopolitical transformation. What is Luxembourg’s reaction to these developments?

François Bausch: Geopolitically, we have witnessed over the past years several phenomena: the continuing rise of China, an aggressive Russia seeking to play a stronger role in the world, an unprecedented rise, since the 1930s, in mostly right wing populist movements, and the continuing, ever stronger impact of global environmental and demographic changes, increasing instability in Europe and its neighbourhood. Luxembourg is affected by this transformation both directly as a country – for example through an increased occurrence of local natural disasters – and as a member of the EU and NATO. The Luxembourg government considers that more international cooperation is needed in this situation and that we need to better combine military and non-military means through an enlarged security concept putting more emphasis on non-military means and green defence.

The European: This is an essential part of your “3D Foreign Policy”, isn’t it?

François Bausch: Luxembourg indeed follows a so-called “3D Foreign Policy”, a common and comprehensive approach, integrating diplomacy, development cooperation and defence policy. Luxembourg pursues in this context a very ambitious aid policy, spending 1 % of its GDP on development and humanitarian aid. Women, peace and security are important topics given our commitment to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

The European: What were the highlights of this policy in past years?

François Bausch: Regarding sustainable development, Luxembourg played a key role as EU Council Presidency in the negotiations leading up to the Paris Agreement. On the defence side, I have triggered a debate among EU defence ministers on climate security. Efforts have been undertaken to start reducing the ecological footprint of Luxembourg’s armed forces, and Luxembourg has been instrumental in setting up a circular economy working group at the European Defence Agency. I am sure that ethical considerations are of key importance, in particular if we want to remain credible in the promotion of our fundamental values worldwide. In this context, I am convinced that the next US administration will take a leadership position, as did the US in past times. For Luxembourg, it is of utmost importance that all our endeavours serve to keep our world, but also space, a peaceful domain.

“For Luxembourg, it is of utmost importance that all our endeavours serve to keep our world, but also space, a peaceful domain.”
meaningful capacities for our common defence as well as for society in general.

**The European:** You mentioned some key factors of Luxembourg’s defence policy. Could you evaluate the importance of satellite communication?

**François Bausch:** Satellite communication and air mobility remain areas of major focus for Luxembourg Defence. In addition to this, we are currently working on a national space-based earth observation program, called LUXEOSys (Luxembourg Earth Observation System). This national earth observation satellite, to be launched in 2023, would allow Luxembourg to have access to high-resolution imagery and create additional cooperation and partnerships with allies and institutional partners.

Satellite communication systems is a field where the Luxembourg army has been developing its skills and expertise for over 10 years. Furthermore, Luxembourg launched together with Luxembourg’s SES company a joint venture called LuxGovSat, providing secured satellite capacities to governments and institutional partners using our national satellite, the GOVSAT-1. Besides the commercial aspect, Luxembourg Defence owns a certain percentage of satellite capacities, which are used in partnership with allies or as a support to the operations of international organisations.

**The European:** What are the concrete illustrations for this kind of support?

**François Bausch:** Let me start with the provision of these secured satellite capacities and services by Luxembourg to the “UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali” (UN MINUSMA) since March 2020, aiming to strengthen in-theatre connectivity between the MINUSMA HQ in Bamako and various remote locations. It includes the deployment of a mobile military team integrated in a multinational contingent. This contribution falls within the above mentioned “3D Foreign Policy” approach. I am confident that our contribution is adequately supporting MINUSMA but will also bring significant improvement to the reliability and security of the network using our national government communication satellite, GovSat-1. Furthermore, in the space domain, we are analysing future opportunities together with our allies. One of the ideas we are exploring is the potential development of capabilities for space situation awareness capability, which could be linked with a weather payload to cover crucial shortfalls from a defence point of view. Here, space situation awareness is, from my point of view, one of the crucial capabilities to keep space peaceful. It will definitively be a focus of the space-defence community in coming years and could be an additional area of focus for Luxembourg Defence.

