President Macron's Economist Interview: Reactions and Implications

President Macron (and Edith Piaf's) "Cri de Coeur": Present at the Creation Round 2

11/11/2019

By Kenneth Maxwell

President Emanuel Macron's long and provocative interview in "The Economist" coincided with the celebrations marking the fall of the Berlin Wall, 30 years ago, on November 9th, 1989, which brought a peaceful end to the Cold War in Europe.

President Macron's interview also coincided with the beginning of the campaign in yet another British "Brexit" General Election.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was an unexpected event.

It created the opportunity for the emergence of a new United Europe: "Whole and Free" as the saying went. It led to a reunited Germany which was to become the dominant economic power at the core of the new Europe.

It also marked the collapse of Soviet dominated Warsaw Pact, and it opened the door for the incorporation of the new democracies which replaced the communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe to join the expanded institutions of the European Community.

It led to the expansion of NATO eastward to incorporate a reunited Germany, Poland, and the Baltic states.

The Soviet Union collapsed and was replaced by a resentful, shrunken (and initially chaotic) but profoundly irredentist Russia.

A Pew Survey in 2015 found that 61% of Russians believed that parts of neighboring countries really belonged to Russia, 69% believed that the breakup of the Soviet Union had been a bad thing, and 60% wanted the Ukraine to splinter further. The Russian "near abroad" and former parts of the old Russian Empire and the USSR (as well as territories within the new Russian Federation like Chechnya where open warfare broke out during the rule of Boris Yeltsin and thereafter), were to become targets of opportunistic interventions once Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000 and consolidated his authority.

Nothing in history stays still for very long.

President Macron is right about this. Few victories go uncontested. History did not "end" in 1989, nor did wars end in 1989. Within two years of the fall of the Berlin Wall internecine conflicts began in the Balkans. In 2001 the Al-Qaeda terrorist group struck the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon In Washington DC. Conflicts were merely sublimated, transferred, and relocated onto new but equally dangerous paths. In response to the 9/11 attacks President George W. Bush launched his "war on terror" and began the endless American military engagements in Afghanistan, and then launched a war against Saddam Hussein, the disastrous consequences of which was the rise of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or (Daesh) seizing control of large territorial portions of Syria and northern Iraq.

America's NATO allies were drawn into both of these American military interventions, most especially Britain under Tony Blair's Labour government (despite large scale popular opposition at home and dishonest justifications), though not significantly France, which although it was involved in Afghanistan after 2001, was strenuously opposed to participation in the military intervention in Iraq. In 2008 the global financial crisis shook the foundations of the western financial system. In 2011 the Arab spring brought hope and then disaster to the Middle East, with brutal and unending civil conflict in Syria. Britain and France intervened in Libya (with the US under President Obama leading "from behind"), but then left Libya in chaos after Muammar al-Gaddafi was overthrown and assassinated. Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe shook Nice, Paris, Brussels, London and Birmingham.

The new Europe had already emerged in the decade before the Fall of the Berlin Wall, with important developments in the South. Portugal, then Spain and Greece, had all emerged as democracies in the mid-1970s after long periods of right-wing dictatorships.

Portugal had been a founding member of NATO despite being ruled by the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar. Spain had not been a member of NATO until it joined in 1982 after the Spanish Caudillo, Generalissimo Francisco Franco, died in 1975. The entrance of both Spain and Portugal into the European Community took place in 1986 when they acceded to the then "Europe of Twelve."

The US already had military bases in Spain during the Franco regime. But NATO membership for Spain required a referendum of the Spanish people in 1986 in order for accession to be approved. The successful integration of the two former Iberian dictatorships into the Western European democratic mainstream, however, was undoubtedly a major achievement of the 1980s, and the role of West Germany in this process was notable, in both Portugal and in Spain, by providing political and financial support through the West German political parties and their party affiliated trade unions and international foundations.

In fact, the models of democratic transition provided a positive model for post-Berlin Wall post-communist eastern Europe

Prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall major changes had also occurred in the Eastern Europe and especially within the Soviet Union and within the Soviet dominated Eastern European satellites, which in the final analysis, made the reunification of Germany, and the expansion of the EU and NATO to the East possible.

The rise of Lech Walesa and the Solidarity movement in Poland, the rise of Vaclav Havel and the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, contestation in Hungary where the electrified wire border fence was turned off, and the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 as the leader of the Soviet Union who was not prepared to use brute force to sustain Soviet domination (as had happened in in 1968), meant that East Germany found itself increasingly isolated within the eastern bloc. In 1989 East Germany was the last dike holding out while the force of the water pent up behind the dike was finding exit channels all around it.

I was in Berlin for a conference earlier in 1989 just prior to the fall of the wall. I had been speaking at a seminar on the democratisation of the Iberian Peninsula. Stanley Payne, the American historian of Spain was there, as well as several leading political figures involved in the democratic transitions from both Spain and Portugal.

There were participants from East Germany who sat throughout in stony silence. We went over into East Berlin through Checkpoint Charlie. I will never forget the female East German border guard who checked me out. She was a splitting image of the female border guard who had daggers hidden in her boots in the James Bond movie.

Ironically l had been in Berlin during Easter 1961 on my way by train via Warsaw to Moscow.

We had also visited East Berlin then and brought back four Berliners who jumped aboard our bus and were tucked away under our feet as they fled from the Russian zone. The Berlin Wall went up on August 13, 1961 five months later.

NATO has been founded in 1949 with 12 European and two North American members. Greece and Turkey joined in 1952, West Germany in 1955. Spain in 1992. The Warsaw pact was dissolved in 1991, and the expansion of NATO to the east occurred in 1999 when Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic joined over Russian objections.

There was, and there remains, much controversy over the understandings undertaken or implied or not undertaken between east and west over NATOs expanded role into the former communist states in eastern Europe.

But despite these Russian objections NATO in 2004 incorporated seven more Central and Eastern European nations, including Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania.

There is an elementary rule of physics that an action produces a reaction.

Predictably the Russian Pushback began. Putin in 2014 audaciously made a successful land grab for the Crimea, a iconic location of Russian conflict with Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire, during the 19th century. He launched a long war of attrition within Ukraine's eastern boundary. He exploited American indecision over Syria to provide critical military support to the floundering Assad regime allowing Assad to regain lost territory and seize the initiative in the grotesque and bloodily Syrian conflict. He engaged with Turkey to outflank Trump and become (possibly) the major outside broker in Middle Eastern diplomacy, backed with the unambiguous use of diplomatic influence and of force where necessary.

President Macron is right about the retreat of American engagement under President Donald Trump.

But this retreat began earlier.

The real challenge lies in the shifting of the tectonic plates of world power and politics and conflicts and in the manner in which they are conducted, which has changed dramatically over the past decade.

We have long since ceased to live in an American dominated unipolar world. The authoritarian regimes of China, Russia, Turkey, and Iran and North Korea, not to mention the growing web of south-south relationships between India, China, Brazil and South Africa though the embryonic BRICS institutions, investment, and trade, are all players in this new emerging re-configuration of power, competition and challenge.

Meanwhile, the core participants, those "present at the creation" in the words of Dean Acheson, of the post WW2 global order, the United States and Great Britain, are each engaged in their own psychodramas.

Some of these psychodramas are encouraged and stimulated by Russian clandestine cyber-warfare, a new and increasingly effective ingredient in international clandestine competition.

Macron refers to the British Brexit mess as an irritating sideshow.

It is not.

Britain remains a member of the UN Security Council like France. It remains a middle range military power with the capacity for overseas engagement, also like France. It is a nuclear power, also like France.

