

**EUROPE, STRATEGY,
SECURITY
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REFORMING NATO TO SAVE THE ALLIANCE

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NATO is seventy. It has survived the demise of the Soviet empire, worked to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia, helped to reunite the countries of Eastern Europe with the rest of the continent and participated in American expeditions in Afghanistan. “*Mission accomplished*”¹, one might be tempted to say, particularly as it continues to serve a useful purpose by reassuring States directly facing Russian aggression.

However, never have there been more questions as to its permanence. It took just one word – “obsolete” – for both sides of the Atlantic to start asking: “could NATO die?” Really? It is a paradox, because although the transatlantic political links have seriously deteriorated, never has NATO so blossomed as a military organisation. As Bruno Tertrais so rightly put it, “NATO is doing fine, but the Atlantic Alliance is in trouble”².

The fact is that criticism is mounting on both sides of the Atlantic. The marriage is on the rocks, but the spouses cannot make up their minds to leave. It would be better for them to reorganise their relationship than start throwing crockery at each other. But how?

NATO IS FINE...

It has survived everything, particularly the disappearance of its enemy, the USSR. It has been able to adapt and continue in its existence. It is no longer an organisation. It is an institution. Not only has it survived, it has grown from twelve members to twenty-nine and new candidates are knocking on the door. New commands and new missions have recently been created and American reinvestment on European soil has been significant in recent years. Finally, the icing on the cake, cooperation between NATO and the European Union has made progress as never before since the Warsaw summit of 2016. From the inside, NATO is anything but an organisation on its last legs.

It must be admitted that unlike the European Union, NATO has managed to reconcile enlargement and deepening whilst remaining a cohesion-producing machine. This is partly thanks to the reorganisation of its defence planning process – the *NATO Defence Planning Process* or NDPP – in 2009, making it the clock that keeps time for all members, providing them with a reassuring routine and technological standardisation. And partly also because it retains the appearance of sovereignty whilst promoting effective decision-making. In theory, decisions are made by consensus, but in practice, representatives of the United States just have to insist, and everybody comes into line. There is even a rule – known as “consensus minus one” – which allows decisions to be made against the will of

¹ This expression seems to have been used for the first time by Andrew J. Bachevich: *Time for the United States to leave NATO* – The New York Times 16 September 2013

² Bruno Tertrais : *NATO is doing fine, but the Atlantic Alliance is in trouble* – NATO Defence College

a single nation opposing them, most notably in the field of allocating capability targets. The European Union dreamt it, NATO has done it.

The key to its success may lie in the fact that NATO almost never discusses political matters and no State can be called to account over its internal policy. If your country is called Poland, Hungary or Turkey, there is absolutely no risk of legal proceedings being brought against you for illiberalism. It is a far more serious matter to buy Russian missiles than to imprison opponents or suspend public liberties. There is nothing new under the sun. Since the beginning it was opposition to the Soviet Union, rather than dedication to liberalism and human rights, that held together Scandinavian socialists, British Tories, German Christian Democrats and a series of military leaders who were not all equally committed to promoting democracy.

Finally, the last factor in its success is that its chain of command is extremely clear, which is of great importance for the military. Decisions on operations are ultimately made by the *Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)*, who is always an American General who takes orders directly from the Oval Office of the White House. It is, in fact, very similar to the intentions of the 1954 project for a “European Defence Community” (EDC) which was, it is worth reiterating, to have been placed under the authority of an American General and failed to get off the ground due to French opposition³. Why continue to lament the EDC? It exists and its name is NATO.

... BUT THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK HAS SHIFTED PROFOUNDLY

Since the end of the Cold War, the transatlantic link has, from the point of view of concern to us, undergone several major transformations. There are at least five of these in number.

The first is the demise of the USSR. This enemy has gone and has not been replaced, because Russia is not the USSR. Whatever charge sheet could be drawn up against Vladimir Putin⁴, many countries of Western Europe do not consider the country a serious threat. Obviously, this is not true of the Baltic states, the northern countries or Poland, which quite rightly see it as an existential threat. It certainly cannot be denied that Russia poses a considerable security problem for Europe, from many points of view. But for the time being, the threat lies more in the fact that Russia divides the Europeans than that it might invade them. As for the position of the United States, this is hard to read as there is a considerable distance between the words of the American president, who is greatly in favour of Vladimir Putin, and the actions of his administration, which are very hostile towards Russia.

³ Pierre Haroche : *Retour sur l'échec de "l'armée européenne" (1950-1954) : quelles leçons pour demain ?* – Les champs de mars 2018/01

⁴ Evelyn Farkas : *The future of NATO: new challenges and opportunities* German Marshall Fund – 2 April 2019

The second major evolution is that threats have become more diversified and complex. They no longer come just from the East, but from the South as well. They are no longer merely conventional in the usual landscapes but take place in all possible theatres of war: space, cyberspace, European cities hit by acts of terrorism and even the democratic space, in which social networks have been used as weapons to manipulate information and elections. It is important to note that most of these threats are “below the threshold of article 5”, even when they emanate from Russia (Skrypal case, manipulations of information, cyber warfare, etc.).

The third major change is that the attitude of American leaders towards European integration has changed dramatically. In 1951, Dwight Eisenhower said that “[with] unity achieved [in a federation], Europe could build adequate security and, at the same time, continue the march of human betterment that has characterised Western civilisation”⁵. The aim of his calls for European integration, echoing those of Churchill in his 1946 Zürich speech, was above all to safeguard the so-called “enlightened self-interest” of the United States. This vision of matters chimed with that of President Truman and Paul Hoffman, administrator of the Marshall plan, who said “we have to put Europe back on its feet to get it off our back”^{6 7}. Seven decades later, President Trump, who sees the European Union as a trade “foe”⁸, is encouraging the United Kingdom to break all ties with the EU⁹, appoints an overtly anti-European ambassador to Brussels¹⁰ and allows his former strategic adviser, Steve Bannon, to roam through Europe with the aim of coalescing anti-European movements!

⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower : *Address at The English-Speaking Union Dinner at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London, 3 July 1951*: “[With] unity achieved, Europe could build adequate security and, at the same time, continue the march of human betterment that has characterized western civilization. [...] The establishment of a workable European federation would go far to create confidence among people everywhere that Europe was doing its full and vital share in giving this cooperation. [...] Could we not help? We the people of the British Commonwealth and of the United States have profited by unity at home. If, with our moral and material assistance, the free European nations could attain a similar integration, our friends could be strengthened, our own economies improved and the laborious NATO machinery of mutual defense vastly simplified.”