**The European:** Air mobility is key for any military force ....

**François Bausch:** ... yes, I mentioned it already as a focus. Luxembourg has invested in high-value transport airplanes for its own use and in support of our partners. By being a member of the European Air Transport Command (EATC) and by participating substantially in the Multi-national A330 Multi Role Tanker Transporter (MRTT) fleet. This is our commitment to pooling and sharing these scarce enabling capabilities in Europe. We have recently welcomed our Airbus A400M, which will be operated within the common Belgian-Luxembourgish fleet. This asset is a key contribution to European air mobility, as this state-of-the-art military transport aircraft can be used for both strategic and tactical airlift. Furthermore, Luxembourg, through a mechanism allowing an exchange of flying hours among the members of the EATC and the MCCE, gets access to a multitude of different air transport capacities from those partner nations.

**The European:** Are there any partnerships with civil aviation?

**François Bausch:** In addition to these pure military capabilities, our partnership with the Luxembourg air transport company, CARGOLUX, provides easy access for our partners through the EATC and the Movement Coordination Centre Europe (MCCE) to large commercial strategic air transport capacities.

**The European:** Allow me, Minister, a question regarding NATO. What is the specific nature of your government’s cooperation with the alliance?

**François Bausch:** The main driver for the development of new activities is Luxembourg’s willingness to contribute to capability development enabling our defence to do more for its own security, within the European Security and Defense policy (CSDP) in a way that also benefits NATO and our allies. These new capabilities are built around different lines among which the improvement of our space capabilities, in light of European and allied shortfalls.

--- Continued on page 36
The European: Could you give a concrete example?
François Bausch: Let me start with NATO. We deliver the sustaining of mission connectivity for NATO-HQ and several of its agencies. The locally based offices of the NATO Support and procurement Agency (NSPA) are connected thanks to the SATCOM services delivered by Luxembourg Defence and we are also providing secure satellite connectivity to other NATO actors through the NATO Communication and Information Agency (NCIA).

We largely support NATO’s surveillance reach and capability framework. NATO’s Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) capability consists of air segments, ground segments and support segments. To support its missions, AGS needs satellite capacities. Therefore, Luxembourg responded to essential NATO needs in the area of joint communication with a full end-to-end service, thus enabling the alliance to respond to current and future security challenges.

The European: An indeed enormous contribution to NATO’s operational capacities. Do you have similar arrangements with the EU?
François Bausch: We have to find innovative ways to fulfill our defence commitments and to remain a trusted and useful partner for NATO and the EU.

The EU’s Capability Development Plan (CDP) provides a full capability picture that supports decision-making processes at EU and national levels regarding military capability development. Space-based information and communication services are clearly identified as a priority together with earth observation and satellite communication for space situational awareness and Positioning, Navigation, Timing (PNT).

The European: Luxembourg also provided Covid-19 assistance to the European Space Agency in Piedmont with a mobile lab (B-LIFE) and real-time transmission.
François Bausch: B-Life was again a creative opportunity to support partners with a real added value asset. Healthcare professionals and the Piedmont regional government in Italy were using the satellite enabled mobile Biological Light Fieldable Laboratory for Emergencies, known as B-LiFE, to scale Covid-19 screening operations. It was deployed to one of the worst-hit regions in Italy in order to support large-scale testing. B-LIFE deployment was cofounded by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Luxembourg Directorate of Defence and led by the Université Catholique de Louvain with the support of the Belgian Civil Protection.

The European: This is most interesting. What was the role of SES and LuxGovSat?
François Bausch: Indeed, we were very operational. The mobile laboratory relied on an end-to-end satellite-enabled connectivity solution put in place by SES.

The role of Luxembourg Defence was to support the efforts engaged by the ESA, SES and LuxGovSat, and to provide the B-LiFE mission with the necessary equipment and secure satellite connectivity on our national GOVSAT-1 system to ensure safe processing and transmission of data.

The European: Minister, I would like to conclude our conversation with a view to your troops. The regular participation in international engagements is highly respected. How are you reforming them?
François Bausch: Luxembourg’s armed forces face, like many European forces, increased challenges which result in a multiplication of roles as we discussed earlier. That means that we need more, better equipped, better trained and more flexible troops.

The government has adopted an ambitious recruitment plan for the armed forces. We have set up an air component, we have invested in satellite communication and trained our armed forces therein and we have equipped our forces with observation drones. Last but not least, we just finalised a cyber defence strategy.