The British referendum which resulted in a majority voting in favor of leaving the EU is a continuing and self-inflicted blow to the European Union idea which should not be underestimated. The result of the three-and-a-half years of paralysis since the referendum over EU membership also reflects a wider disenchantment with the political system and in particular with the political class.

The Pew Research Center's global attitude survey earlier this year found that in Britain 69% of the population were dissatisfied with the way democracy was working, which ironically approached the attitude Russians where the survey found 64% were dissatisfied (In Sweden by way of contrast 72% were satisfied, though in France only 41% were satisfied.)

The election campaign has begun with a battle between "the toffs" and "the chavs," between a posh-boy mini-would-be British Trump in the person of Alexander Boris de Pfellel Johnson, the Eton College and Balliol College, Oxford University, educated, Manhattan born, former Oxford Union president, and sacked columnist for the London "Times" for falsifying a quotation, and

then the correspondent for the “Daily Telegraph” in Brussels, where he entertained and stocked up his eurosceptic readership with tales of the absurdities of the Brussels Eurocrats.

He then was elected as the mayor of London were he hosted the London Olympic Games (successfully) and introduced a hire cycle scheme known colloquially as “Boris Bikes.”

He is also known for his verbal excesses, his sexism, his homophobia, and his crass comments about Muslims. Together with Jacob Rees-Mogg, the leader of the House of Commons, Boris Johnson is a caricature of English upper class privilege and entitlement.

The “leader of Her Majesty’s Most Loyal Opposition” (his official title), Jeremy Corbyn, has an equally absurd profile of class resentment, stepped in an anti-American sub-Marxism from the 1970s.

Corbyn was an overseas student volunteer in Jamaica and then travelled extensively in Latin America between 1969 and 1970, joining anti-military regime demonstrations in Brazil, and witnessing the election of Salvador Allende in Chile. His current wife is a Mexican. He was apparently for a time under surveillance by MI5, and for two decades by the Special Branch of the metropolitan police as he was deemed to a subversive. He has been a participant in the campaign for nuclear disarmament, the campaign for a United Ireland, and he was a vocal opponent of the Iraq war, and a warm admirer of the late Venezuelan socialist leader Hugo Chaves. He has long been a eurosceptic. He is in favor of the nationalisation of public utilities and the railways. And needless to say he is in favor of nuclear disarmament and approves of the UK leaving NATO. He has been dogged by accusations of anti-semitism in the Labour Party.

Both Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn are entirely out of touch with electorate which is utterly fed up with the shenanigans of their would-be political leaders inside and outside parliament.

Not surprising they have agreed to one on one debates excluding the Liberal Democrats, the Brexit party, the Scottish Nationalist Party, the Greens, and the Welsh Nationalists. Which is s huge mistake since the upcoming election and Brexit could well lead to Scottish Independence next year and renewed conflict in Ireland over unification.

Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn are promising a Christmas tree laden with goodies in a pre-Christmas election. Yet all these promises are underwritten by massive unfunded and borrowed money to fund these competing giveaways.

Thank you, President Macron, for the wakeup call.

You make some very pertinent arguments as always.

They should be debated.

But l very much doubt anyone, especially in navel-gazing Britain and in the Trump obsessed USA, is listening.

Providing Macronite to Revive the West

11/12/2019

By Robbin Laird

In the United States, we have tweeting Trump and the impeaching House of Representatives; in Europe they have Macronite.

We have had and continue to have a significant deluge of comments on President Trump and his approach to foreign policy with little that has a positive tinge to it; but what about Macronite?

How positive or significant is this for shaping the second creation of the West?

The first creation was lead by the United States after World War II with the laying down of the rules based order; the Post-Cold War period was more or less acting on the belief that the collapse of the Soviet Union allowed those rules of the game to be extended East.

But in fact, little noticed was the rise of 21st century authoritarian capitalist powers who were key anchors of globalization and have woven themselves into the fabric of the liberal democratic societies.

With the 21st century authoritarian powers working to write the rules of the game going forward rather than reinforcing the rules based order, what should and can the Western liberal democracies do?

In his recent interview with *The Economist,* the President of the Republic provided his answer and having done so, he deserves a serious examination of whether or not that resets the effort in a manner that can lead the way ahead.

He certainly has provided a wide ranging analysis of the current situation; but does the Macronite approach going forward provide a realistic way ahead to deal with the current crises?

Let us navigate through his interview and highlight some of his core points to get a sense of how he sees the challenge and gauge his approach to guiding the West to its next phase.

Europe was built on this notion that we would pool the things we had been !ghting over: coal and steel.

It then structured itself as a community, which is not merely a market, it's a political project.

But a series of phenomena have left us on the edge of a precipice…. A market is not a community.

A community is stronger: it has notions of solidarity, of convergence, which we've lost, and of political thought.

What he underscores is the importance of Europe thinking of itself as a community and focus on its common destiny, rather than simply thinking of itself as a trading bloc.

But the challenge facing this core point is rather straightforward: is the European Union with the Commission as its driving force for integration really a custodian for the broader sense of community?

Does Europe need to recast even significantly how the nations can work together to shape community, rather than face a bureaucratic machine which is driving bureaucratically mandated commonality?

And notability, with the expansion of the European Union, there is no way that Western Europe with a 50 year period of working together has as much in common with the "new" states who have been under a 50 year domination by Communism.

This is proving to be a mix which may be more oil and water than providing strands for a single community.

Perhaps there is no single community?

Perhaps we are looking at clusters of states which pursue specific interests in common on particular issues; Rather than thinking of Europe as a community of forced unity.

Maronite is generated by a Europe first policy whereby the Americans are looking elsewhere in the world.

And the current American president is seen to be abandoning the European project.

And with the rise of China, and the preoccupation of the United States with the Pacific, America is focused elsewhere. Of course, there is the largely ignored question of how significant Chinese engagement economically with Europe has become, and whether or not Europe, either individually on the national level or collectively on the European Union level is providing a counter balance to what China has been able to do within Europe itself.

He very clearly focuses on the challenge which the 21st century authoritarian powers pose to Europe while the Americans reduce their commitment to the European project.

So, f!rstly, Europe is gradually losing track of its history; secondly, a change in American strategy is taking place; thirdly, the rebalancing of the world goes hand in hand with the rise—over the last 15 years—of China as a power, which creates the risk of bipolarisation and clearly marginalises Europe.

And add to the risk of a United States/China "G2" the re-emergence of authoritarian powers on the fringes of Europe, which also weakens us very signi!cantly.

This re-emergence of authoritarian powers, essentially Turkey and Russia, which are the two main players in our neighbourhood policy, and the consequences of the Arab Spring, creates a kind of turmoil.

It is hard to disagree with much in his analyses of the world but this is where it gets interesting.

Let us apply some Macronite to the challenges.

His first step: regain military sovereignty.

To do this, he argues for the reinforcement of the European project and having a more realistic assessment of dealing with a "brain dead NATO."

Europe must become autonomous in terms of military strategy and capability. And secondly, we need to reopen a strategic dialogue, without being naive and which will take time, with Russia. Because what all this shows is that we need to reappropriate our neighbourhood policy, we cannot let it be managed by third parties who do not share the same interests

The problem with this can be put simply — it ignores the reality which he has painted earlier.

There is no common European defense because European defense threats are not seen the same way and there is a reverse trend — clusters of states focusing on their specific approaches within an umbrella set of institutions — NATO and the EU.

Does anyone believe that the Nordic states are waiting for France or Germany to defend them?

Hardly.

They have enhanced their own cooperation and have deepened their working relationships with the United States and the United Kingdom and have done so in large part by embracing the latest US military technologies, something which Macron clearly rails against

But as Secretary Wynne once said — "Being the second best air force in a conflict is not where you want to be."

And the United States still offers the best opportunity to not be a second best air force, for example.