⁶ Greg Berhman *The most noble adventure - The Marshall Plan and the time when America helped save Europe* – Free press August 2007 p. 181

⁷ Paul Hoffman : *Statement at the 75th OEEC Council meeting 31 October 1949*: “The substance of such integration would be the formation of a single large market within which quantitative restriction on the movements of goods, monetary barriers to the flow of payments and, eventually, all tariffs are permanently swept away. The fact that we have in the United States a single market of 156 million consumers has been indispensable to the strength and efficiency of our economy. The creation of a permanent, freely trading area, comprising 270 million consumers in Western Europe would have a multitude of helpful consequences. It would accelerate the development of large-scale, low-cost production industries. It would make the effective use of all resources easier, the stifling of healthy competition more difficult... This is why integration is not just an ideal. It is a practical necessity.” He concluded this speech with a barely veiled threat that Congress could not continue to finance the Marshall Plan if Europe did not integrate.

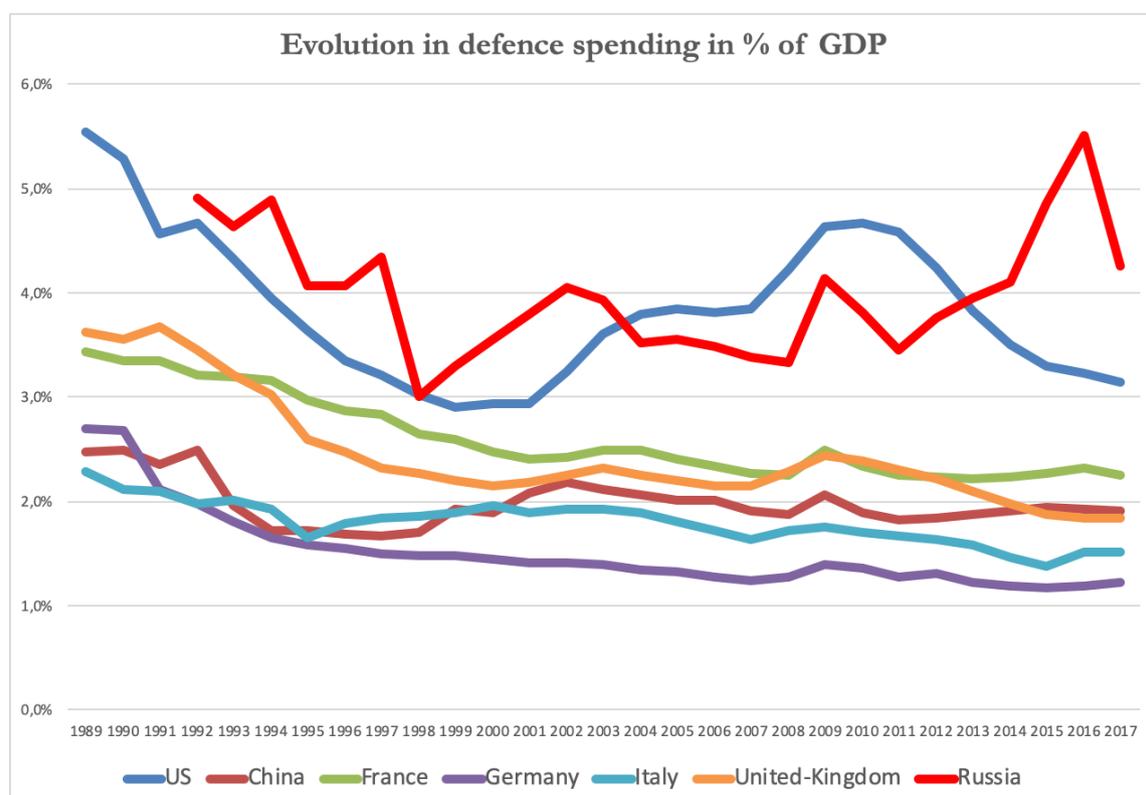
⁸ *Interview with CBS news – 15 July 2018*: “Well, I think we have a lot of foes. I think the European Union is a foe, what they do to us in trade. Now, you wouldn't think of the European Union, but they're a foe. Russia is foe in certain respects. China is a foe economically, certainly they are a foe. But that doesn't mean they are bad. It doesn't mean anything. It means that they are competitive.”

⁹ *Interview with the BBC – 26 November 2018*: “President Trump has said the Brexit deal is great for the EU and has cast doubt on whether the UK will be able to make a trade arrangement with the US.”

¹⁰ Gordon Sondland, interview with the newspaper Politico on 12 October 2018: “Trump's man in Brussels slams 'out of touch' EU”.

The fourth development, which dates back to 11 September 2001, is the lag in efforts and therefore in military capabilities between Americans and Europeans. Whereas the American effort has sharply increased as a result of terrorist attacks and the war in Afghanistan, then Iraq, the Europeans' effort has continually reduced, as though nothing had happened. The Americans have invested massively in their capabilities, but also in research, particularly anti-missile defence. They have reinvigorated defence research, increasing its budget colossally in recent years and by 22% in the last financial year, from \$72.2 billion in 2017 to \$88.2 billion in 2018¹¹. This increase is simply an extension of the efforts already made by the Obama administration, which launched the “third offset strategy”, also known as “defence innovation initiative”, in 2014, with the aim of retaining American defence's technological lead over its potential enemies. The private expenditure of the GAFA, whose research budgets are stratospheric (\$15 billion for Google, \$11 billion for Apple) and feed into American technological superiority, particularly in the field of artificial intelligence and big data, should also be taken into account.

Finally, the fifth factor transforming the transatlantic link relates to the fact that it is China – rather than Russia – that has become the principal strategic competitor of the United States. It is the old issue of the “pivot”: the American leaders' attention has been turned towards Asia, automatically forsaking Europe.



¹¹ [Office for Science & Technology at the Embassy of France in the United States 6 April 2018](#)

Source: SIPRI. For China and Russia, these are estimates – additionally, SIPRI provides values for France and the United Kingdom that do not correspond with those supplied by NATO

... AND THE ALLIANCE IS IN TROUBLE

Taken together, these changes have given rise to an increasingly deep resentment towards the Europeans on the part of the Americans.

Criticism has related firstly to the matter of burden-sharing, which is practically as old as the Alliance itself. For many years, the American leaders have been asking the Europeans not to be the “free riders” of their own security and the farewell speech of Robert Gates to NATO in June 2011 is still remembered in Brussels¹². Whether or not the criticism is justified, the American leaders have persuaded themselves, and the entire transatlantic community, that “the Europeans are not spending enough on their defence”¹³. They sincerely believe that they are paying for the Europeans’ security, which the latter could well afford themselves. This leaves the Americans unable to husband their resources in the face of China. This feeling took root long ago and Donald Trump has simply exacerbated it with simplistic shorthand which only he understands: “the Europeans owe [us] massive amounts of money”¹⁴ and “take advantage of us very seriously, both at NATO and on trade”¹⁵. In a word, the Europeans are profiteers.