The European: Minister, I am most grateful for this conversation.

The Interview was led by Hartmut Bühl.
European capabilities and cooperation

The armed forces of all EU Member States are about to renew their structures and equipment. After a period of staff reductions and savings, nations face new political and military challenges. The conviction that these can only be addressed together in the Union is largely gaining ground, and common projects are showing initial success. Research & Development are a prerequisite for all future equipment, and without modern satellites there will be no operational progress.
As Europeans, we have demonstrated solidarity with our partners and allies in the past months and supported each other in the fight against the coronavirus, including with capabilities of our armed forces. However, we must not allow these circumstances to draw attention away from the fact that our security is shaped by complex external threats beyond that. The pandemic has taught us that we must become more resilient at the European level, in the face of unexpected events. It has also taught us that we must improve the European Union’s military operational output.

A compass for the EU Global Strategy
In past years, our focus has been the development of common capabilities. This is, undoubtedly, an important area, albeit one where it can often take years before operational output becomes tangible. Regardless of this, we must continue to strengthen our ability to act in the short term wherever possible. To achieve this, we must be able to employ our existing forces more coordinately, more rapidly and thereby more effectively.

Quick action is possible where there is a common will to act that is supported by functional structures and existing capabilities at the same time. We must identify and address the areas that we can and need to work on today in order to be able to successfully meet future challenges together. The world will not wait for us to feel ready to face its surprises.

In light of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2020, we have contributed ideas and initiated discussion regarding both areas. A project that will provide the European Union with a more common course of action within the CSDP is the Strategic Compass. It will operationalise the strategic priorities of the EU Global Strategy and thereby help the Union determine which threat it wants to and is able to meet and which means to use.

All EU Member States are aware that this will require intensive dialogue. Naturally, each state assesses challenges based not only on its unique geographic location, but also on historic and political experience as well as its security culture. Within the scope of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Germany has therefore initiated a common 360-degree threat analysis that establishes the starting point for further dialogue and the basis for the development of the Strategic Compass. A greater understanding of what the European Union is able and willing to achieve within the framework of the CSDP contributes to an improvement of operational output. So do functional and reliable command and control structures.

Improving command and control structures
The EU has recently significantly strengthened its command, control and planning capabilities by establishing the Military Planning and Conduct Capability. But we must think ahead. This is why, within the scope of the German Council Presidency, we have worked to ensure the continuous improvement of the overall command and control structures of the European Union.

From a German perspective, it is important to separate the existing levels of warfare into a strategic level which could develop based on the civilian and military structures in Brussels.
on the one hand, and a clearly defined operational level with a number of headquarters on the other. This would increase the EU’s response capability from Brussels and conserve valuable resources in the Member States because some tasks would be performed centrally while the number of headquarters that require repeated certification for EU missions and operations would simultaneously be adjusted to correspond with the future level of ambition. This is an aspect we should keep in mind, not only in the EU, but in general.

Enhancing interoperability and cooperation
In many areas, tasks change hands, and the focus shifts too frequently. We create processes only to hand over the task to another headquarters once we have finally mastered it. In the EU Battle Group, the only unit exclusively earmarked and held ready for the CSDP, the path from training to certification is currently almost as long as the readiness phase. It must be ready to deploy at all times. For this reason, Germany has offered to extend the readiness phase from six months to one year when it assumes responsibility for the EU Battle Group again in 2025 in order to achieve greater balance between cost and benefit and to further enhance interoperability among forces.

Likewise, improved coordination in international crisis management can bring us a little closer to reaching our goals. The Sahel is one example. Various organisations and nations conduct more than a handful of operations in the region. As opposed to cross-border terrorism, the mandated missions and operations often end at the relevant country’s border, which is why we must significantly improve the networking aspect of our actions. To this end, Germany will integrate the training operation Gazelle – the Bundeswehr training special operation forces in Niger – into the EU training mission in Mali as a first contribution to improved networking.

A more common course of action based on the Strategic Compass could not only positively affect action in CSDP operations, but also contribute to improved cooperation between the EU and NATO.

