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THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE & SECURITY

CICAs June 2018 (Madrid & Krakow)

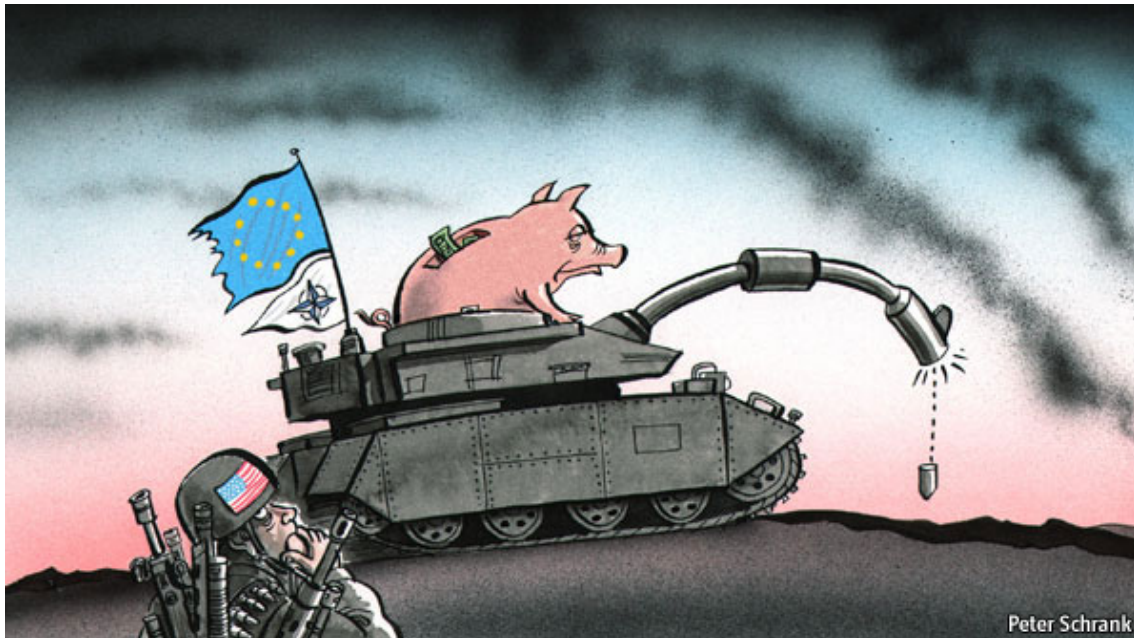
by

J. Martin Ramírez & J. Cayón

Universidad Antonio de Nebrija

Madrid, Spain

* correspondence: mramirez@ucm.es and jcayon@nebrija.es



It is not any secret that Europe has shortcomings in defence and security. Being realistic, its military strength is relied on the Americans. Without America, the military punch of even the most powerful European members, Britain and France, is limited. There is a Europe's feeble spending on defence. Although Europe has a larger GDP than America, US is covering more than 70% of the alliance's spending.

Unless Europe enhances its defence spending -target of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence, compared with America's commitment of some 5% of GDP-, NATO faces "collective military irrelevance" and a "dim and dismal future", as the former American Defence secretary Robert Gates bluntly asserted quite a few years ago. What is more, as President Trump has recently said, Europeans should not take America's commitment for granted.

Since the main purpose of our present intervention is to focus on some important points that merit to be discussed in depth during two coming international conferences that the Spanish Pugwash National Group is organizing for 2018, in Madrid and in Krakow, on the Future of Defence and the Security in Europe, respectively, we will limit our present parliament to list some of them, besides other ones may also be suggested.

1. NATO's mission: After the collapse of the Soviet empire and the end of the cold war, the initial mission of NATO -confronting the Soviet Union- seemed to become almost obsolete. America's security concerns had other priorities, shifting from Europe to the Middle East and Asia. NATO's hot war, in Afghanistan, went badly and kept out of other important issues related to the security of the world: far from getting directly involved in the war against Islamic terrorism, let the antiterrorism strategy in hands of the EU or of each individual member; it was unable to take part as such in Iraq, even if one of its members, Turkey, made an appeal to the article 5 of its Treaty.

NATO congratulated itself on winning the cold war without firing a shot, and then reuniting Europe with its eastward expansion, even if the alliance is at odds over further expansion to the Balkans. Members of "old Europe" may hope to avoid a clash with the Kremlin, but many countries of "new Europe" say the struggle has already begun. For them security lies in expanding the frontiers of what was once the transatlantic alliance to the Black Sea and ultimately to the Caspian.

