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**THE FUTURE OF THE EU SECURITY AND DEFENSE
POLICY AFTER BREXIT**

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Abstract:

This paper explores first, in order to frame the discussion, the historical evolution of the security and defense policy of the European Union (EU). Then the Brexit implications are analyzed, trying to answer the question: does Brexit create an opportunity for a more integrated security and defense policy by removing the UK veto, or will the damage from losing British military force be too great? Some important and worrying concluding remarks are derived, accompanied by an outlook of the EU security and defense policy in the near future.

Key words: Brexit, defense, security, EU

1.Introduction

The Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) enables the EU to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets.

The implementation of the CSDP involves the deployment of military or civilian missions for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations (UN) Charter. Military missions are carried out by EU forces established with contributions from the member states' armed forces. The CSDP also entails collective self-defense amongst member states as well as a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in which 25 of the 28 national armed forces pursue structural integration.

Security and defense policies of the EU represent, however, a field of EU external policies which is not yet a deeply integrated process. An entire consensus among the EU member countries is not fully realized, determining a limited global impact of these policies – unlike, for example, trade, development assistance, humanitarian aid, enlargement, neighborhood policy or Eastern partnership, areas which are commonly agreed.

But as the world is changing, the EU confronts an increasingly complex and uncertain security environment. There is a growing demand for the European Union to become more capable, more coherent and more strategic as a global actor.

This paper intends an analysis of the main stages of the European security and defense policy and of the key issues signaled by the associated contemporary literature. It then examines the Brexit consequences in the rapidly changing international context. The worrying conclusions of this analysis should stimulate reflection as regards the most appropriate security and defense policy of the EU in the years to come.

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2. Historical evolution of the security and defense policy of the EU

The idea of a common defense policy for Europe dates back to 1948 when France, Benelux and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Brussels. This treaty had a mutual defense clause that paved the way for the Western European Union (WEU). Since then, European security policy has followed several different paths, developing simultaneously within the WEU, NATO and the EU.

The founding Treaty of Rome does not contain mentions to a common foreign and security or to military aspects.

A plan for the European Defense Community (EDC) was proposed in October 1950 by René Plevin, French Prime Minister, which was to include France, West Germany, Italy and Benelux. Unfortunately, EDC could not come into effect – not obtaining ratification of the French Parliament.

Only in 1974, with the creation of the European Council, some coordination in the field of foreign policies was started. In October 1970 the foreign ministers approve the Luxembourg Report, setting up European Political Cooperation (EPC). They will meet every six months, to coordinate their positions on international problems and agree common actions. They will be aided by a committee of the directors of political affairs.

But the 1970's and 1980's were the so-called years of "civilian power". As Duchêne (1973) remarked, the European Economic Community should continue to remain a civilian power, relatively solid in economic terms but no so strong as military forces.

In February 1986, the Single European Act (SEA) is signed, containing Title III on EPC. EPC can discuss the economic and political issues of security. EPC and the European Community (EC)'s external relations must be consistent. A small EPC secretariat, based in Brussels, will help the presidency.

In February 1992, Maastricht Treaty is signed, replacing EPC with the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The Council of foreign ministers will decide Common Positions and Joint Actions, and Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) can be used to implement the latter. The Commission can initiate proposals. CFSP activities can be financed by the EC budget. The EU can request the WEU to implement decisions that have defense implications.

In June 1992, the Petersberg Declaration states that the WEU will engage in humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and crisis management tasks, including peacemaking ("Petersberg Tasks"). Three forms of WEU membership (full, associate and observer) are created.

The Amsterdam Treaty, signed in October 1997, contains several reforms of the CFSP pillar. QMV is to be used to implement the European Council's Common Strategies, and member states can abstain from decisions; a High Representative for the CFSP is created: this position was occupied by Javier Solana, given his experience as secretary general of NATO and Spain foreign minister.