Credible deterrence, which has once more been a priority for NATO since 2014, does not only require well equipped and interoperable armed forces that are actually capable of defending the Alliance territory against potential aggressors. It also requires a wider range of instruments, many of which can be found in the security toolbox of a European Union that focuses on integrated action.

NATO and EU complement each other
It is in our shared interest to expand cooperation in those fields that will support the realisation of objectives that the two organisations share. The EU and NATO are capable of complementing each other well. Examples include the “Military Mobility” PESCO project as well as the Multinational Medical Coordination Centre/European Medical Command in Koblenz, Germany. A concept for the storage of medical supplies was developed under the responsibility of the European Medical Command and the related tool is already in use.

These latter examples, in particular, highlight that enhanced cooperation between NATO and the EU is important for those nations that are not part of both organisations at the same time. The breakthrough regarding the participation of non-EU nations in PESCO that was negotiated under the German Council Presidency only days ago will help further expand cooperation and thereby further improve the existing operational output.

Strengthening Europe’s ability to act, in this case, does not constitute a weakening of NATO nor does it question NATO, which is works well and serves its purpose. Indeed, enhanced cooperation serves to improve both organisations’ ability to act. After all, this is our shared goal: to improve our ability to act to ensure future security for and in Europe.
Since the beginning of 2020, Covid-19 and its economic and social impacts have revealed the vulnerability and dependencies of Europe in the health sector and more globally in the economic domain and value chains. There is a feeling of global uncertainty.

The battle to halt the pandemic is a reminder of the importance of European strategic autonomy, one of the features of the EU’s June 2016 Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy. It has highlighted the need to extend this autonomy to areas such as health and the numerous economic sectors where globalisation and unbridled competition have exposed the EU and its Member States to a degree of dependency not only unacceptable but fraught with long-term risk.

A wake-up call to pull together

At the start of the pandemic, Member States reacted in isolation, giving the impression that it was every man for himself. The European Commission, while it may have no specific responsibilities for health issues, was slow to play its coordinating role and propose consistent action. But with the Commission’s support, Member States finally began to pull together, although the road towards solidarity and cohesion was bumpy, to say the least. However, to emerge from the crisis created by the pandemic, Member States now need to take matters further and demonstrate solidarity on all fronts.

The Franco-German European recovery initiative of 18th May set the scene for further developments and the Commission reacted swiftly by unveiling plans on 27th May for a massive reboost of Europe’s economies. In July, the European Council agreed on a plan based on these proposals in addition to the draft 2021-2027 budget under discussion with the EU Parliament. This plan will represent major progress: for the first time, it will allow the Commission to borrow funds to inject into the European budget to top up contributions from Member States and its own funds and pave the way for EU-specific public borrowing.

Although Hungary and Poland, who do not fully agree with the funds allocation conditions, have delayed the budget approval process, the European Council has reached a consensus on 10th December. Then the 2021-2027 budget package should be approved on time by the Council and the Parliament. One thing is certain: the EU cannot afford to fail in this venture, since a failure would threaten its future and that of the Member States.

In her speech on the state of the Union early this year, the President of the Commission invited the Member States to shape the changes to protect European citizens. But she never mentioned the field of defence. It is obvious that it was not prioritised in the compromise approved by the European Council for the 2021-2027 budget. The European Defence Fund (EDF)
The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), launched in 2017, has been also significantly reduced, to a level which will not incentivise Member States to improve their participation in EU military operations. The European space budget (with civilian and military applications) has also been reduced.

**Defence is no longer taboo**

However, the word “defence” is no longer taboo in Brussels. Before 2016, the simple idea of a defence line in the EU budget was unthinkable. Since 2016, with the Global Strategy putting forward the new objective of EU strategic autonomy, Member States are ready to accept or take new initiatives to improve their defence cooperation.