The next criticism is that the Europeans are poor warriors. This criticism, which emanates from media sources close to Republican circles, reflects a fairly widespread opinion in American military circles and is, unfortunately, not entirely without justification. An article in *The National Interest*¹⁶ entitled “NATO is 70 and past retirement age”¹⁷ states that “in Afghanistan, some American servicemen muttered that NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) actually stood for ‘I Saw Americans Fighting’. The more charitable would grant that it was ‘I Saw Anglos Fighting’, including the British and Canadian troops who held ground in the violent south and south-west. Despite the undoubted valour of soldiers from all nations in the coalition, the reality was that most European contingents were hamstrung by risk aversion and restrictive rules of engagement (...)”.

Thirdly, the Europeans are criticised for being poor allies, as they allegedly sell themselves to America’s enemies. At the NATO summit of July 2018, President Trump did

¹² *Remarks by Secretary Gates at the Security and Defense Agenda – Brussels, Belgium* 10 June 2011

¹³ Derek Chollet and Richard Fontaine : *From Truman to Trump, why Kansas City matters to NATO* – The Kansas City Star - 7 April 2019.

¹⁴ NATO summit in Brussels on 25 May 2017 - comments reported by the *New-York Times*.

¹⁵ Declaration to a group of American governors on the sidelines of the Washington summit on 2 April 2019, *reported by USA Today*.

¹⁶ This bi-monthly review founded in 1985 became famous in 1989 when it published an article by Francis Fukuyama entitled: “The End of History and the Last Man”.

¹⁷ Gil Barndollar - *NATO is 70 and past Retirement Age* – The National Interest – 8 April 2019.

not hold back from saying that Germany was “totally controlled by Russia”. But it is mainly Chinese acquisitions in Europe that are of concern to the American leaders, particularly the acquisition of the ports of Piraeus, Genoa and Trieste, plus the fact that telecommunications giant Huawei is accompanying the deployment of so-called fifth-generation networks (5G) in Europe, principally in Germany.

Finally, the last series of criticism stems from the firm belief of American leaders that the EU is an unfair partner, which finances its champions’ industry out of State aid and practises protectionism. They have, moreover, carried out highly aggressive lobbying to attempt, unsuccessfully thus far, to obtain access to the European Defence Fund, to be up and running in 2021, for American businesses or their European subsidiaries.

The Atlantic Alliance has certainly always had ups and downs: the Suez crisis in 1956, the changing nuclear doctrine in the 1960s and France’s departure from the integrated military command in 1966, the Pershing missile crisis in the early 1980s, the second Iraqi war in 2003, the Libya campaign in 2011 and, more recently still, possible operations in Syria, on the Turkish border.

But Donald Trump has taken things an extra step further. Under him, the Alliance has entered the “age of the deal” in which the guarantee of security is subject to money spent on American equipment. The fact is that an Alliance that “counts dollars rather than measures value”¹⁸ ceases to be a true Alliance and becomes a security contract.

The Europeans have responded in a number of ways to this barrage of criticism.

The European authorities were the first to take the measure of the changes in the transatlantic relationship and, more broadly, in the security environment. This is true of both the Commission, with statements by President Juncker who, in 2014, began to moot the idea of a “European army” and called for the establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) set in place by the Treaty on European Union, and of the Parliament where, in 2015, a German MEP, Michael Gahler, became the first person brave enough to add the word “military” to the end of an appropriation line earmarked for a pilot project in favour of defence research. Since then, many more initiatives have been launched by the European authorities.

These can be divided into two categories. The first was the relaunch of the European planning process, with the adoption of the global strategy of the European Union at the end of June 2016 and, subsequently, an implementation plan by the European Council in the November of the same year, for the first time laying down a “military level of ambition” for the EU. This led to the resurrection of the “capability development mechanism” set out in the Treaty on European Union and headed up by the Military Committee of the European Union, with the support of the EU Military Staff. This process saw the adoption of high-impact capability goals in 2017. Subsequently, the European Defence Agency

¹⁸ Kathleen H Hicks et al. *Counting dollars or Measuring Value* – CSIS - July 2018.

established a capability development plan, the third of its existence, which was published in 2018. It also implemented a coordinated annual defence review, which is also part of the planning process.

The second initiative by the European authorities was to set in place a series of appropriation lines in favour of defence research, firstly covering R&T through the defence research preparatory action, with a budget of €90 million over three years, and then in the field of R&D with the European Defence Fund, which is to have an envelope of €13 billion over seven years with effect from 2021.

These initiatives are promising and have the potential to be a game changer. However, the level of the European Defence Fund envelope has still to be confirmed in the budget and assuming that it is, it will not bear fruit for at least ten years. For the time being, the most important thing is to ensure coherence between these initiatives and, in particular, to establish a link between the results of European planning and the future work programme of the Fund.

Lastly, in November 2017, by initiative of France and Germany, the PESCO was finally set in place. This was not a moment too soon, as it should have been in place as soon as the Lisbon Treaty entered into force and no later than 2010. However, the instrument set in place bears very little resemblance to the inclusive capability process that was supposed to lead to the constitution of an “autonomous capability” for Europe to manage crises outside EU territory. As it stands, the PESCO is simply a cooperation “framework”, barely different from the framework of the European Defence Agency. It is an accelerator for cooperation projects, on a “modular” and “voluntary” basis in which each party does as it wishes. At the moment, it is unfortunately nothing more than old wine in a new bottle.

Taken individually, the Member States reacted very differently, ranging from apathy to unrest via acceptance. Many of them chose to keep silent, to wait and see. Almost nobody challenged the narrative that American expenditure represents 70% of NATO spending, an idea that is based on a simplistic and incorrect interpretation of the Organisation’s statistics which assumes that all money spent by the members of the Alliance goes on European defence. This is obviously untrue. However much the United States spends on its own defence, it does not do so to protect Europe, but to retain its position as the global number one power. It is, moreover, interesting to note that the most reasoned criticism of the “2% policy” comes from the United States and the United Kingdom. The American think tank *Center for Strategic & International Studies* (CSIS), one of the most highly esteemed in the world on security matters, has shown how meaningless these indicators are¹⁹ and that it is armed forces that should be measured, rather than dollars. As for the British think tank *International Institute for Strategic Studies* (IISS), its researchers published a seminal study in July 2018 which shows that the United States spends just

¹⁹ Anthony H. Cordesman – CSIS February 21, 2019 : *NATO’s Pointless Burden Sharing Debates – the need to replace a Mathematically ridiculous 2% of GDP Goal with Real Force Planning.*

between 5.1% and 5.6% of its total military expenditure on defending Europe²⁰. This effort, which represented around \$30 billion in 2017 and \$36 billion dollars in 2018, sheds different light altogether on the matter of burden-sharing with regard to European spending, which stood at \$256 billion this last year. This would put the American contribution at just 15%. Even if this contribution was multiplied by three to take account of reserve forces, that comes to around \$100 billion, or 29% of the total.