The Helsinki European Council held in December 1999 sets the headline goal for the common European security and defense policy. By 2003, the EU will be able to deploy within 60 days and for at least one year, military forces of up to 50,000-60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg Tasks. It establishes interim committees to run it: the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff.

The Treaty of Lisbon, signed by EU member states on 13 December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009, had significant implications for CFSP. A major

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innovation was the replacement of the “Union Minister for Foreign Affairs” by a new “High Representative (HR) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy”, who will be double-hatted as Vice-President (VP) of the European Commission, and will be supported by a European External Action Service. In the institutional setting, a further novelty is created by the new permanent President of the Council who will chair the European Council and ensure the external representation of the Union in issues concerning its common and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

In 2016, HR/VP Federica Mogherini drew up a new security strategy, the European Union Global Strategy, which, along with the Russian annexation of Crimea, the scheduled UK’s withdrawal from the EU and the election of Donald Trump as US President have given the CSDP a new impulse.

Box 1 below presents a synthetic chronology of the EU Common Foreign, Security and Defense Policy.

Box 1: Chronology of a Common EU Foreign, Security and Defense Policy

March 1948: Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the UK sign the Brussels Treaty of mutual defense.

April 1949: The US, Canada and ten West European countries sign the North Atlantic Treaty.

May 1952: The European Defense Community Treaty is agreed by the six ECSC member states. It would have created a common European army, and permitted West Germany’s rearmament. In August 1954, the French National Assembly rejects the Treaty.

October 1954: The Western European Union (WEU) is created on the basis of the Brussels Treaty, and expands to include Italy and West Germany. West Germany joins NATO.

October 1981: Measures approved in the London Report include the crisis consultation mechanism: any three foreign ministers can convene an emergency EPC meeting within 48 hours. In meetings with third country representatives, the presidency can be accompanied by the preceding and succeeding presidencies (the *troika*).

October 1984: The WEU is reactivated, as WEU foreign and defense ministers agree to meet regularly.

February 1986: The Single European Act (SEA) is signed, and contains Title III on the EPC. The EPC can discuss the “political and economic aspects of security”.

February 1992: The Maastricht Treaty is signed, replacing the EPC with Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Council of foreign ministers will decide Common Positions and Joint Actions, and the QMV can be used to implement the latter.

June 1992: The Petersberg Declaration states that the WEU will engage in humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and crisis management tasks, including peacemaking (“Petersberg Tasks”).

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January 1994: The NATO summit agrees that the NATO assets can be used by the WEU and endorses the concept of “Combined Joint Task Forces”.

October 1997: The Amsterdam Treaty is signed, and contains several reforms of the CFSP pillar. QMV is to be used to implement the European Council Strategies, and member states can abstain from decisions. A high Representative for the CFSP is created.

December 1998: Franco-British declaration on EU military capability at St. Malo.

June 1999: The Cologne European Council agrees that the EU should be able to undertake the Petersberg Tasks, replacing the WEU.

December 1999: The Helsinki European Council sets the headline goal for the common European security and defense policy.

July 2001: European Union Satellite Centre is established, in order to support early warning and crisis monitoring functions of the CFSP and the CSDP. The Centre becomes operational on 1 January 2002.

March 2002 – June 2003: Convention on the Future of Europe drafts a constitutional Treaty creating a European foreign minister; a European external action service (EEAS); a European armaments, research and military capabilities agency.

November 2003: EU foreign ministers reach agreement on permanent structured cooperation in defense (battle groups); a mutual assistance clause; creation of an EU civil and military planning cell within the EU military staff.

June 2004: The provisions agreed since 2002 are incorporated in the draft constitutional Treaty, and many are implemented without Treaty ratification (excepting the foreign minister and the EEAS).

June 2007: The European Council agrees a negotiating mandate for a new reform Treaty, which retains the constitutional Treaty’s provisions on foreign relations (the post of foreign minister being renamed High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy).

December 2009: The Lisbon Treaty enters into force.

March 2012: For the first time, the Foreign Affairs Council activates the EU Operations Centre to coordinate the on-going CSDP missions in the Horn of Africa.