And as for his working relationship with Berlin, given that Germany has no real commitment to its own direct defense, there is a question of whether France and Germany could defend a central front if challenged by the Russians.

NATO is only as strong as its member states.

This is certainly true and why Article III of the NATO Treaty is the bedrock for any Article V commitments.

But then we are back to a key question: how convergent is French defense policy with other European states to contribute and to manage the common defense?

Is it actually more convergent than is the United States itself?

He notes: *I think that the interoperability of NATO works well.*

But we now need to clarify what the strategic goals we want to pursue within NATO are.

But the first may be what the European alliances can provide; whereas the second is really left up to the cluster of nations willing to work on specific strategic lines.

Take the case of cyber offense, where France has nothing at all in common with Germany.

Indeed, as a leading French analyst put it to me when I asked him the question: Who are France's allies in cyber offense?

"The Dutch lead the pack because they recognize that the Russians declared war on them with the shoot-down of the Malaysian airliner. Also crucial are the UK, Sweden and the Baltic states."

He then goes on to mischaracterize what the Trump Administration is actually doing for European defense.

Even though the current Administration has significantly stepped up its operational commitments to deal with the Russians, this is what Macron has to say.

In the eyes of President Trump, and I completely respect that, NATO is seen as a commercial project. He sees it as a project in which the United States acts as a sort of geopolitical umbrella, but the trade-o$ is that there has to be commercial exclusivity, it's an arrangement for buying American products. France didn't sign up for that.

This is an indirect comment getting at the "F-35 threat" to Europe which is treated as strategic as the seizure of Crimea by many French analysts.

And hence we see the brith of the Future Combat System and the coming fighter in 2040.

But as one German analyst put it: "I hope we have agreement with the Russians for avoiding conflict until 2040."

In my opinion some elements must only be European.

This is where the Macronite impact could be signifiant, if Europe follows the Finnish approach.

Notably with regard to infrastructure, Europe has allowed the 21st century authoritarian powers to own significant infrastructure elements in Europe.

They are not alone.

This can lead to what John Blackburn, the Australian analyst, to a condition where "we are losing without fighting."

How to control our supply chains and infrastructure to the point whereby the authoritarian powers can not disrupt our capabilities in a conflict is a clear challenge.

And significant focus within Europe on this problem could follow from the Macronite impulse.

Of course, the Finns lead the way on this and not the French.

The underlying idea is that if we're all linked by business, all will be !ne, we won't hurt each other. In a way, that the inde!nite opening of world trade is an element of making peace.

Except that, within a few years, it became clear that the world was breaking up again, that tragedy had come back on stage, that the alliances we believed to be unbreakable could be upended, that people could decide to turn their backs, that we could have diverging interests.

And that at a time of globalisation, the ultimate guarantor of world trade could become protectionist.

Major players in world trade could have an agenda that was more an agenda of political sovereignty, or of adjusting the domestic to the international, than of trade.

The question of the future of globalization is clearly a key one to sort through at the second creation.

And here Macron talks both European values and national sovereignty and assumes that the two blend together — but that is precisely the nexus of the challenge — they do not.

To re design globalization to work with trusted partners, to reshape manufacturing, to shorten supply chains, to deal with the political challenge of the 21st century authoritarian states, certainly starts with national solutions, but ones which recognize the semi-sovereign situation in which the modern democratic state finds itself.

Maron highlights the challenge in his interview, but the question is how best to deal with national sovereignty in a semi sovereign world in which 21st century authoritarian powers are on the ascendancy?

And this is his trajectory with regard to one of the key authoritarian powers, Russia.

If we want to build peace in Europe, to rebuild European strategic autonomy, we need to reconsider our position with Russia. That the United States is really tough with Russia, it's their administrative, political and historic superego. But there's a sea between the two of them.

It's our neighbourhood, we have the right to autonomy, not just to follow American sanctions, to rethink the strategic relationship with Russia, without being the slightest bit naive and remaining just as tough on the Minsk process and on what's going on in Ukraine.

It's clear that we need to rethink the strategic relationship. We have plenty of reasons to get angry with each other. There are frozen conflicts, energy issues, technology issues, cyber, defence, etc.

What I've proposed is an exercise that consists of stating how we see the world, the risks we share, the common interests we could have, and how we rebuild what I've called an architecture of trust and security.

And when asked how the Poles and Balts feel about this approach, he highlights that indeed there are "European" differences.

Having a strategic vision of Europe means thinking about its neighbourhood and its partnerships. Which is something we haven't yet done. During the debate over enlargement, it was clear that we are thinking about our neighbourhood above all in terms of access to the European Union, which is absurd.

Macronite is about driving European solutions to its common neighborhood, but the challenge for France is that the Europe envisaged by the French president may not be the realistic project or outcome.

As former Admiral James Stavridis commented after the release of *The Economist* interview:

NATO is far from brain dead, but it is suffering from the fallout of centrifugal forces pulling Europe apart. NATO has key missions in deterring Russia, the Arctic, cyber, and the Med — all directly affecting USA.

For the full Economist interview, see the following:

https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/11/07/assessing-emmanuel-macrons-apocalyptic-vision

Applying Macronite to the West: Further Reactions

11/23/2019

By Defense.Info

The interview which President Macron gave to *The Economist* has certainly triggered reactions, and comments.

We have published two of our own, and in this article are highlighting some further detailed reactions to the article which provide inputs to the next phase of Western development or what we have called shaping the Second Creation of the West.

Don't Lead Europe by Triggering Its Fears

In a thoughtful piece by Jan Techau, senior fellow and director of the Europe Program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), the author warned of the dangers of how Macron has phrased his criticisms which, in turn, shape his solutions.

Despite a notable military re-investment in Europe that began under president Barack Obama and continues under Donald Trump, this president has destroyed almost all trust in America's role as defender and stabiliser of Europe.

The result is a nervousness and uncertainty that eats like cancer into European stability.

External actors like China and Russia see an opening and invest heavily in splitting up Europe and playing divide and rule. Some countries hope for the best and stay passive, such as Germany.

Others, such as Poland and the Baltic states seek bilateral re-assurance with an uninterested commander-in-chief in the White House. And yet others believe that their moment has come and that some strategic dominance can be achieved in a political market hungry for leadership.

This latter role currently falls to France under president Emmanuel Macron who has announced that his country would lead Europe towards a place of eminence in the emerging world order. To many, however, this ambition smacks of old Gaullism with a new rationale.

Confidence in France's ability to pull it off is extremely limited.

Macron believes that things in Europe are too ossified, that patience will lead to nothing and that disruption is needed to make headway on big goals such as strategic autonomy and European sovereignty.

Even though he might be right on the disruption part, he might have miscalculated on substance.

First, it appears impossible to build a new security architecture that includes a Russia governed by Vladimir Putin. Too brutal have Moscow's tactics been in its 'near abroad' been, too insidious are the Kremlin's attempt to distort the truth and political process in Europe (including in France).

Second, if Macron believes that disruption would bring Europeans closer together, he is almost certainly wrong.

In Europe's low-trust political environment, the instincts of nations under duress have traditionally not been 'let's join forces' but 'everyone for himself'. Integration is not a European instinct, it is an acquired taste.

Take America out of Europe and there are many Europeans who fear only one thing more than a Europe dominated by Germany, and that is a Europe dominated by France.

What this leads to is the old European game: strong leadership by a European power leads to counterbalancing, not bandwagoning. Distrust seeps into the system, malevolent external players feel further emboldened, and the narcissism of small differences becomes the order of the day again.

Political elites in Berlin have stayed largely silent so far, not because of their coveted attitude of restraint but because they are stunned.