The table below, taken from NATO statistics, illuminates the source of the transatlantic misunderstanding. If, in 2018, the European members of the Alliance had observed the two quantitative commitments of 2% and 20%, this would have translated into an extra €76 billion, €15 billion of which would go on equipment alone. Even so, the disproportion of defence efforts between the United States and the rest of the Alliance would barely decrease, dropping from nearly 69% to 62%.

Furthermore, nobody or almost nobody²¹ pointed out that American criticism of the alleged European protectionism on the procurement of military equipment is unjustified. The fact is that the Americans see the mote in Europe's eye but not the beam in its own of the exorbitant advantages they draw from the dollar, industrial policy dressed up as a defence policy which led them, amongst other things, to cancel a huge contract (\$120 billion) for tanker aircraft awarded to EADS/Airbus in 2008 in favour of Boeing. Turning a blind eye to the principle of reciprocity in international relations, they do not accept the idea of not having access to the European Defence Fund and have conducted aggressive lobbying to open it up to third countries, whilst access to their own defence market is locked down by the Buy American Act and the protectionist laws derived from it.

The only justified criticism levelled by the Americans at the Europeans is that they are incapable of defending themselves against Russia. But even this criticism is based more on preconceived ideas than on serious studies. To what level of Russian aggression does this refer? A cyber-attack, an outright attack on one of the Baltic states to defend the Russian-speaking minorities, or an invasion of Europe?

In any event, some European countries have opted to comply. Unsurprisingly, these are the ones for which the Russian threat is most clearly felt: Baltic states, Poland and Romania, which have already aligned themselves on the 2014 objectives²². The Polish President, Andrzej Duda, has gone the furthest in this direction, having eagerly proposed the construction of an American base in Poland, a "Fort Trump",²³ for \$2 billion. But he is not the only one. Last April, Lithuania entered into a very close cooperation agreement

²⁰ Lucie Béraud-Sudreau, Nick Childs : *The US and its NATO allies: costs and value* – IISS Military balance blog 9 July 2018

²¹ Renaud Bellais: *Le commerce transatlantique des armements, à armes égales* – DSI (Défense & Sécurité Internationale) Hors-Série n° 61 August-September 2018 pp 92 to 98; available in French only.

²² Dick Zandee *The future of NATO – Fog over the Atlantic* Clingendael 18 December 2018

²³ Paul Taylor: *Fort Trump or Bust ? – Poland and the future of European defence* Friends of Europe winter 2018

with the United States, much of which is given over to equipment programmes²⁴. Others may follow.

Various other European countries have decided to lie low. They have bought some American equipment, and nothing minor, as it includes fighter aircraft and anti-missile defence systems, but not enough to bring their defence efforts to 2%. In this group of countries, we find the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy, in particular.

Germany was initially divided between “Atlantists”, who consider it vital to preserve the transatlantic link, and “post-Atlantists” in the opposite corner, who believe that Germany and, by extension, Europe, must arrange their “uncoupling” from the United States²⁵. This debate now seems redundant as everybody recognises the evolution of the transatlantic link.

²⁴ Nicolas Gros-Verheyde: [La Lituanie s'engage avec les Etats-Unis dans un pacte de coopération militaire. Equipements à la clé](#) - Blog Bruxelles2Pro - 3 April 2019; available in French only

²⁵ Hans Kundnani, Jana Puglierin: [Atlanticist and "Post-Atlanticist" Wishful thinking](#) - GMF 3 January 2018

2018 (estimations)	Dépenses de défense (y compris dépenses de pension)					Investissements (équipements & coûts liés de R&D)				
	M USD	M EUR	En % du PIB	Montant des dépenses si respect de la norme des 2 % en M € ****	Effort nécessaire pour respecter l'objectif de 2 % en M EUR	M USD	M EUR	En % des dépenses de défense	Effort nécessaire pour respecter l'objectif de 20 % en M EUR	Effort nécessaire pour respecter les deux engagements en M EUR *****
Belgique	5 029	4 199	0,93	9 061	+ 4 862	493	412	9,80	+ 428	+ 1 401
Bulgarie*	937	782	1,43	1 094	+ 312	190	159	20,30	+ 0	+ 60
Croatie	1 057	883	1,71	1 035	+ 152	100	83	9,45	+ 93	+ 124
République tchèque	2 754	2 300	1,11	4 144	+ 1 844	341	285	12,39	+ 175	+ 544
Estonie	627	524	2,07	524	+ 0	114	95	18,15	+ 10	+ 10
France	51 200	42 748	1,82	47 042	+ 4 294	12 115	10 116	23,66	+ 0	+ 0
Allemagne	50 199	41 913	1,23	67 920	+ 26 007	7 091	5 921	14,13	+ 2 462	+ 7 663
Grèce	4 924	4 111	2,22	4 111	+ 0	611	510	12,40	+ 312	+ 312
Hongrie	1 820	1 520	1,15	2 633	+ 1 113	370	309	20,35	+ 0	+ 217
Italie	25 371	21 183	1,15	36 832	+ 15 649	5 359	4 474	21,12	+ 0	+ 2 892
Lettonie**	711	594	2,03	594	+ 0	251	210	35,37	+ 0	+ 0
Lituanie**	1 071	895	2,00	895	+ 0	328	274	30,59	+ 0	+ 0
Luxembourg	378	316	0,54	1 170	+ 854	158	132	41,77	+ 0	+ 102
Pays-Bas	12 817	10 701	1,35	15 805	+ 5 104	3 196	2 668	24,93	+ 0	+ 493
Pologne**	12 156	10 150	2,05	10 150	+ 0	3 226	2 694	26,54	+ 0	+ 0
Portugal	3 267	2 728	1,35	4 032	+ 1 304	424	354	12,97	+ 192	+ 452
Roumanie**	4 678	3 906	1,92	4 073	+ 167	1 607	1 342	34,36	+ 0	+ 0
Slovaquie	1 316	1 098	1,21	1 810	+ 712	293	245	22,27	+ 0	+ 117
Slovénie	558	466	1,02	917	+ 451	46	38	8,22	+ 55	+ 145
Espagne	13 506	11 276	0,93	24 147	+ 12 871	3 112	2 599	23,04	+ 0	+ 2 231
Membres communs OTAN- AED hors Royaume-Uni	194 377	162 293	1,37	237 990	+ 75 697	39 426	32 918	20,28	+ 0	+ 14 680
Royaume-Uni	61 622	51 451	2,15	51 451	0	14 878	12 422	24,14	+ 0	+ 0
TOTAL Membres communs AED-OTAN***	256 000	213 743	1,50	289 440	+ 75 697	54 304	45 340	21,21	+ 0	+ 12 548
Albanie	181	151	1,16	260	+ 109	19	16	10,72	+ 14	+ 36
Danemark	4 279	3 573	1,21	5 915	+ 2 342	575	480	13,43	+ 235	+ 703
Montenegro	85	71	1,55	92	+ 20	8	7	9,66	+ 7	+ 11
Norvège	7 222	6 030	1,62	7 454	+ 1 424	1 927	1 609	26,69	+ 0	+ 0
Turquie	13 898	11 604	1,64	14 190	+ 2 586	4 386	3 662	31,55	+ 0	+ 0
Europe OTAN	281 665	235 172	1,50	317 352	82 179	61 219	51 114	21,73	+ 0	+ 0
Canada	21 483	17 937	1,23	29 075	+ 11 138	2 804	2 341	13,05	+ 1 246	+ 3 474
Etats-Unis	684 360	571 397	3,39	571 397	+ 0	172 931	144 386	25,27	+ 0	+ 0
Amérique du Nord	705 843	589 333	3,18	600 472	11 138	175 735	146 728	24,90	+ 0	+ 0
Total OTAN	987 508	824 506	2,36	917 823	93 318	236 954	197 841	24,00	0	+ 0
Part de l'Europe en %	28,5	28,5		34,6		25,8	25,8			
Part de l'Amérique du Nord en %	71,5	71,5		65,4		74,2	74,2			
Part des Etats-Unis en %	69,3	69,3		62,3		73,0	73,0			