The EDF demonstrates the progress of EU defence, with its preliminary experimental programme, EDIDP, already implemented in 2019-2020 with funds provided by the EU budget. Although the EDF budget for 2021-2027 is lower than expected, the annual amount is four times higher than before: it will be a huge incentive for the increase of cooperation between Member States in the armament domain and will have a positive impact on the efficiency of the European industry. But this is still a fragile dynamic:

- The level of cooperation between Member States in the defence domain remains too low, in armament programmes as well as in operations.
- The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), launched in 2017, has not yet produced concrete results.
- The EDA budget remains limited, which reduces its efficiency.\(^3\)
- The decision making process, based on consensus for all intergovernmental issues (foreign affairs and defence), is strong but it takes too much time, and there is no real solidarity for the funding of operations (the ATHENA system has not been improved).
- The European Defence Fund will finally be approved, but there is no guarantee that the funds will be rightly used to cater to priority capacity requirements, as there is no common agreement between states on priority investments.\(^4\)

The progress of EU defence requires the full commitment of Member States and the full cooperation of all stakeholders, mostly the European Defence Agency (EDA) - which was created in 2004 - precisely for that purpose, the Military Staff of the European Union (EUMS); the EU Military Committee (EUMC), and the European Commission, in particular its general directorate in charge of defence and space.

**EDA - a major instrument at EU level**

The EDA carried out a long-term review in 2016-2017, following which ministers agreed to reinforce the agency’s mission by giving it several new roles. They qualified it as the major intergovernmental prioritisation instrument at EU level in support of capability development, as the preferred cooperation forum and management support structure at EU level for technology and capability development activities, and as the facilitator with the European Commission and other EU agencies with regard to EU funded defence-related activities.

This means that, with the support of Member States and the EUMS, the EDA has a major role to play before project funding decisions, by ensuring coherence among EU defence tools, mainly PESCO,\(^6\) the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD),\(^7\) the Capability Development Plan (CDP), for which periodic revisions are produced by the EDA in close cooperation with Member States, the EUMC and the EUMS, and the EDF managed by the European Commission. CARD and CDP must provide the Commission with the information and priorities it needs to make choices for the use of the EDF. Downstream, when a decision to launch and fund a project has been made, the Member States and the Commission can rely on OCCAR\(^8\) for the management of the project.

**European strategic autonomy**

In an uncertain world where the American military strategy has created doubts on the full support of Europe’s main ally which may not significantly change after the last US election, European nations will have to rely more and more on their own capacities, as Chancellor Merkel recently said. Behind the risks, it is indeed the question of European strategic autonomy which is at stake, and even the question of the sovereignty of the EU and its Member States in the future. In these difficult post-crisis times, in which the pandemic is still with us, conflicts are still at Europe’s doors, and post-Brexit negotiations with the United Kingdom continue to make a mark, it is only by driving the EU onwards and upwards that Member States will be able to shape their future.

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1. The operations will continue to be funded by the Athena system, which is insufficient.
2. European Defence Industrial Development Programme
3. This situation may change with the Brexit, as the UK was the main opponent to the EDA budget increase.
4. A European White Book on defence is critically needed, as required by the European Parliament in its last report.
5. The EUMS is the directorate-general of the EU External Action Service (EEAS) that contributes to the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) by providing strategic advice to the High Representative (HR/VP) and command- ing operations through its Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) operational headquarters.
6. Together with the EEAS (including EUMS), the EDA acts as the EUMS Secretariat.
7. Together with the EUMS, the EDA acts as the CARD Secretariat.
8. OCCAR (Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en matière d'Armement / Organisation for Joint Armament Co-operation) is an international organisation whose core business is the through life management of cooperative defence equipment programmes. OCCAR signed an agreement in 2012 with EDA and recently with the Commission for the implementation of EDIDP projects.
Today’s world is not a safe place. Towards the end of the 20th century, which was marked by armed conflicts, there was widespread hope for peaceful development. Conflicts, however, have not disappeared – they have become more complex. Nowadays, conflicts among ethnic and religious minorities, over self-determination and independence, sparked by underdevelopment, overpopulation and destruction of natural livelihoods by droughts and lack of water, are on the rise. They frequently provide a perfect breeding ground for terrorist groups and extremists to take up the fight for their goals, to overthrow states and societies. The difficulty to find peaceful solutions is often exacerbated by the involvement of regional or great powers striving for hegemonic influence. Europe cannot turn a blind eye: this situation also results in a continuous flow of refugees posing various challenges for its societies.