They loved to believe that Macron was a genuine European integrationist in the mould of general German pro-European-ness. Now they fear he is an emboldened Gaullist willing to sell out the European spirit at the first convenient America-free moment.

Large parts of the strategic community still console themselves by hoping that, ultimately, he is doing all of this for Europe's greater good and in the name of new European ambition.

But down deep they fear that this could lead to selling out to Russia, throwing central and eastern Europe under bus, alienating Poland and large parts of Europe's north, and going to bed with Trump.

Germany's problem is that it is not at all in the position to complain about Macron's leadership. So few ideas and so little action have come from Berlin that blaming others for leadership sounds stale, to say the least.

Macron should replace the quasi-Trumpian faith in creating turmoil to cure ills with ideas along the line of servant leadership: a forceful offer to fellow Europeans to put French power and French ambition in service of the greater European gain.

Macron could learn a trick or two from the way America led Europe when it was still interested in doing so: the pesky Europeans cannot be lead by triggering their fears.

What is needed is sober strategic assessment, generous offers, tough love, and an attitude that does not play the glory of the nation against the need of the whole continent.

And of course it would help greatly if Berlin finally woke up.

Germany Breaks Silence

Well Germany did break its silence.

According to an article by Steven Erlanger published in *The New York Times* on November 23, 2019:

Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, was uncharacteristically furious. At a dinner to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, she huddled with President Emmanuel Macron of France, who had just given an interview in which he cited the "brain death" of NATO and wondered whether its commitment to collective defense still held.

Mr. Macron had also been the sole leader to veto the start of lengthy membership talks for North Macedonia to join the European Union, despite Skopje's having done everything Brussels had asked of it, including changing the country's name.

"I understand your desire for disruptive politics," Ms. Merkel said, according to a person who was there. "But I'm tired of picking up the pieces. Over and over, I have to glue together the cups you have broken so that we can then sit down and have a cup of tea together."

Mr. Macron defended himself, saying that he could not simply go to a NATO meeting in London in early December and pretend that the United States and Turkey had behaved in the collective interest in Syria.

"I cannot sit there and act like nothing has happened," he said.

European Reactions to Macron Taking NATO to the Woodshed

According to an article published November 25, 2019 in The Express, Chancellor Merkel included Macron in the kind of reaction she has had historically for President Trump.

In the emotive outburst, indicative of the Franco-German power struggle at the heart of the EU, Angela Merkel raged at Emmanuel Macron and said: "I understand your desire for disruptive politics, but I'm tired of picking up the pieces.

"Over and over, I have to glue together the cups you have broken so that we can then sit down and have a cup of tea together."

"Earlier this month, the French President launched another broadside towards his global allies, warning a lack of leadership is causing the "brain death" of the NATO military alliance, questioning whether its commitment to collective defence still existed….

"Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki had also lashed out at Mr Macron when he warned any move to to question the collective defence guarantee included in the NATO treaty were a threat to the future of the European Union and the military alliance.

"Speaking to The Financial Times earlier this month, he said the French President's attack on NATO was "dangerous".

"Mr Morawiecki insisted NATO is "the most important alliance in the world when it comes to preserving freedom and peace".

"He said: "I think President Macron's doubts about NATO's commitment to mutual defence can make other allies wonder if perhaps it is France that has concerns about sticking to it. I hope that we can still count on France fulfilling its obligations.

"France is spending below two per cent of GDP on defence. I think it's worth asking why certain aspects of NATO do not look as we wish.

"It's not for the lack of US commitment to the alliance, but rather the lack of reciprocity on the part of some European allies."

The Sec Gen of NATO Responds

In a November 7, 2019 speech, the Sec Gen of NATO took up Macron's challenge.

The *bond between Europe and North America made it possible to reintegrate Germany into the European and international community, to end the Cold War without a shot being fired, and to create the conditions for European integration.*

The reunification of Germany and Europe would have been impossible without the United States' security guarantee. And further European integration was made possible under the umbrella of security provided by NATO. For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, NATO membership was the first step to integration in the Euro-Atlantic family. A driver of democracy and reform. A step to greater prosperity. And a precursor to EU membership. NATO and the European Union are two sides of the same coin. Indispensable partners for peace and prosperity in Europe.

Any attempt to distance Europe from North America will not only weaken the trans-Atlantic Alliance—it is also risking dividing Europe itself.

European unity cannot replace trans-Atlantic unity. I strongly welcome efforts to strengthen European defense, which can enhance capabilities and burden-sharing within NATO. But the European Union cannot defend Europe.

This is partly about military might. After Brexit, 80 percent of NATO's defense expenditure will come from non-EU allies. And Germany will be the only EU member leading one of NATO's battlegroups in the east of the alliance.

It is also about geography. From Norway in the north to Turkey in the south and the U.S., Canada and the U.K. in the West. All are key to keeping Europe safe.

I say all of this knowing that many of you may be thinking about the disagreements, differences, and divisions among NATO allies over trade, energy, climate change, Iran, and most recently over the situation in northeast Syria. We have had serious differences before—from the Suez Crisis in 1956 to the Iraq War in 2003. But at the end of the day, we have always been able to unite around our core task: to protect and defend each other.

NATO is the only platform where allies from Europe and North America sit down on a daily basis to discuss difficult issues affecting our shared security and to keep our almost 1 billion citizens safe.

Consensus is not always easy. I know that after chairing the North Atlantic Council for some years. But our unity is essential for our shared security. And it is in the national interest of each and every one of us to stay united. It is good for North America. And good for Europe.

Therefore, we all have a responsibility to overcome our differences today, as we have done in the past. Because we are faced with a more unpredictable world. And in uncertain times we need to stand together. We need strong multilateral institutions like NATO.

A more assertive Russia is a key driver for the increased unpredictability we are facing. Its illegal annexation of Crimea was the first time after World War II one country seized another's territory in Europe. North America and Europe have responded in a united and firm way. NATO has implemented the largest reinforcement of our collective defense since the end of the Cold War. And the European Union has stood firm in its use of economic sanctions, demonstrating to Russia the consequences of violating international law and showing the strength of the trans-Atlantic bond.

And Stoltenberg is visiting Paris to discuss with President Macron.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said on Tuesday (Nov 19) that he will visit Paris next week to seek an explanation from Emmanuel Macron after the French president dismissed the alliance as "brain dead".

Stoltenberg mounted a vigorous defence of NATO ahead of a meeting of alliance foreign ministers, saying it was doing more than ever and warning against undermining it.

The diplomatic shockwaves from Macron's forthright interview with The Economist continue to rattle NATO just weeks before a summit in London meant as a 70th birthday celebration for the alliance.

"I will go to Paris next week and there I intend to discuss these issues with President Macron — I think that's the best way to address any differences, to sit down and discuss them and to fully understand the messages and the motivations," Stoltenberg told reporters.

"My message is that NATO is adapting, NATO is agile, NATO is responding."

And Germany Reinforces Stoltenberg But Addresses Macron's Concerns

And in an article by David Herszenhorn, the German government suggests a way ahead.

An array of German officials had pushed back on Macron, including Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer. European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen, who is a former German defense minister, also spoke out in support of NATO, as did the U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas arrived at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Wednesday with a plan to ease the tensions by appointing the expert group, though he was careful to reiterate Germany's position that NATO is indispensable or European security. Still, he conceded in a statement ahead of the ministerial: "NATO has undergone difficult stress tests recently."

At a news conference after Wednesday's meetings, Stoltenberg said the proposal was well-received by allies and would be given further consideration ahead of a leaders' summit in London early next month.

"First of all, allies expressed very strong support to NATO and to the importance of transatlantic unity," Stoltenberg said. "The proposal from Minister Heiko Maas received support from many allies and, I think, it has value and we will now look into it as we prepare for the upcoming leaders' meeting and then we will decide what to do."