Source: Tache (2015), pp. 9-11.

Brexit and its implications for EU defense and security

On 23rd June 2016, the UK voted to leave the EU, the depart being scheduled for 29 March 2019. This decision raises important questions for security and defense in the UK, Europe and the world. Both UK and the EU risk becoming less secure if Brexit negotiations lead to a “zero-sum” game and a “messy” divorce. The key aspects regard:

- a) the impact on defense expenditures, industry and military research
- b) UK membership in EU institutions
- c) UK and EU global strategic roles, including their position in international organizations, such as NATO and UN

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d) domestic effects linked to Northern Ireland's peace process and the Scottish independence.

According to Black et al. (2017), defense may be less immediately affected by Brexit than areas such as labor policy or trade. Much international defense cooperation takes place through NATO or bilaterally – as will remain the case after the UK leaves the EU. The analysis of the above quoted authors highlights the need for sustainable post-Brexit solutions for defense and security. This will require effective compromise and continued engagement between the UK and EU, which have both benefited from information-sharing, the joint work of bodies like Europol, and use of the European Arrest Warrant¹.

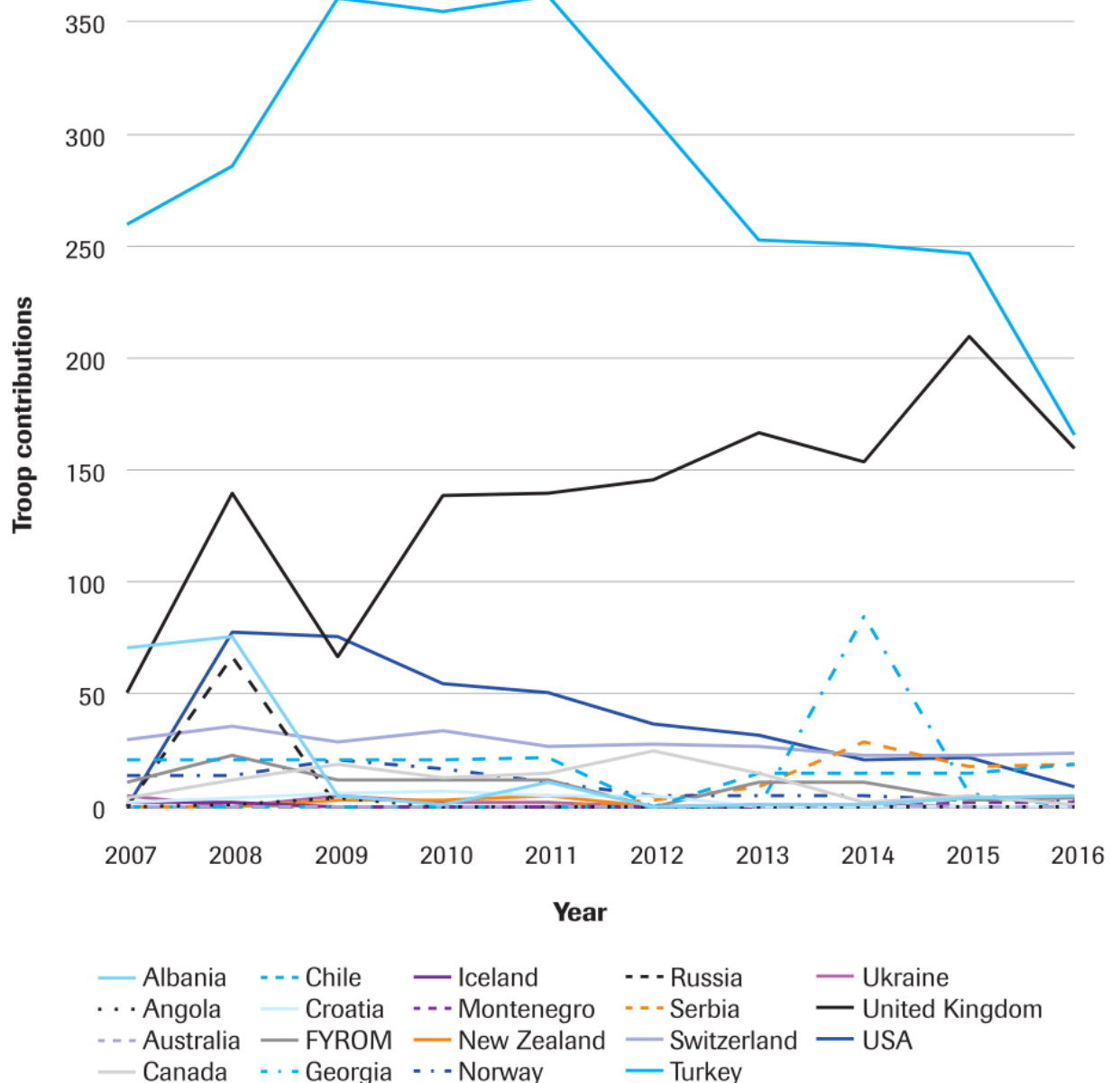
As regards the future of EU defense and security, it seems that Brexit represents a significant loss for the EU. Some estimate that Brexit could reduce the EU's defense capabilities by a quarter. UK is indeed a net contributor to European defense and security (unlike other policy areas). This is the reason why EU leaders are working at present to promote EU defense integration through a European operational headquarters, a plan which was not agreed by UK while a EU member state.