Protecting civilian peacekeepers
What is needed is the early involvement of governmental and civilian aid organisations. The deployment of military force to end such conflicts and stabilise regions can only establish basic conditions for long-term economic and public recovery. Therefore, international organisations such as the United Nations with its refugee and food relief branches, the European Union and the World Bank, international NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders, but also national aid organisations are active in crisis regions, usually from the very beginning. Being exposed to the same risks as military personnel in their operational areas, deployed civil organisations must provide their personnel with adequate protection. The armoured civilian off-road vehicles and special security vehicles made by Stoof International offer this protection. For decades, we have gathered experience from missions around the world in a wide range of threat scenarios and extreme terrains and climates and have translated this knowhow into a constantly evolving cutting-edge technologies for the security of armoured civil vehicles.

Cutting-edge technologies for the security of armoured civil vehicles

by Fred Stoof, Owner and Managing Director, Stoof International GmbH, Borkheide

Fred Stoof is the managing director and owner of Stoof International GmbH, a mid-sized family business founded in 1865. Fred Stoof led the company from its humble beginnings to the No. 1 position in Europe. His company supplies international governmental and civilian organisations with his special armoured vehicles, enabling them to carry out their important missions in regions of crisis and conflict with the highest possible degree of security for their personnel.

Providing civilian personnel with adequate protection
European capabilities and cooperation

protection concept that is highly reliable and extremely effective. The armour gives the vehicles a considerably greater overall weight. In order to maintain the good driving characteristics and safe handling of base vehicles both off-road and under the most difficult operating conditions, specially developed components such as shock absorbers and braking systems are used. The vehicles are also equipped with extra features and specialised, certified security systems.

High security standards
Realistic government testing procedures and certifications guarantee consistently high security standards. Under the stringent control of the German National Ballistic Testing Authority, Stoof International armoured vehicles are ballistically tested to comply with the protection levels defined by the European Committee for Standardisation: VR 7 and VR 9 according to VPAM BRV 2009, VPAM ERV 2010 and STANAG 4569 AEP-55.

Security, however, is more than engineering. Service and customer orientation are just as important as the engineering solutions. In this regard, Stoof International GmbH sets the standard for the industry. Our security solutions are sustainable and extensive. Customers receive sound advice from the very first contact, and support does not stop once the service order is placed. With service points in many crisis regions and a dedicated mobile service team, Stoof is prepared to provide comprehensive service at short notice.

A wide range of vehicles
In order to cover the wide spectrum of deployment options of different organisations, Stoof uses vehicles made by Toyota, Nissan, GMC and the Mercedes-Benz G model, to name a few, as base vehicles. Moreover, Stoof has developed an armoured Toyota Land Cruiser 200 Trojan, which is optimised for missions in particularly difficult security situations. The range of special security vehicles includes for example the BLACKWOLF, a tactical armoured personnel carrier that is already being used by various special police units. Stoof offers professional driver training for all vehicles.

Civilian armoured vehicles need to be inconspicuous, protected against weapons fire and explosives, and must absolutely remain mobile after an attack to guarantee that personnel can always safely leave the danger zone. Stoof vehicles have stood the test in even the toughest and most dangerous deployment conditions. They have earned the trust of countless members of governmental and civilian organisations. This trust, knowing that one can depend on the highest possible level of security, is the prerequisite for any successful mission.

Being exposed to the same risks as military personnel in their operational areas, deployed civil organisations must provide their personnel with adequate protection.

“Civilian armoured vehicles need to be inconspicuous, protected against weapons fire and explosives, and must absolutely remain mobile after an attack to guarantee that personnel can always safely leave the danger zone.”
Satellites have always been known for their superpower reach and their quick-to-market deployment capabilities, but as technology evolves, the world can expect optimised network performance and heightened flexibility. 2020 has been and continues to be a year of upheaval as large parts of the world battle with Covid-19, with governments having to reassess the health situations almost on a weekly basis.

Rapid connectivity and swift reaction
The increasing number of people working from home, attending school remotely, and simply being at home has put existing networks under pressure. Governments are also requesting extra capabilities to connect hospitals and medical professionals in remote locations.