Yet the mood is of trouble and uncertainty. At its core, Russia led by a belligerent President Putin nurtures the old dispute with NATO. The Kremlin regards as an affront NATO's idea of extending NATO's promise of mutual defence to countries that could drag them into direct confrontation with Russia, particularly when it encroaches on chunks of the former Soviet Union.

The renewed threat from Russia was analyzed at the 2014 NATO summit, in Wales, with a returned NATO to its cold-war role of territorial defence, and at the 2016 summit, in Warsaw, reassuring its nervous eastern members and re-establish effective deterrence in front of Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad, which borders Poland and Lithuania and of the Ukrainian issue with the Readiness Action Plan.

From the another side, Russian and Chinese navies staged together a joint exercise in the Baltic Sea, officially called “Maritime Cooperation 2017” ([Kaliningrad 21-28 July 2017](#)), “for confront security threats in the sea”, according to the Russian Ministry of Defence, as a response to the growing military activity of the Alliance in the Baltic, wanting to express their shared resentment of American and NATO naval power: they “ have no hegemony in this territory”.

These Russia's bullying tactics are backfiring, forcing Europeans into adopting a more assertive stand. The question would be how much military planning is needed to cope with Russia’s sabre-rattling.

2. EU & NATO: Successive American administrations have implored their European allies to stop cutting their military budgets and to spend what money they have on the things that matter. That means not so much a higher level of participation of Europe in NATO’s command structure but its capabilities, with more specialization and modern equipment rather than static divisions, bloated bureaucracies.

NATO and the EU have to find new ways of working together, f.in., allowing NATO to support EU-led operations in which the alliance as a whole is not engaged. For the time being, military forces are national; and the stronger they are, the stronger will be both the EU and NATO, even if this tendency for the two organizations to work in parallel rather than together is expensive and leads to wasteful duplication and muddle.

The EU is pushing for more military integration, “Europeanising” defence, suggesting that nowadays Europe has to start taking care of its own security and defence, even if this means duplicate stuff that NATO is much better equipped to do and unsettle the alliance. In this direction, Juncker is backing an EU defence fund for common research and procurement, and for capital spending to be excluded from the commission’s rules on fiscal deficits.

Some countries favor creating a European army –a federalist idea as old as the hope for European unity-, but, being realistic, it is not easy at all to get an agreement of almost thirty countries: most of them are still too much attached perhaps to their old national sovereignties, not willing to depend on others, paralyzed by historical irreconcilable differences and, even less, to be dragged into somebody else’s war. We will limit examples found in our own country: the attitude of the last Spanish socialist government that, in spite of talking about *todos para uno* and the “efficient multilateralism” of ONU, they did not want it for NATO, the only multilateral organization which may be really efficiently interoperable: Spain ran away unilaterally from the coalition in Irak, refused the assumption of combat tasks in Afghanistan, or left Kosovo in a not very elegant way. In addition, the alliance’s more Atlanticist members, such as USA, Canada or Britain, have always mistrusted Franco-German plans for establishing an EU military planning, autonomous operational European command headquarters and, even more, an EU army.

3. Besides its situation within NATO, another important point related to the defence of Europe, is the outcome **problem of the BREXIT**. Now that the EU is in trouble and Britain has voted to leave, the idea of military integration is being revived. The European Union is pushing for more military integration but, being the British the strongest European army and a nuclear power, this may more clearly exposes Europe to its weakness. There has been much debate in national capitals on a new defence initiative, perhaps even setting up an operational military headquarters, which will be easier to do without a carping Britain, permanent member of the UN Security Council and historically close to the States... Keeping Britain involved makes obvious sense.

Of course, there is good reason not to allow non-members full participation in the single EU market, since that could undermine the principle that the economic and trade privileges it confers are contingent on accepting its rules and obligations. But such *quid pro quo* does not apply to security policy, judicial matters or foreign and defence policy.

This flexibility, indeed, was the thinking behind the “pillar structure” set up by the 1992 Maastricht treaty, which was an attempt to create common foreign and security policies (CFSP) and an area of freedom and justice on an inter-governmental basis, without supervision or interference by the EU’s institutions. Later treaties folded these

subjects back into normal EU rules and practice, although most policymaking still retains the unanimity requirement. A CFSP without Britain would be weaker and less effective. Hence the need for some institutional innovation -observer status, partial or associate membership- that brings Britain into the picture and helps to secure its solidarity with its European partners. The lack of specific norms and requirements in security matters allows a bigger flexibility for finding the most adequate cooperation between all of them.