Source : chiffres retraités à partir des données disponibles sur le site Web de l'OTAN consulté le 08/04/2019

* Les dépenses de défense n'incluent pas les pensions.

** Selon l'OTAN, ces pays ont soit une législation, soit des accords politiques en vertu desquels ils sont tenus de consacrer chaque année au moins 2 % du PIB à la défense. Ces estimations devraient donc évoluer en conséquence.

*** Font également partie de l'AED, mais pas de l'OTAN : l'Autriche, Chypre, la Finlande, l'Irlande, Malte et la Suède

**** Lorsque la dépense constatée est supérieure à la norme des 2 %, nous avons fait figurer la dépense constatée

***** Dans ce cas le taux de 20 % est appliqué sur les dépenses de défense nécessaires pour atteindre 2 % du PIB et non pas sur le montant constaté

Chancellor Merkel has said that the Europeans should take their fate into their own hands²⁶, but this has led to no concrete action. It is clear that whatever the political configuration in power, German leaders have no intention of increasing defence spending to 2% of GDP in 2024, in line with the commitments made at the NATO summit in 2014. This would represent an effort of €26 billion a year over time, including seven and a half for equipment. This has been a source of irritation to American leaders²⁷. Even so, this does not benefit European defence. The policy of rapprochement with France is moving forward in small steps and Germany's veto on export of armaments co-produced with France has had the effect of a bucket of cold water. The stalemate originates from the leaders of the Social Democrat party²⁸, who are very unlikely to budge.

As regards France, President Macron has produced many initiatives and declarations since he came to power in 2017. In his famous speech at the Sorbonne on 26 September 2017, he launched the European intervention initiative, aiming to bring about a convergence in European strategic culture, an initiative that includes the United Kingdom within a pointedly pragmatic framework that has won the support of ten European nations so far. The initiative is based on the assumption that only a shared vision of the security situation will enable European defence to move forward. Unfortunately, it does not seem to have seduced the European leaders, most of whom are uncomfortable outside the framework of the treaties. It has been interpreted as a reaction born of frustration on France's part, as it is unable to gain traction for its conception of an "ambitious" PESCO. The inclusion of the United Kingdom, moreover, is perplexing to all, whether they find it attractive or disturbing.

As for the United Kingdom, although its leaders are entirely caught up in Brexit, they intend to play an increased role in NATO once they leave the EU²⁹.

In a new endeavour, President Macron and Chancellor Merkel raised the idea of a "European army" in November 2018. The Spanish Prime Minister added his voice to theirs. But these remain empty words and no action has followed. In both France and Germany, the idea comes up against strong opposition from State apparatus and industry, which support the status quo. However, if the status quo wins the day and this debate is once again shelved, this would mean that Europe is so afraid of its own future that it refuses to discuss it.

²⁶ Speech to the meeting of the CSU in Bavaria on 28 May 2017: "The times in which we could completely depend on others are, to a certain extent, over. I've experienced that in the last few days. And that is why I can only say: we Europeans truly have to take our fate into our own hands, of course in friendship with United States of America, in friendship with Great Britain and as good neighbors, wherever it is possible, even with Russia, even with other countries. But we have to know that we must fight for our own future on our own, for our destinies Europeans, and that's what I want to do together with you" (translation courtesy of theguardian.com).

²⁷ Nicolas Barotte: *Mauvaise élève de l'Alliance, l'Allemagne reste prisonnière de son dilemme militaire* - Le Figaro, 3 April 2019

²⁸ John Vinocur: *How Germany went wobbly on the West – Former Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel exemplifies his country's geopolitical misjudgments* – Politico 2 May 2019

²⁹ Rob Oliver: *UK Can Expect enhanced NATO Role After Brexit, Top General Says* – forces.net 17 April 2019

However, the idea of a European army is still one of the most promising ideas ever put forward and deserves better than the flawed questions that are constantly asked: “is the guarantee of American security still solid?”³⁰. Of course, it is still solid; the credibility of the United States rests on it being so. If the US did not respect its commitments, its reputation would be instantly destroyed with all its allies and the world. The guarantee is particularly solid as it does not cost the Americans much: the disproportion of present forces is such that the Russians will not risk hostilities with any member countries in NATO – conventionally, at least. The real question is how much this protection will cost the Europeans both in political terms – alignment – and in trade terms in the forthcoming negotiations. For the remainder, European leaders are well aware that the demands of President Trump do not aim to reinforce the Alliance, but to sell more American equipment. Some are quite comfortable with this transactional vision of the Alliance. They are prepared to ride out several more years with Trump or people like him in the White House. Others are less happy. The French defence Minister, Florence Parly, falls into the latter category, charismatically stressing that the alliance should be unconditional, or it is no longer an alliance, and that the NATO solidarity clause “is called article 5, not article F-35”³¹.

THE SITUATION IS AT STALEMATE...

At the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Washington on 2 April 2019, the NATO Secretary General said that “NATO is good for Europe, but also good for the United States”. And that, one might be tempted to add, is very much the problem. Like parents not wishing to separate “for the sake of the children”, we are at stalemate with an organisation that serves our mutual interests but is at the same time the source of our disagreements.

If Europeans are such poor warriors, profiteers, disloyal partners and protectionist traders, in a word bad allies and have been so for such a long time, why on earth does the United States not simply withdraw from NATO once and for all, instead of constantly complaining about it? Quite simply because “NATO is good for the United States”. In other words, because that is where their interests lie.