Stoltenberg, who had spent much of the last two years safeguarding the alliance amid fierce criticism by U.S. President Donald Trump over insufficient military spending by European allies, made a predictably strong defense of the alliance against Macron's assertions, though he did not address Macron personally other than to say he planned to visit Paris next week.

"We are actually the only platform where North America and Europe sits together, decides together and do things together" on important security issues, he said.

Still, Stoltenberg said he was very open to the Maas proposal. "Again, I think it has value to look into how we can further strengthen NATO and the transatlantic bond. We need to look into this as we prepare for the upcoming leaders' meeting and then we will see what will be the final conclusions," he said at the news conference.

Macron and NATO

12/04/2019

By Andy Law

French president Emmanuel Macron said last week that "we are experiencing the brain death of NATO," calling for the development of a "true, European army."

And he has been backing his words with action.

On Tuesday, European Union ministers proceeded with thirteen defense projects under the Permanent Structured Cooperation initiative, with France taking the lead on ten of them.

The irony is that the idea of a European army, which dates back to the immediate postwar years, may have come to fruition were it not for France and its president, Charles de Gaulle.

In the years following World War II, a robust debate ensued over the question of German rearmament: would Germany ever again be allowed to build up a military? Plenty of domestic and international sentiment was against it. Kurt Schumacher, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and leader of the opposition in the Bundestag, decried rearmament for fear that it would preclude German unification. Nor were European states ready to see a rearmed Germany so soon after the war. Even John J. McCloy, appointed as the Allied High Commissioner for Germany in September 1949 to supervise Germany's economic, military, and foreign policy matters, agreed with this sentiment.

Then, on June 25, 1950, North Korean troops stormed the 38th parallel, marking the start of the Korean War and spreading the fear of a communist takeover across Europe. Ultimately, McCloy's goal was to create a Western-aligned democratic state in West Germany. As such, he realized that to make the state viable, it would need to be able to defend itself and that at some point, it would have to rearm.

Knowing that countries were still reluctant to allow this possibility, McCloy proposed the idea of a European Defense Force (EDF). Each country would contribute divisions to the EDF, to be overseen by a supreme commander and integrated chain of command. Since the EDF would have equal French, British, and German units and German power would be subordinated in a supranational structure, McCloy thought it easier to sell politically.

The French, however, balked at the idea of German units, fearing a resurgent Germany.

French diplomat Jean Monnet—now recognized as a founding father of the European Union—then worked behind the scenes to address the concerns, forming the Pleven Plan. Troops were to be organized in smaller contingents and all troops were to be overseen by their national governments, except for Germany's (to be overseen by the supranational organization). But even

this proved to be insufficient to resolve the impasse. After years of negotiation, the proposal came before the French parliament for ratification in 1954.

President de Gaulle worried that a European army threatened French sovereignty and constitutional integrity and could bring back a militarized Germany.

So, the proposal never passed in Parliament.

And considering that Stalin had recently died, the Korean War had ended, and West Germany would ascend to NATO in 1955, a European army never came to be, its proposed responsibilities today divided among NATO and the European Union.

Ultimately, France's actions today are in line with the Gaullist policies of its past.

President de Gaulle had wanted a Directorate of Three (the United States, the United Kingdom, and France) to dictate Western security.

Unlike the 1950s, in which precluding a rearmed Germany could lead to this arrangement, President Macron is trying to unify a Europe—now with a rearmed Germany and especially one with Brexit-focused Britain—under his country's leadership to form this arrangement.

To do so, he is proposing to create a supranational army that his Gaullist predecessors once rejected, an army that is to render obsolete the transatlantic alliance that made it redundant.

What an irony.

Andy Law a public policy analyst based in Washington, DC and also writes for magazines such as The Diplomat.

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Is NATO Brain Dead?

12/04/2019

By Ian Bond

NATO leaders will meet in London on December 3rd and 4th against a background of internal disagreements.

But reports of the alliance's death are exaggerated.

A lot of water has flowed down the Rhine since NATO celebrated its 60th anniversary in April 2009 with a two-day summit, symbolically shared between the cities of Strasbourg in France and Kehl, on the opposite bank of the river in Germany. Ten years on, as NATO leaders prepare to

meet in London on December 3rd–4th, the alliance feels a lot more fragile and less confident of its future. But NATO's members still have no better framework in which to work together in the interests of their own security.

If leaders want to do something useful in London, they should be honest about their problems, and focus on increasing NATO's role as a place for allies to talk frankly about their security concerns.

NATO feels a lot less confident about its future as it marks its 70th anniversary than it did when it celebrated its 60th.

But it is still the best framework its members have for discussing their security challenges.

In 2009, Barack Obama was on his first official visit to Europe as president, and was immensely popular with Europeans. France announced its full reintegration into NATO's military command structure, reversing President Charles de Gaulle's 1966 decision to leave it. Albania and Croatia officially joined the alliance. NATO leaders issued a 62-paragraph declaration, including everything from tasking officials to draft a new NATO Strategic Concept to offering to enhance dialogue with the African Union. The alliance faced challenges – above all in its operations in Afghanistan – but overall the 60th anniversary summit was the occasion for a show of confidence.

This year, limiting the opportunities for US President Donald Trump to criticise his allies or call into question NATO's existence has become an important objective in planning NATO events.

The London meeting was initially described by the Secretary General in May as a summit and a chance to "address current and emerging security challenges and how NATO continues to invest and adapt to ensure it will remain a pillar of stability in the years ahead".

It has become something much more modest, a 'leaders' meeting' consisting of a single working session at which each country's president or prime minister will have three or four minutes (at least in theory) to say what is on their mind. Leaders will also issue a short statement (which everyone involved hopes will be agreed in advance, to avoid presidents and prime ministers arguing over the text), and approve various documents, including NATO's first military strategy since the 1960s.

Despite the damage limitation measures, there is still a significant risk that NATO will be weaker and more divided after the London meeting than before it.

What was supposed to be a low-key celebration of the alliance's 70th anniversary is taking place in the context of multiple crises, internal and external, and disagreements among allies.

Trump's decision to pull most US troops out of northern Syria without any consultation with his allies infuriated France's President Emmanuel Macron, leading to his observation in an interview with The Economist that we were experiencing the "brain death of NATO".

Macron was equally angry with NATO member Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for his attack on the largely Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), who had been fighting alongside American, French, British and other NATO troops against the so-called Islamic State.

Erdoğan in turn is at loggerheads with his allies over their support for the YPG, the main Kurdish militia in the SDF, whom he regards as part of the Kurdish terrorist organisation the PKK, which is active inside Turkey. Relations with the US are also frosty as a result of Erdoğan's purchase of the Russian S-400 air defence missile system; the US has responded by kicking Turkey out of the multinational F-35 aircraft programme.

Macron has irritated the US over his support for European "strategic autonomy" in defence and foreign policy – or (as he said in his Economist interview) Europe's "military and technological sovereignty".

The Americans see French ideas on European defence industrial co-operation as thinly-disguised protectionism, designed to shut US firms out of EU-funded defence projects.

Macron's initiative, launched this summer, to "ease and clarify our relations with Russia" has gone down badly in Central Europe and even in Germany, where Norbert Röttgen, a senior member of the governing CDU, warned against "rewarding Putin even though he hasn't moved an inch on anything."

The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has implicitly rejected Macron's views on NATO, telling German MPs "The preservation of NATO is in our fundamental interest, even more so than during the cold war".

In normal circumstances one would expect the UK, as the host and one of the allies most invested in NATO's survival and success, to be working to smooth things over.

But the leaders' meeting is taking place eight days before the UK's general election, and preparations have been overshadowed by the UK domestic political turmoil, and an endless stream of Brexit deadlines and related crises.