It has been a privilege to be part of the satellite industry where we have been able to react swiftly to various requests for additional connectivity services over the last six months. The nature of satellites being in space means that we have the advantage of being able to deploy connectivity swiftly. Flexibility has always been one of the key tenets of our industry, as it allows us to respond quickly to rapidly changing needs. From restoring communications networks, rolling-out e-applications, broadcasting sports, news and education channels, satellites have always been able to connect and reach people in places where no other technology can.

One example is the Piedmont region in Italy, one of the worst Covid-19 hit areas in Europe, where the European Space Agency’s satellite-enabled mobile laboratory B-LiFE was rolled out for rapid Covid-19 testing of frontline workers. The workers who tested negative could continue with their duties, thanks to the end-to-end satellite network for real-time data transmission provided by SES, LuxGovSat and the Luxembourg Department of Defence. Another example was when SES enabled the Mexican government to deploy a telemedicine network to 35 public hospitals across the country in less than three weeks, providing vital support for the delivery of critical healthcare services. When the world was in full lockdown in the second quarter of 2020, we were relocating beams in a matter of hours as opposed to days in order to respond to spikes in data connectivity, whenever and wherever they occurred.

Thanks to our highly skilled operations team and our space technology, one of our customers in East Timor who had a short-term need for additional capacity was able to deploy additional connectivity services thanks to the reconfigured networks in less than 12 hours. Recently, we also steered an additional O3b Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) beam over the Gao region in Mali, to address an optical fibre shortage and support governments and institutions in their work when they need it most.

Making a difference with the MEO system
This flexibility and agility will be further amplified in our next generation MEO communications system, O3b mPOWER. The terabit-scale and future-proof constellation is built on the success of SES’s MEO system that is in space today. Its 11 satellites are currently under construction and on track to launch in 2021. These high-throughput and low-latency satellites are supported by automated, reconfigurable and predictive ground infrastructure that will deliver managed services to our customers ranging from hundreds of Mbps to multiple Gbps. The terabit-scale satellite communications system will deliver connectivity to any one location being reconfigurable in real time, either for defence applications, to bridge the digital divide, or for connectivity on the move, such as aero or maritime use.

Our MEO systems, along with our Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) satellites and our constant technology innovation, are crucial components for making a difference to entire geographies and populations. No other technology has that near-instant flexibility and efficient reach. This is also why it makes me proud to be part of the satellite industry and of SES where we believe in connectivity and the transformational value of it for people and communities.
The objective of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), founded on 14th December 2017, is to enable the European Union (EU) to implement armament projects. Vague at the beginning, PESCO has already created 47 multilateral cooperation projects to be launched within the EU. One of these projects is the free movement of the armed forces of Member States across the EU, often called the “military Schengen”. Military mobility is a subject of almost unanimous interest within the Union. 24 Member States have already subscribed to this very project.

European defence extends from Gibraltar to Hammerfest in Norway, from Limerick in Ireland to Poland’s eastern border and from Varna in Romania to Brest. It is due to the rise of the EU and of NATO’s forces in Europe that the mobility of military units throughout EU territory has become an operational imperative.

Difficulties of all kinds
In fact, this mobility is fraught with difficulties of all kinds, first of all, in terms of principles, because the 27 EU Member States are sovereign. Demanding respect for their sovereignty, they will only accept the passing of foreign military forces on their soil if their plans are compliant with local regulations. For example, a Portuguese unit needing to reach operational deployment in Lithuania would have to complete a whole series of administrative procedures and controls specific to each of the countries crossed, in this case, Spain, France, Germany and Poland. Secondly, the difficulties to be overcome concern both road and rail infrastructure. With regard to road networks, and especially motorways, a great deal of work needs to be done to define and upgrade the major roads likely to be used by military convoys.

Bridges: Particular attention will have to be paid to the type of bridges that will have to accommodate the heaviest vehicles. I know from my own experience as an officer with French forces in Germany that in western Germany, from the 1960s to the 1990s, every bridge had a yellow sign on which its category was written in black. These signs have now often disappeared from the German landscape. They will have to be reinstated and introduced across Europe.

Railways: In the railway sector, military mobility is linked to the standardisation of the European rail network. In some countries, notably the Baltic states, track gauge is not 1,435 mm as it is in most European countries except Spain and Portugal. Often tunnels are not wide enough for large armoured vehicles such as tanks. Renovating the Baltic rail network is of strategic importance, especially considering the re-emergence of the Russian threat, even if this is less worrisome but more skillful than during the Cold War.