The first point of interest in NATO for the United States is commercial and concerns the sale of military equipment. Indeed, their position of hegemony has created a pool of mandated clients. Between 2008 and 2017, the European countries ordered €21 billion worth of armaments from the American industry³². This trend has increased sharply:

³⁰ Judy Dempsey: *Judy Asks: Is NATO Deterrence a Paper Tiger?* – Carnegie Europe, 31 January 2019

³¹ Florence Parly: *The US-French relationship in a changing world* – speech to the Atlantic Council in Washington on 18 March 2019.

³² Romain Mielcarek *Armements. L'Europe a commandé pour 21 milliards aux Etats-Unis en dix ans (enquête)* – blog Bruxelles 2Pro, 27 February 2019; available in French only

between November 2017 and November 2018, Europeans spent €25 billion on armaments from the American industry³³. These armaments included weapons systems with structural effects on European forces, such as F-35 fighter planes (Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Belgium), Reaper drones (France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom) and Patriot ground-to-air defence systems (Germany, Poland, Romania, Sweden). In so doing, the American industry kills two birds with one stone. Firstly, they can sell their production and ensure a considerable flow of services for the longer term as, with aeronautical equipment for instance, for every euro spent on purchasing the equipment, two more are spent on keeping it operational. Secondly, and most importantly, they prevent European producers from attaining the industrial Holy Grail – offsetting the cost of R&D over long production runs – and becoming competitive on the international market.

The second point of interest for the United States in preserving NATO is of a military nature. Taking the above into account, American leaders have a right of veto on the use of armaments they have sold to the Europeans. But in particular, nothing can be done without them in terms of operations. As we have seen, NATO is commanded by an American general. The American bases in Europe provide American forces with a “bulwark” and allow them to act in the Middle East and Africa³⁴. For the US military, therefore, NATO is a command structure, an interoperability guarantee and a tool to deploy troops.

The third point of interest is strategic and is about having “friends”. NATO is a power multiplier. As Jens Stoltenberg said, “the strength of a nation is not only measured by the size of its economy or the number of its soldiers, but also by the number of its friends”³⁵. One of the major advantages the United States has over its strategic competitors is the number and quality of its allies. Admiral James Stavridis acknowledged this, saying that “the greatest single advantage the US has on the global stage is our network of allies, partners and friends”³⁶. The Allies enhance America’s global stature, not diminish it. It is because it is at the head of a network of alliances with no equivalent that the United States is more powerful than Russia or China, which have been able to gather few friends and allies around them.

Finally, everyone in the US who is mindful of the fact that disorder in Europe has resulted in two world wars in which their country had to intervene³⁷ realises that a stable and prosperous Europe which is, moreover, their largest trading partner, is extremely

³³ Frédéric Mauro: *EU Defence: The White Book implementation process* – Study for the European Parliament, December 2018 – annex 7 p. 97

³⁴ Admiral James Stavridis (16th SACEUR) *Why NATO is essential for World Peace, According to Its Former Commander* – Time100, 4 April 2019

³⁵ Jens Stoltenberg: *NATO: good for Europe and good for America – Address for the United States Congress* – 3 April 2019

³⁶ Ibid Time100, 4 April 2019.

³⁷ see in particular Karen Donfried, president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States: *NATO at 70: A strategic partnership for the 21st Century* – GMF, 2 April 2019

valuable and should be conserved. Ultimately, this is the greatest motivation for the Alliance: Europe is the largest solvent market of the United States. It is important to take care of its integrity, in the same way that it is important for a farmer to take care of his chickens.

There is, therefore, no reason for the United States to leave NATO and regardless of Donald Trump's bluffs, it is unlikely that Congress would allow it to. After the NATO summit in 2018, the Senate voted through a motion by 97 votes to 2 to reaffirm the commitments of the US in favour of the collective defence of the Alliance. In January 2019, the Chamber of Representatives adopted the "NATO Support Act" by 357 votes to 22, to "reject any effort to withdraw the United States from NATO". During the same month, a bipartisan group of senators introduced a bill requiring the President to seek the opinion and approval of the Senate to withdraw from NATO.

Conversely, "NATO is good for Europe", as it is its security guarantee. It has been since the Cold War and still is today, in the face of a hostile Russia that would not dare to attempt anything like a conventional-type armed attack on EU soil as long as the Americans have a presence there. Whatever progress European defence makes, there is no credible European alternative to NATO and still no "Plan B" in sight.

The Europeans have unquestionably increased their cooperation and defence budgets. However, they have failed to overcome their strategic and tactical differences and have still not managed to create a European entity capable of having a coherent defence policy. Each State remains committed to its own obsessions. It is a troubling conformism that has prompted them to churn out the same old refrains and that prevents them from taking the full measure of current disruptive events. Europeans are therefore almost all completely dependent on the security guarantee of the Americans and would be incapable – individually – of preventing an armed Russian attack in the Baltic states.

Only two States are an exception to this: the United Kingdom and France, both of which retain a degree of versatility and, in particular, have nuclear arms. However, the United Kingdom decided long ago to throw in its lot with the United States and is effectively a mere vassal state, obliged to follow, as shown by the Iraq affair in 2003, which admittedly occurred in the middle of the renegotiation of the Nassau agreement of 1963 on American nuclear missiles used by British forces. As for the French, they went down the same path somewhat later and are increasingly dependent on the Americans for their operations in Africa and the Middle East. Additionally, they refuse to seriously open up the question of nuclear-sharing and extending it to other European States. The French and British have basically become the more or less obedient hunting dogs of the American huntsman.

Basically, the Europeans and the Americans are trapped in a marriage with fewer and fewer shared values and in which they are increasingly bound by their interests. The interests are still important, but differ increasingly, particularly on trade matters. The “love story”³⁸ is turning sour. “Uncoupling” seems inevitable³⁹.

WE HAVE TO GET OUT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...

There are benefits in recalling past achievements. However, nostalgia is not a policy. The challenges to be met require a clear vision: the current situation is not satisfactory and should be brought to an end as quickly as possible.

The situation is not satisfactory for the United States. Their current leaders are in the process of destroying America’s soft power and the moral foundation of the leadership it took them seven decades to acquire and which drew support from the demise of the Soviet Union. They have moved away from the status of the benevolent and generous stronger brother, an economic model, a shining beacon of democracy, the country everybody wants to live in, and is now seen as a bully, riddled with selfishness, complacency and greed, a violent society where people kill each other, which exports its financial crises and which cares nothing for the climate, for others, for rules, for the law... It is a sad fate for the inventors of multilateralism. Under the hubris of power, American leaders are killing off what made America unique and exemplary: the *American exceptionalism*.