Trump disrupted the last NATO summit, in July 2018, demanding more burden-sharing from allies and appearing at one stage to threaten that the US would leave the alliance if he was not satisfied.

Though allies are increasing their defence budgets, and Europeans have agreed to pay a bigger share of NATO's administrative and shared military costs, Trump could still give an encore (he has recently shocked South Korea by demanding a five-fold increase in the amount it pays for US forces stationed there, so burden-sharing is clearly on his mind). Facing impeachment hearings in Congress,

Trump may think that berating allies – especially Germany – for inadequate defence spending will play well with his supporters and distract attention from his domestic troubles.

Even if NATO can get through the London meeting unscathed, its leaders should not just breathe a sigh of relief and hope that Trump will be out of office by the time of the next summit (expected in 2021).

In reality, Trump, Erdoğan and Macron all have some valid criticisms of NATO.

The solutions they pursue are likely to do more harm than good to security in Europe; but the correct course is to look for better solutions, not to ignore the problems.

Trump is right to think that Europeans are not spending enough on defence.

But there are solid national security reasons for the US to stay engaged in European security regardless of whether all the allies eventually spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence – not least, the risk that if the US deserts Europe, some Europeans may align themselves unhelpfully with America's rivals, including Russia and China. Beijing and Moscow are using their economic and political influence to try to enlarge the splits between the US and its partners, in Europe and elsewhere; the US should be trying to close the gaps, not widen them.

Trump says Europeans spend too little on defence. Erdogan complains his allies do not take his security concerns seriously. Macron wants Europe to be able to do more without relying on US help.

All are partly right.

European defence spending has risen significantly since Russia's annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine in 2014, responding to a clearly heightened threat to regional security. The most useful thing the US can do to encourage Europeans to continue to invest in defence is to be candid with its allies about the security threats that all face, creating a basis for discussing the capabilities needed to deal with them.

Such exchanges on threat assessments are likely to be even more important as NATO has to face new challenges – both in terms of countries and non-state actors that might affect allies' security interests, and in terms of new domains such as space and cyberspace in which threats might arise.

Very few allies will have the resources to analyse the security picture for themselves, and to make the right decisions about how to respond.

For the first time, NATO has taken an in-depth look at China.

The allies are certainly not ready to label China a potential adversary, or even a strategic competitor. Some allies still see China primarily as an economic opportunity. NATO-China co-operation may be possible in some cases, such as some UN peace-keeping operations.

But allies are starting to get to grips with issues that might arise from China's increasing defence capability, its nuclear weapons programme, its naval deployments (including to European

waters) as well as its non-military activities – such as ownership or control of ports such as Piraeus in Greece and Antwerp in Belgium, or involvement in 5G networks.

NATO members who have insights into China's capabilities and intentions can help others to think through the implications of apparently innocuous Chinese economic activity.

Erdoğan is right to think that Turkey's allies sometimes take it for granted, and that US and allied interventions in Iraq and Syria, on Turkey's borders, have at best not helped the situations there, and at worst made them significantly worse.

But in turning to Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Erdoğan is making a major strategic mistake: Putin's interest is in prising Turkey away from NATO and disrupting the alliance, not in providing a substitute security guarantee. Turkey should not mistake short-term friction in its relations with its partners for a long-term shift in its own security interests.

Other allies should also recognise Turkey's strategic importance. It is easy to be frustrated with Turkish behaviour, such as attacking Kurdish groups in northern Syria, or drilling for gas in Cypriot waters; and right to be worried about human rights in Turkey. But even Erdoğan will not be in power forever, and the West's interest in Turkey's stability and political orientation will outlast him. NATO is the one place where Western countries talk to Turkey, not just about it; the allies should make use of the opportunity for plain speaking on both sides.

Macron is right that in theatres such as Syria allies are acting in an unco-ordinated way, pursuing national interests with little regard for the impact that their actions may have on others.

He might have been wiser to ask privately rather than publicly what sort of response Turkey would get from its allies if it tried to invoke NATO's Article 5 defence guarantee after provoking Syria and Russia; but he was not wrong. The answer, however, should be more, not less, consultation between NATO allies.

Macron's approach to European defence and security has been unwelcome not only in Washington but in most European capitals.

He would have done better to prepare the ground in private, before expressing himself so forcefully to The Economist. He is right to want Europeans to do more for their own security.

But he is wrong to imply that the difference between European and US strategic goals is as big as that between European and Chinese aims; he is wrong to think that Putin's Russia is not NATO's adversary, as he said after meeting the NATO Secretary General on November 28th, or that it can be turned into a partner if Europe breaks with the US and relaxes its sanctions regime; and he is misguided if he thinks that in the foreseeable future Europeans can develop the capabilities to defend themselves entirely without US assistance, or outside a NATO framework.

Allies are waking up to the implications of China's increasing military capability, and its investments in strategic infrastructure in and around Europe, even if they do not want to label it as a potential adversary.

Macron would do better to encourage the new European Commission to take forward work on the 74 'common measures' agreed by the EU and NATO as areas for co-operation – recognising that in dealing with hybrid threats and disruptive technologies both the EU and NATO may have vital contributions to make.

And in dealing with Russia, he should remember that since Putin came to power it has invaded two of its neighbours, Georgia and Ukraine, and carried out assassinations on the territory of at least two NATO member-states, Germany and the UK: a lot would have to change before most NATO countries could start to see it as a potential partner.

Despite having 29 members (soon to be 30, when North Macedonia's accession is ratified) on both sides of the Atlantic, NATO has often been neglected as a forum for political consultation. EU member-states have increasingly focused their discussions in the EU; the US has acted unilaterally or preferred to work with small groups.

But the security environment for all the allies demands broader, not narrower, consultation, and more co-operation between the EU and NATO, and between allies within NATO. The London leaders' meeting is a risky moment; but it may also be a chance for NATO to show that it is not dead yet.

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Shaping Way Ahead for NATO After its 70th Anniversary

12/07/2019

By Peter Rough

The West is in the beginning stages of the most profound societal change since the end of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. New technologies are disrupting established social and economic patterns while generating unprecedented opportunities. These trends, enabled by information technology in particular, will only accelerate, perhaps even exponentially, in the coming decades. At a minimum, the pace of change in society has increased markedly.

These breakthroughs have also spawned the rise of new transnational epistemic communities. In 2011, Chrystia Freeland, now Canada's minister for foreign affairs, described a "21st-century plutocracy" of globe-trotting conferees, operating largely unmoored from their local communities. Joining them today is a new category of social media mavens to form "a global community," as Freeland put it, whose "ties to one another are increasingly closer than their ties

to hoi polloi back home." The ethos that unites them is a decidedly cosmopolitan, globalist worldview.

In large parts of the West, citizens searching for meaning, grounding, tradition, and identity in an era of globalization have rejected these elites and their consensus. Instead, they have turned to new nationalisms that define the West as a mosaic of cultural and historical entities rather than an interwoven community of cosmopolitan ideals. The 2016 election of Donald Trump as president of the United States stands as the most obvious rebuke of cosmopolitanism. For transatlantic observers who had grown complacent on the assumption of ever greater economic and political integration, this setback has come as a bitter shock. At present, nationalism and cosmopolitanism are battling over the future of the West—and with it, over the political foundations of NATO.

This is not the first time that NATO has experienced acute political differences in its ranks. After the military coup in Greece in 1967, for example, relations between the so-called colonels and the alliance were strained. But that challenge, and others since, constituted discrete episodes rather than a general shift in the politics of the West. From Turkish nationalists to American progressives and all points in between, NATO features a growing diversity of political actors with varying preferences. How these politics will evolve no one knows, but there is a clear sense in Western capitals that change is afoot.