Procedures: Finally, over and beyond the efforts to be made with regard to infrastructure to facilitate troop and equipment movements, it will be necessary to define the procedure to be followed for use the network. This brings us to the need for an EU operational military staff, to organise and plan the movement of units that are affected to the Union for any purpose. But the EU is not the only player. The fact is that NATO also has to organise the movement of units on European territory. This is why the Allied Command Europe (SHAPE) is also interested in this project which, launched by the European Union as part of PESCO, could well be the subject of a friendly takeover bid by NATO!

“Military mobility is a subject of almost unanimous interest within the Union.”

In conclusion
Military transport is a major logistics project, the completion of which will take us well into 2025, or even 2030. But it is not only a symbolic project as it is proof of tangible progress towards European defence and sovereignty. Many aspects of this “military Schengen” include the upgrading of European Union’s Member States’ infrastructure and will require the skills of military logisticians, particularly sappers. But beyond these technical aspects, it is the very sovereignty of each Member State which will be challenged and eroded, albeit, if we are honest, still very much symbolically!
NATO-EU cooperation has reached unprecedented levels

(Ed/hb, Paris) On 4th December 2020, NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană held a keynote speech at the European Defence Agency’s annual conference in Brussels.

The key points of his speech (excerpts):

**Shared Values:** “We should never forget that what really bonds our two organisation are our common values. And I think this is another incentive to further strengthen our strategic partnership between NATO and the EU. (...) in recent years, NATO-EU cooperation has reached unprecedented levels. We are working together on so many issues, from improving military mobility, countering hybrid and cyber threats, and countering disinformation together, we have done this during the pandemic very successfully, to coordinating our exercises or improving our strategic communications. (...) With the pandemic, that we are still in the eye of the storm, we have seen our cooperation accelerate.”

**Cyber:** “Cyber is one of the examples that the EU has developed tremendous instruments and a specific toolbox. NATO is also very advanced in cyber. We have declared five years ago, at the Warsaw NATO summit, that cyber is an operational domain. (...) This is where we are and we should work even closer together.”

**Emerging and disruptive technologies:** “I think we can do, and should do, more when it comes to new technologies and the way in which these are affecting not only defence and security, but also the way of life. Because the definition of security is becoming far more multifaceted. The line between traditional threats and non-traditional threats is becoming more blurred” (...) Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, Biotechnology, are all topics that are in turbulent transformation and that are impacting on our security. We have to work and do things together (...)”.

**Strategic cooperation:** “Recently NATO has established in Ramstein, Germany, a Space Subcommand for military operations, and we are establishing in Toulouse, France, a Space Centre of Excellence, while the EU has a Space Agency. So I think we can do things together.”

**China as a global player:** “We must not fool ourselves, China is becoming a dominant global player. And we have to coordinate the way in which our two organisations are looking into China.”

**Russian missile systems:** “(...) they have developed, and are developing as we speak, super-advanced missile systems that are posing a threat to us, to all of us, and mainly to the European territory, and that is something that we have to work together because this is not something that we should try take lightly.”

**Shifting the balance:** “It is not only burden-sharing (...), it is also about the quality of the investment in our defence. We are still very vulnerable, and the way in which international security is developing is putting our societies, our national interests and our organisations under tremendous stress. And this is where we have to do much more together. It is also shifting the balance.”

**Strategic partnership:** “90% of the population of the EU is also population of NATO. So we are, in a way, obliged to work together. And if there is evolution like NATO 2030, the potential revisiting of our Strategic Concept in the next period of time, and as EU, naturally and positively is looking through his strategic compass and his vision about the future, I think we have to make sure that we work together and we keep the synergies in place. I am a great proponent of the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU. I think that if there will be high level meetings next year we have to think how we can really inject a new generation of fresh ideas in what to do together. Because as we enter in this very turbulent period of human history we need each other more than ever, we need to do more, we need to do better. And we have to make sure we keep the integrity of our values and our interests intact in a period which is complicated.”

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**web:** Full Speech: https://bit.ly/37m8346
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