The result is that instead of acting together, the West is growing disunited. This situation is unlikely, as the links that bind the Europeans and Americans are infinitely stronger than those that bind them to the Chinese. If the argument was carried through to its logical conclusion, it would be a suicide pact: the death of the West. Has the time come to compose the Requiem Mass⁴⁰ ? Not yet, but it is certainly no longer “one for all and all for one”; it is “every man for himself and God for all”. Can you be military allies and commercial foes? For how much longer will it continue to be possible to compartmentalise things? Can you disagree over virtually everything – climate change, Iran, Jerusalem, Cuba – and swear eternal fidelity to each other? Like an elderly married couple who have fallen out of love, we are trying to keep up appearances. We celebrate and we commemorate. We pretend. But the reality is that the partners are stuck together in a relationship that is becoming intolerable to them.

Should we see it as a bad patch, a blip in a long marriage, rather than the stuff of divorce? Might a different American president could adopt a different policy? On defence, this is

³⁸ Nicolas Gros-Verheyde : *Entre USA et Union européenne, une histoire d’amour qui tourne mal. La diplomatie européenne face à un nouveau front* – Blog B2Bruxelles2, le 3 mai 2019

³⁹ Général Vincent Desportes : *Europe/Etats-Unis- L’inéluctable découplage* – DSI janvier 2019

⁴⁰ Pascal Boniface : *Requiem pour le monde occidental – Relever le défi Trump*. Ed. Eyrolles. Paris 2019.

unlikely. The idea that the Europeans are not doing enough for their own defence and the Americans are picking up the bill for them will not go when Trump does. For the remainder, there are doubts. American unilateralism came before Donald Trump. It dates back to the Clinton era and the bombing of Iraq without a UN mandate. Similarly, George Bush Jr invaded Iraq without a resolution from the UN Security Council and ordered espionage on financial transactions of the European network SWIFT. And even Obama started to tax European businesses on the basis of an abusive extra-territorialisation of American law and had European leaders, most notably the German Chancellor, spied on.

It is therefore unlikely that things will change on the other side of the Atlantic. It may be a law of nature: all power tends to be abused. The US is becoming what Dwight Eisenhower did not want it to become: a modern-day Rome protecting the civilised world with its legions, rather than an enlightened Athens at the head of a league of free cities.

The denunciation of multilateralism exercised by Trump is dangerous, not just for the United States and the West, but also for the world. Law is powerless if it is not backed up by force and this is Europe's problem. However, force is terrible if not used to back up the law. And if only force counts, then America is no different from the rest. And the rest will not let themselves be pushed around forever.

For the Europeans, the situation all the more unsatisfactory as, strange as it may appear, the Americans have become their main threat, if we think about it dispassionately.

The first threat to the EU is indeed not Russia, Jihadism or terrorism. It is disunity and the keenest of all to divide the Europeans is none other than Donald Trump himself. He has fraternised with the most rabid proponent of Brexit – Nigel Farage – and, in general, with all governments that draw their legitimacy from opposition to Brussels. He describes Brussels as a dictatorship in the hands of a “brutal” President and encourages the Europeans to liberate themselves by bringing their policies back home. So far, his efforts have, if anything, encouraged the Europeans to remain united. But this could change if he decided to pursue his policy of “divide and conquer” more intensely. This is the worst-case scenario described by Jana Puglierin in a remarkable analysis for the German Marshall Fund⁴¹. By linking his commercial policy to his security policy, by making the American security guarantee conditional on procurement of American weapons systems or natural gas, Trump could drive a wedge between the European Member States that could shatter the EU. It is no secret that his main target is Germany, as it and France are central to European integration. By refusing to keep negotiations on defence, a matter on which the EU is weak as its States are divided, separate from commercial issues, on which the EU is strong as it speaks with one voice, he may succeed in using the American security guarantee to leverage the concessions he wants, such as limiting exports of German cars.

⁴¹ Jana Puglierin: *The next two years in EU-US relations: bad, worse, worst* – GMF Policy Paper, March 2019

Simply put, what could prompt a Western European to accept structural funds being used to buy American weapons? A situation in which Europeans have to choose between the American security guarantee and the economic integration of the EU must be avoided at all costs. Admittedly, Europeans do not need anybody to help maintain their divisions, but by linking security and the economy and constantly fanning the flames, the American administration could eventually manage to bring down the EU.

The second threat the US represents to Europe is that of technical decommissioning. Given the amount invested by the American federal government in defence research, it is likely that within no more than 15 years, there will be no more European companies able to produce critical military capabilities. European States will be forced to buy American weapons systems for the very simple reason that if they do not, their forces will no longer be interoperable with their American counterparts⁴². This situation has already arisen, with the well-known “Link 16”, which led American generals to exclude allies that did not have it from the Afghan battlefield. This is probably what will happen with the roll-out of the F-35 fighter plane and the future NATO air surveillance system, AFSC (Alliance Future Surveillance and Control), to replace AWACS aerial reconnaissance aircraft. Not only will Europeans no longer be able to wage the wars they choose, but they will be forced to obey laws other than their own. It will be “strategic heteronomy”, also known as dependence. The American bulldozer will destroy everything in its path, without distinguishing between strategic competitors and allies, giving the latter no choice but to integrate with the American army or fight with second-order equipment.

Finally, the third threat from the United States is the risk of being drawn into a cold war with China. China has become the strategic obsession of the US. They want the Europeans on the side, invoking the simplistic adage that could come from a second-rate Western, that “if you’re not with us, you’re against us”. It is, moreover, not yet clear whether there is more to be feared from a cold war between the US and China or from being saddled with a trade agreement. One thing is clear: if it does not change, Europe will be no more than a spectator of its own future.

BUT HOW?

The simplest and most logical solution would be for the Europeans to “take ownership” of NATO and build the “European pillar” that has been under discussion for so long. This would be the “Europeanisation of NATO” for which Hubert Védrine called in his 2012 report on a French return to the integrated command of NATO. As he commented at the

⁴² See the remarkable article by Alain de Neve : [l’OTAN et la supériorité technologique américaine : un risque pour la solidarité euro-atlantique?](#) Security Studies Centre of the Belgian Royal Higher Institute for Defence (known by its French acronym, IRSD), 18 March; Jean-Marc Vittori [pourquoi la guerre du XXIème siècle sera technologique](#) - Les Echos 5 April 2019; both available in French only

time, “the Atlantic Alliance has worked so well that it has wiped out any spirit of defence in Europe”⁴³. If the Americans really want to stop paying for Europe’s protection, then they should allow the Europeans to take their rightful place in NATO. This could take the form of a merger between the common security and defence policy and NATO, as the eminent professor, Jolyon Howorth⁴⁴, has long argued for. This which would require a solution to the case of Turkey, which is a member of NATO but not of the EU, as the UK will soon also be.

For the time being, however, it is more likely to be NATO that appropriates European defence. In the field of defence planning, the NDPP is having the effect of crowding out European planning. In the field of operations, once Brexit has taken place, the two major NATO commands – the SACEUR, who is American, and the Deputy SACEUR, who is British – will be held by States that are not part of the EU. Is this compatible with the idea of European strategic autonomy?