Issues at Stake

For a political-military alliance like NATO to function properly, its members must maintain two areas: first, their political commitment to the alliance and, second, the large-scale military investments to back it up. Cosmopolitans have long understood their countries as part of a larger order; in fact, it is rare to hear them make anything other than earnest commitments to the alliance. However, many of them, in Western Europe in particular, have neglected their national military capabilities. Germany, for instance, is scheduled to take as long to reach its target of investing the equivalent of 1.5 percent of its gross domestic product in defense—already a downward revision from the goal of 2 percent on which allies agreed at their 2014 summit in Wales—as the country took to fight World Wars I and II combined. In large parts of Europe, the United States is expected to pick up the slack, if military force is considered important at all.

By contrast, the new nationalists of the West seem to carry a certain martial vigor and esprit de corps. But these nationalisms also run the risk of devolving into narrow, even ugly parochialisms. In several NATOcountries, self-proclaimed nationalists have questioned the wisdom of containing Russia—to name one alliance objective—despite the Kremlin's obvious hostility to the West. Like France's former president Charles de Gaulle, the leader of the country's far-right National Rally, Marine Le Pen, has pressed for France to leave NATO's integrated command structure. She has also called for an end to sanctions over Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea.

But what about the United States? It remains the center of gravity of the alliance as its largest and most powerful state, but it, too, seems divided between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. To sustain U.S. support for the alliance in the coming decades, NATO must not rest on its

laurels. Principally, allies need to address the imbalance in the distribution of the military burden. The United States accounts for two-thirds of all defense spending in the twenty-nine-member alliance, despite the near economic parity between the United States and Europe. This makes it too easy for U.S. administrations of all stripes to cast the Europeans as de facto free riders. Burden sharing constitutes the most serious U.S. objection to NATO. In combination with the new temptation of parochialism in Washington, it risks hollowing out the U.S. commitment to the alliance altogether.

As a treaty-based alliance of sovereign states, NATO is the international organization that most easily traverses the cosmopolitan-nationalist divide in the United States. To date, the American people and their representatives remain broadly supportive of the alliance, evidenced by polling and the applause for NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg's April 2019 address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress. So long as the United States stays supportive, NATO will remain a strong military force.

The alliance features prominently in the United States' most important strategy documents, from the National Security Strategy to the National Defense Strategy and the National Military Strategy. For almost every major operation abroad, Washington looks to its primary European allies first for support and assistance. In that sense, the alliance also performs a valuable psychological function. The United States is most confident when it receives the support of its democratic partners, whose endorsement serves as a form of validation for especially thorny decisions.

The European Deterrence Initiative is an example of the best that NATO has to offer. It seeks to protect the alliance's Eastern flank against potential Russian aggression through a battalion-sized group of multinational forces in the Baltic, with a brigade-sized force of U.S. troops in neighboring Poland. Germany, Canada, and the United Kingdom lead the deployments in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, respectively. Farther abroad, NATO is leading a mission in Afghanistan. By virtually any metric, the alliance is a net benefit to U.S. national security. But it requires shared sacrifice lest it decay to the point of losing meaning.

Recommendations

As an international, rather than supra- or transnational organization, NATO has largely managed to sidestep the political divisions roiling the West. In the preamble of its founding charter, the alliance commits its members "to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law." NATO should remain focused on that core mission—one that allies of all hues should be able to embrace.

In the post–Cold War era, the West lost the binding force of a common enemy in the Soviet Union. Instead, it turned inward and focused on the important task of extending democracy to the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. Of late, however, this internal focus has served more to highlight differences between cosmopolitans and nationalists in the alliance than to develop a common front against external actors. Now is the time to turn NATO's spotlight back on its core

mission of deterring the West's strategic challengers, a process that began after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The external threat to the alliance from authoritarians has increased markedly. In addition to direct military action, Russia has used energy, corruption, and information operations to undermine NATO members and countries on the alliance's periphery. In Turkey and the Baltic, Russia has tested NATO borders directly. For its part, China has used debt financing as a lever over some NATO members such as Montenegro and employed unscrupulous practices to capture cutting-edge companies in key European industries. Today, China controls approximately one-tenth of Europe's container-port capacity.

As NATO's largest member, the United States has a special role in directing the focus of the alliance on a revanchist Russia and an authoritarian China. It should be able to count on all members to reciprocate in supporting the West against its challengers. These external responsibilities, rather than internal political standard setting, are the proper focus of a military alliance. And by distributing responsibilities for great-power competition across the alliance, NATO's popularity would only increase in the United States, which has grown weary of the organization's long combat missions in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Great-power rivalry is bound to spill across multiple areas of competition, too. NATO must shore up its vulnerabilities in the Arctic, where Russia and, to a lesser extent, China have intensified their military operations after decades of calm and in the target countries of NATO itself, where Russia has pioneered new modes of hybrid warfare. The creation of the European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki in 2017 was a good step in this direction.

Relatedly, NATO can increase its public appeal by addressing new areas of concern that are of obvious importance to member states and their publics. From the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea, the alliance should consider freedom of navigation operations that ensure the unencumbered movement of energy and goods. Similarly, although there is little consensus on assigning NATO a role in stemming illegal immigration and the trafficking of humans and weapons that often accompanies it, such an effort would demonstrate in clear and unmistakable terms the value of the alliance to its citizens. Earlier this decade, NATO engaged in a broad-based antipiracy operation that could serve as a template for a similar mission to tackle human trafficking.

Finally, NATO members should guard against any attempts to create an EU military rival to the alliance. Such a development would lead to the unraveling of U.S. support for NATO. While EU defense consolidation could achieve some efficiencies of scale, the resulting savings are unlikely to be reinvested in new capabilities. Instead, it would lead simply to a new bureaucracy that duplicates NATO functions. Moreover, any moves toward defense protectionism would undermine the industrial defense integration that developed across the Atlantic over decades.

Ultimately, for NATO to maintain its military edge, the West cannot neglect the foundations of power, from economic innovation and military strength to demographic growth and a sense of

national purpose. These are matters for individual governments to address, but without healthy foundations, NATO will lose its ability to act.

As the West sorts through these questions, and as the duel between cosmopolitans and nationalists unfolds, the alliance must continue to provide the apolitical, militarily capable backbone that respects the diversity of its members and guards against external competitors. Member states can also add to NATO's popularity by making it fit to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, from migration to hybrid war, rather than solely those of yesterday. The alliance can and should serve as a steel vessel protecting its members from those on the outside who wish to do it harm. In the years to come, reinforcing that hull will require shared sacrifice.

Read the full article with footnotes included in Carnegie Europe

The European Union and Defence: Defence Without Direction?

12/04/2019

By Sophia Besch

French President Emmanuel Macron recently made headlines with his comment that we are seeing the "brain death" of NATO – an alliance that is nominally functioning but lacks strategic aim and political focus. When asked for solutions, he pointed to the progress Europeans had made boosting defence initiatives outside of NATO. But EU defence also currently lacks direction.

Europeans have come far in the last three years, particularly in terms of capability development. The European Commission proposes to allocate a total of €13 billion to defence research and development in the EU's 2021-2027 budget cycle, compared to just €590 million in the previous one.

To use this money effectively, the EU will need to fix its defence planning process. The European Court of Auditors recently pointed out that the EU has now created as many as four different planning tools – the capability development mechanism, the capability development plan, the co-ordinated annual review for defence and Permanent Structured Co-operation, or PESCO – that often overlap with or even contradict one another.