UK backed always the CSDP of the EU with significant political weight – being a nuclear power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It also brought technical and military expertise to Brussels institutions, which will be difficult to be substituted. However, UK's military and political weight is not reflected in its contribution to the CSDP (Bakker et al., 2017). Both in terms of personnel contributions to missions and operations and capability development cooperation, UK has not been at the forefront. It has been reluctant to put its capabilities at the EU disposal and has refrained from participating in the largest research projects of the European Defense Agency (EDA). As regards personnel contributions, UK ranks 11th – behind small military powers like Austria or Romania. Figure 1 below presents the number of personnel offered by UK and third countries – that is the group of countries the UK will join after Brexit.

Figure 1: Third country and UK personnel contributions to CSDP missions and operations 2007-2016

¹ The European Arrest Warrant (EAW) was created in 2004 for faster and simpler surrender procedures and an end to political involvement in extradition procedures. EU countries can no longer refuse to surrender their own citizens to another EU country, if the citizen has committed a serious crime or is suspected of having committed such a crime in another EU country.

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Source: SIPRI Multilateral Peace Operations Database

No matter how Brexit negotiations will evolve, the deteriorating security situation in Europe’s neighborhood, terrorism on European capitals and the recent US troubled commitment to NATO call for a deep and special partnership between the UK and the EU.

Conclusions

Unlike other policy areas which are commonly agreed by EU member states (such as trade, development assistance, humanitarian aid, enlargement, neighborhood policy or Eastern partnership), security and defense are not yet deeply integrated. The historical evolution of the security and defense policy of the EU shows sometimes completely different views and stances regarding the international conflicts and the solution for stopping them.

In this context, Brexit could have important consequences for the future security and defense policy of the EU, including the cooperation between the UK and its European

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neighbors. As far, the British government made clear that it intends to build a “deep and special security partnership” with the EU. As Chalmers (2018) points out, achieving a strong post-Brexit security partnership will require difficult decisions on both sides. The EU will need to move beyond its attempts to see the issues involved primarily through the prism of existing third-country models (for example, with Norway and Switzerland), and recognize the unique importance of maintaining close cooperation with one of Europe’s most capable security actors. For its part, the UK will need to be clearer as to how far it is prepared to continue current levels of cooperation (for example, in relation to data-sharing), even when this involves a loss of policymaking autonomy.

In the present tense global context, marked by terrorism and the rise of ultra-nationalist populist parties, UK and the EU should to recognize that they are uniquely bound by common interests and values.

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