4. Preserving security is another European priority: besides the risks and threats to the existence, identity, integrity, independence and sovereignty of each nation, which have to be under the responsibility of the domestic security forces of each country, there are other threats common to a group of nations associated in a wider system which should be under common defence and security policies, integrating all the national capabilities through more effective and non necessarily military international means. For instance, international co-operation in the intelligence information fighting against terrorism and organized crime is vital. And, to persuade skeptic mentalities, who may be against raising military spending, it is wise to remember that most of these modern threats to our security -not limited to violence, but including also other hazardous situations concerning infrastructures, policy, economy, welfare of the inhabitants of the Earth...- are best dealt with by civilian bodies. This explains the importance of improving the common security policy in the European Union.

A couple of examples that may corroborate its usefulness are the run EU military and civilian missions, such as Operation Sophia, launched last year against migrant-traffickers in the Mediterranean, and Operation Atalanta, an anti-piracy campaign off the coast of Somalia that began in 2008; or the establishment of a relationship of sorts between Kosovo and Serbia in the western Balkans.

Many modern-day security threats are pushing NATO and the EU to work together against new threats such as energy blackmail and cyber-attacks (we all remember the recent *WannaCry*, that affected a wave of ransomware in many companies, hospitals and shops of more than 150 countries, or the Ukrainian cyberattack *NotPetya*), and “hybrid warfare” (the mix of conventional force, political subversion and disinformation that helped Russia conquer Crimea).

5. Control of flows of migrants and refugees is an issue essential to be considered, even if politically touchy too.

That workers become far more productive when they move from a poor country to a rich, well-run one, is a reasonable assertion, because there they are better educated and live in societies that have developed institutions that foster prosperity and peace. And their non-economic benefits are hardly trivial, either.

Nobody may question either the humanitarian duties that EU and each of its members have towards economic immigrants and especially political refugees. But there is the danger that a naive *buenism* may blur some realistic lines recognizing the danger that a lack of an adequate control of illegal migrants, affecting the common European security. Many European countries have not yet come to grips with how to manage migration. We should not forget that “open borders” does not mean “no borders” or “the abolition of the nation-state”, but that people are free to move to find work.

An understandable fear of the locals, however, may be that if lots of people migrate from, say, war-torn Syria, gangster-plagued Central America or chaotic Congo, the newcomers might bring mayhem with them, becoming worse the life of the locals: those with similar skills may experience a slightly depressing in their the wages; a higher rate of crimes –it is a sad fact that migrants are more likely to get into trouble than locals-; perhaps there is a lack of integration of many newcomers, bringing unwelcome customs that change the local traditions and threat its political system or its culture, with a consequent danger on the social cohesion of the host countries – Sweden and Germany are becoming a sad example-; or even headline-grabbing acts of terrorism, as a practically daily basis news of attacks in Western Europe during the last two years show.

The chaos enveloping practically all Middle East and Libya has sent a wave of refugees into Europe, creating an urgent and not quite well solved refugee crisis; the threat of Islamic State terrorism is more than alive; a Turkey which has become more violent mess than ever, specially after the failed *coup d’Etat* against an increasingly distant President Erdogan; a uncontrolled migrant flows, embebed by people-traffickers and terrorists... It is more than understandable the increasing concern of the Europeans in front of these facts; it would be quite irresponsible to pass over closing the eyes to these threats to security. European Security, thus, is not short of threats that have to be tackled efficiently by the European Union.

These considerations explain the attitude of some European countries, like the Visegrad group, although not only them –seven countries, so far, in the Central Europe Defence Cooperation (CEDC)- that want to preserve their national sovereignty, protecting the borders from unwanted criminals, arriving within an uncontrolled massive waves of so-called “political refugees”, even if many times are just “economic migrants” who are looking for a better world.

All those above mentioned topics and other related ones are going to be subject of our two coming CICAs (International Conferences on Conflict and Aggression) to be held this coming June 2018 on: **Security in Europe** (Krakow, 6-8 June 2018) and **The future of European Defence** (Madrid, 11-13 June 2018), respectively. In order to facilitate the attendance to both meetings of colleagues from abroad, we will put them in two contiguous weeks: 6-8 June in Poland, and 11-13 June in Spain.

The leading thought behind both CICAs is presenting various preventive methods for the reduction of violence in all the world, but with a special focus on Europe, that can be used in the intercultural dialogue among the diverse societies living in the contemporary Europe.

Those colleagues interested to participate may:

access to the CICAInternational's website -

<http://www.cicainternational.org/CICAinternational/index.html.html>

and contact the local organizers:

mramirez@ucm.es and science2@apeiron.nazwa.pl