But in developing the EU's defence policy, Europeans face challenges that will not be easily fixed by rearranging its capability planning instruments. Europeans risk losing sight of what they want to do with their military capabilities once they have developed them. EU foreign and defence ministers agreed in 2016 that the EU should invest in its ability to carry out crisis prevention and management in its own neighbourhood, to help build up the capacities of its partners, and to protect the union and its citizens. To give substance to these intentions, the EU should do three things.

First, Europeans need to flesh out the military implications of these strategic priorities. For example, what does 'protecting citizens' mean? Should it refer to the EU conducting counter-terrorism or cyber operations? Could it encompass the territorial defence of member-states? The EU has a mandate for the latter: Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union says that EU countries are obliged to come to the aid of a fellow member-state subject to an armed attack on its territory. But governments have quite different views of how this commitment should be interpreted in the future.

France, in particular, wants European militaries and defence ministries to war-game EU responses to a cyber or even conventional attack on a non-NATO EU member-state such as Finland or Sweden. Paris would like to see an EU political declaration during the French EU Council presidency in 2022 that would define what member-states would do if the mutual assistance clause were invoked. In a similar vein, France's European Intervention Initiative – a co-operation format outside the EU, proposed by Macron in 2017 – also encourages its members to discuss threat assessments and exchange expertise and intelligence. The aim is to align their security and defence objectives and make it easier to deploy together in the future.

But other member-states worry that even engaging in these types of exercises could divide the union further: some support a stronger EU defence policy to balance a weakening NATO, while others are concerned about alienating the US further by developing a separate EU defence policy. Germany therefore wants to start a process of discussion and deliberation with all member-states, a so-called 'strategic compass', during its 2020 EU Council presidency. The goal is to unite everyone behind a political and military interpretation of the union's level of ambition.

Both a high-level debate and military exercises are necessary to clarify the military and political implications of the EU's defence ambitions. And time is of the essence: developing new military capabilities can take years, sometimes decades.

Second, the EU should ensure that every new piece of equipment, weapon system or training facility that member-states build together should have a clear link to the EU's strategic priorities. Member-states have so far largely used PESCO, a framework launched in 2017 to help countries work better together, to get financial support for ongoing multilateral projects. The result is a long list of 47 projects, many without a clear link to the EU's ambitions. PESCO would benefit if member-states instead created thematic clusters of projects needed to fulfil one of the union's core defence tasks. They could, for example, group together all cyber defence and security projects related to the goal of protecting European citizens.

Third, Europeans should take another look at the operational side of PESCO, which has not received much attention since the framework's launch. PESCO members pledged to improve their militaries' ability to deploy together, and to reform the way joint military operations are funded. Since PESCO has neither deadlines nor sanctions for failing to meet targets, it is difficult to hold its participants to account. But more public attention to the operational commitments that member-states have made could make a difference. A PESCO review to assess the framework's progress, planned for 2020, could be a good opportunity to put pressure on governments to deliver.

Getting member-states to develop capabilities together is difficult. But getting them to agree on how to use these capabilities is the real challenge. This is where the EU needs to take action, lest it be branded braindead itself.

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President Macron's Russian Initiative

10/12/2019

By Mark Leonard

French President Emmanuel Macron is one of those leaders who wants to bend the arc of history. Having upended French politics, he has secured positions for his preferred candidates at the head of the European Commission and the European Central Bank, and is now trying to improve Europe's relationship with Russia.

French officials are comparing Macron's Russia strategy to US President Richard Nixon's opening up to China in 1972. But Macron's diplomatic overture is more like Nixon in reverse. Rather than wooing China in order to contain the Soviets, Macron wants to 'ease and clarify [Europe's] relations with Russia' in order to prevent Russia from cosying up to China.

In so doing, he hopes to secure Europe's control over its own future.

Macron launched his bid for a new security architecture in a typically grandiose fashion, mirroring the urban planner Georges-Eugène Haussmann's project to redesign Paris in the 19th century. His first move was to hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at Fort de Brégançon near Toulon before the August G7 summit in Biarritz. But the French ministers charged with implementing the plan have since turned it on its head.

Now, rather than starting with a top-down agenda, they are trying to build European security from the bottom up, while pursuing improved relations with Russia one brick at a time.

The French roadmap focuses on five key areas: disarmament, security dialogue, crisis management, values and common projects.

In late August, Macron delivered a speech outlining his vision of a system of 'concentric circles' comprising varying degrees of European and Eurasian integration. Such an arrangement would have to secure NATO and EU member states' borders, allow for a more productive relationship with the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and offer ways to manage regional conflicts, not least the one in Ukraine.

The timing of the initiative makes sense. Like Macron himself, Ukraine's recently elected president, Volodymyr Zelensky, created a political party out of nothing and came to power on the promise of sweeping away a discredited ancien régime. More to the point, Zelensky has made resolving Ukraine's security situation a top priority.

Macron believes that Russia's gravitation towards China is at least partly the result of Western mismanagement. He is not naive about the Kremlin's territorial aggression and election interference. But any country in a position to pose such threats to Europe, he believes, must be engaged face to face.

As one French official explained to me, 'What is true of Iran and North Korea is also true for Russia. We won't be able to influence it and lead it to more responsible behaviour if we just hide behind a wall of sanctions.'

Adding further urgency to Macron's efforts is US President Donald Trump, who has confirmed France's Gaullist suspicions about America's unreliability as a guarantor of European security. As the US escalates its conflict with China, it inevitably will pay less attention to Europe and the surrounding neighbourhood (the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and North Africa). Worse, the French fear that Trump might pursue a grand bargain with Russia, leaving the European Union hemmed in between the US and China.

Macron's biggest concern is Europe itself.

The EU will never become a global player in the 21st century if it continues to be divided and boxed in by other powers. In Macron's view, recasting Europe's relationship with Russia is the first step towards securing European sovereignty. 'If you don't have a seat at the great power table', one French official tells me, 'it's because you're on the menu'. To be sure, the French understand other Europeans' support for the sanctions imposed on Russia following its annexation of Crimea and incursion into Eastern Ukraine; but they fear the flimsiness of Europe's broader security policy.

Ideally, the EU should pursue a two-pronged approach to Russia, combining sanctions and NATO's deterrence with engagement. The French complaint is that there are no meaningful channels for such engagement, and that sanctions don't address the overall threat that Russia poses. 'What would happen to European unity', French officials wonder, 'if Moscow made a move on Ukraine or Syria and some member states decided to block sanctions renewal?'

Most likely, it would spell the end of the EU's Russia policy.

Still, Macron's initiative raises many questions.

Whether Putin has any interest in resolving the Ukraine conflict remains to be seen.

And even if Europe is capable of detaching Russia from China, it's unclear whether the Trump administration would stand by and let the European initiative play out.

But the biggest questions are on the European front.

Many Central and Eastern European countries worry that they will be second-class citizens in Macron's framework of 'concentric circles'.

Others fear that Macron will sell out Ukraine by forcing it to settle the conflict on Russia's terms.

And it doesn't help that Macron launched his initiative without first consulting other Europeans, many of whom are already anxious about America's waning commitment to EU security.

French officials pointed out that Nixon didn't consult US allies before embarking on his mission to China. But Nixon's credibility as a security hawk was unquestioned, whereas France is regarded suspiciously by some in Central and Eastern Europe, who fear that their interests, too, might be sacrificed in a neo-Gaullist attempt to claim a spot on the world stage.

If Macron is to succeed, he will have to prove that he's committed to the sovereignty and security not just of Central and Eastern Europe, but also of ex-Soviet countries such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

He will also have to pursue deeper collaboration with the Nordic and Baltic states, as well as with the relevant EU institutions and its new high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Josep Borrell.

Above all, Macron's initiative must create a credible platform for a common approach to security.

If it is seen as favouring some countries over others, it and its author will end up on the menu, rather than in the history books.

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