If it does not take ownership of NATO, and as it seems unlikely that the Germans will increase their defence spending, it is time to stop pretending with vague concepts such as “defence Europe” which, 20 years later, have still not put Europe in the position of being able to defend itself and seriously consider the integration of European forces, which is the only alternative to having to ask the Americans for help every time a serious crisis occurs in the European neighbourhood.

It is by integrating that the Europeans will become capable allies. However, with 28 heads of State all wanting to make their own decisions on the basis of their own interests, be they industrial or political, with 28 defence ministers looking from different national defence perspectives, European defence is a massive waste. For proof, one just has to compare the sum total of European defence budgets with the Russian budget. If the Europeans, particularly the Eastern States, are so afraid of a State that spends three times less than they do, the problem most assuredly lies in the efficiency of the spending rather than in the volume of it.

The reality is not that the Europeans are not spending enough, it is that they spend it badly. As the table below shows, all sources – the SIPRI (*Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*) and the IISS (*International Institute for Strategic Studies: the Military Balance 2019*) – show that the 27 Member States of the EU, without even including the United Kingdom, spend between two and a half times and four times as much as Russia on defence; between three and five times if the UK is included.

⁴³ Place de la France dans l'OTAN et perspectives de l'Europe de la défense - Hearing of Mr Hubert Védrine Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces of the Senate – 27 November 2012; available in French only

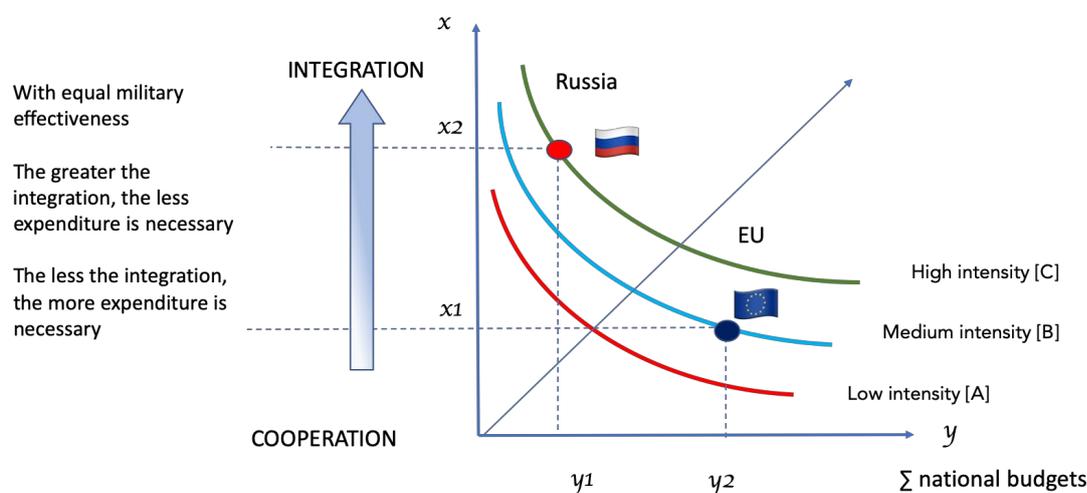
⁴⁴ Jolyon Howorth: Autonomy and Strategy: what should Europe want? – Egmont Security Policy brief n° 110, April 2019

2017	SIPRI		IISS	
	M\$	M€	M\$	M€
U.S.	609 758	543 453	602 783	537 236
EU 27	173 747	154 854	186 744	166 437
EU 28 *	220 940	196 915	237 465	211 643
Russia	66 335	59 122	45 600	40 641
China	228 231	203 413	150 458	134 097

* with the U.K.

This absence of efficiency lies mostly in the poor levels of integration between European forces, as the diagram below shows intuitively.

Military effectiveness and its paradigms



Currently, integration at this level seems out of reach. Although European citizens aspire to greater integration, particularly in the field of security⁴⁵, their leaders are divided as they are on very few other issues. The fractures run through all States, not just between East and West, between North and South, but within the very heart of Europe between Germany and France, Italy and France, to say nothing of the UK.

⁴⁵ Anne Rovani: [les Européens veulent plus d'intégration](#) Le Figaro 13 May 2019; available in French only

There are two possible options to achieve it. The first would be to set up a “defence Eurogroup” outside the framework of the European institutions as an embryonic, integrated and autonomous “European army”. The benefit of this Eurogroup could be to work under the rule of qualified majority for most decisions, thereby allowing for effective governance. The problem is that there are currently very few European states, if any at all, that would agree to moving to qualified majority for defence matters. They might at least, however, agree to make decisions by consensus, or even consensus minus one, as they do within a NATO framework.

The second option would be to carry out a capability and operational development project with the PESCO, between Member States wishing to enact the mutual defence clause of article 42-7 of the Treaty on European Union, the European equivalent of article 5 of the Treaty of Washington. This would be tantamount to recreating PESCO within PESCO. After all, there is already a project within PESCO concerning collective defence in which almost all participate: military mobility. This option would have the benefit of remaining within the framework of the Treaties and preserving an inter-governmental framework within which decisions are made unanimously. But this would also be its weakness.

CONCLUSION: DISSOLVE NATO OR REFORM IT?

To work as a deterrent, an alliance must be credible. To be credible, it must be solid. That is by no means the case. The resilience of NATO, as a military organisation, does little to camouflage the deterioration of the transatlantic link, which is both its pillar and its *raison d'être*. Dissension is such that it can scarcely even still be described as an Alliance. The “Allies” are no longer any such thing. The word “protectorate” is more apposite. Whose fault is this? Obviously, the fault is shared, but this matters little. The fact is that the impulsive tweets of Donald Trump, who, like the cynic he is, “knows the price of everything and the value of nothing” (Oscar Wilde), together with the immobility of the Europeans, who are complacently happy with the effects of announcements and false progress, further erode the transatlantic link every day.

As NATO will not dissolve itself, the time has come to review the terms of the marriage contract. The ball is in the Europeans’ court. They must take charge of their own defence and perhaps consider merging NATO with the CSDP. But the Americans must also accept this. This is why, instead of opposing a European army, they would be better advised to encourage it. Because if there is no European army, they will be condemned to pay for our security. We therefore need to move away from the status quo. European defence cannot remain at a crossroads forever.

Alain Lamassoure observes that “in 1774, the United States had to proclaim independence from the greatest European power of the time before establishing their own Constitution. We must do the same today, from the greatest world power. And the example is a reassuring one for those who are rightly committed to the transatlantic relationship: two centuries later, are not the authors and the recipients of the American Declaration of Independence the best of friends in the world?”⁴⁶. In other words, don’t we need to reform NATO to save the Alliance? ■

⁴⁶ Alain Lamassoure: *The Secret Story of the European Convention* – Fondation Robert Schuman, Albin Michel, Paris 2004

ANALYSIS #7

REFORMING NATO TO SAVE THE ALLIANCE

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