

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188*

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED (From - To)
------------------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------------------

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
---	---

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL



Finding a role:

The United Kingdom and European collective security post-Brexit.

By

Adrian Thompson MBE

Lieutenant Colonel, UK Army

This work cannot be used for commercial purposes without
the express written consent of the author.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

**Finding a role:
The United Kingdom and European collective security post-Brexit.**

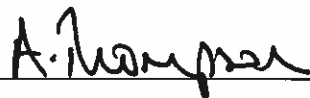
By

Adrian Thompson MBE

Lieutenant Colonel, UK Army


A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.


Signature:  _____

27 May 2021

Thesis Advisor:

Signature:  _____
**Michael G. Sawyer, Colonel,
US Air Force**

Approved by:

Signature:  _____
**Miguel L. Peko, Captain, US Navy
Director, Joint Advanced
Warfighting School**

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Abstract

The United Kingdom's departure from the European Union raises important questions concerning the UK's future role in European collective defense and security. For the UK, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the "bedrock" of British and European defense and security, and the UK's commitment to NATO remains resolute. As a member of the EU, the UK played a key role in developing the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) while simultaneously ensuring that the CSDP did not duplicate NATO's approach. However, the UK can no longer directly influence or shape EU security and defense policy. The EU has accelerated its efforts to achieve "strategic autonomy," and has signed a joint declaration with NATO to improve collaboration on defense and security matters.

The UK and the EU acknowledge shared values and interests and face the same regional threats. Although the UK's 2021 National Security Strategy signals the UK's intent to tilt to the Indo-Pacific, it maintains the primacy of the UK's commitment to NATO for European collective defense and security. The UK intends to adopt an ad hoc approach to collaborating with the EU on security matters while strengthening bilateral ties with several EU members, including France, Germany, Italy, and Poland, and maintaining multilateral initiatives such as the Joint Expeditionary Force.

Formalizing the UK's security relationship with the EU, although likely to remain politically unacceptable in the UK in the near term, will enable the UK to demonstrate its commitment to European collective defense and security.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: UK Strategic Context and Defense Policy Options	8
The UK’s National Security Strategy Pre-Brexit	8
The UK, Alliances, and International Institutions	14
UK Defense Policy Post-Brexit	19
Chapter 3: The EU and European Defense	26
Towards a European Defense Capability.....	27
Evaluating CSDP Missions.....	33
EU Security and Defense Post-Brexit.....	37
Chapter 4: NATO and European Collective Defense	42
Origins of the Transatlantic Alliance.....	42
NATO’s Ability to Adapt and Transform.....	48
Implications of Brexit for NATO	53
Chapter 5: Options for UK support to European Collective Defense and Security.....	56
Option 1: The Ad Hoc Approach.....	57
Option 2: Formalized Security Agreement.....	58
Option 3: Increased UK Support for NATO.....	60
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	62
Bibliography	65
Vita.....	72

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Defense Expenditure as % of Real GDP, 1980-2020.....	12
Figure 2 - Personnel Contributions to CSDP Missions	17
Figure 3 - European Members of NATO and the EU.....	54

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Great Britain has lost an empire and not yet found a role.”¹

“The UK seeks to develop a deep and special partnership with the EU that goes beyond existing third country arrangements.”²

The result of the United Kingdom’s European Union membership referendum on June 23, 2016, followed by the UK Government’s decision to enact Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union in March 2017, delivered a blow to the heart of Europe and its supporters. The UK had performed an integral role in developing and expanding the European Union since joining in 1973. Together with France and Germany, the UK provided the core of the EU’s leadership, albeit sometimes reluctantly. Initial reactions to Brexit from EU and NATO members were downbeat and hinted at a loss of UK influence, particularly with the United States.³ Some commentators suggested that Brexit would lead to significant turmoil for both the EU and NATO.⁴

Dean Acheson’s observation of the UK’s position in the world in December 1962 received widespread condemnation (bordering on outrage) when it appeared in British newspapers the following morning. It is arguably equally relevant today as the UK works to build new bilateral trade agreements and identify its role in the world following Brexit.

¹ Former US Secretary of State Dean Acheson quoted in Douglas Brinkley, “Dean Acheson and the ‘Special Relationship’: The West Point Speech of December 1962,” *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 3 (1990): 601.

² HM Government, *Foreign policy, defence and development: a future partnership paper* (London: Cabinet Office, 2017), 2.

³ The term Brexit will be used throughout this paper when referring to the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union.

⁴ See Carnegie Europe, “Judy Asks: Is Brexit Good for NATO?” July 6, 2016. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/64008>, and David H Dunn and Mark Webber, “The UK, the European Union and NATO: Brexit’s Unintended Consequences.” *Global Affairs* 2, Issue 5 (2016): 471.

Negotiations between the UK and the EU, which commenced in March 2017, focused initially on agreeing on the terms for the UK's planned withdrawal from the EU before implementing the UK-EU Trade Agreement on January 1, 2021. Securing a trade agreement with the UK's largest trading partner is vital to the UK's future prosperity.⁵ The topic deservedly dominated both the referendum campaign and proceeding commentary surrounding negotiations. However, the UK and the EU's future relationship regarding foreign and defense policy remains unresolved, with both parties committed to managing it on an ad hoc basis.

The UK's commitment to European collective defense and security through NATO remains undisputed.⁶ NATO, which celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2019, is one of the most successful military alliances in history and remains the pre-eminent organization responsible for European collective defense. The UK is regarded as one of the leading military powers in NATO, retaining the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander (DSACEUR) post since 1949. Significantly, the UK is one of only ten members who have achieved NATO's defense expenditure target of 2% of GDP.⁷

While the UK is a party to other multilateral defense agreements, notably the Joint Expeditionary Force, and bi-lateral defense agreements with France (the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force), Poland, and the Netherlands, NATO remains the "bedrock" of UK

⁵ Matthew Ward, *Statistics on UK-EU Trade*, UK Parliament House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 7851 (June 17, 2020). <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7851/>. In 2019, UK exports to the EU totaled \$390 billion (43% of all UK exports), while UK imports from the EU totaled \$483 billion (51% of all UK imports).

⁶ Vaughne Miller, ed., *Brexit: impact across policy areas* (London: House of Commons Briefing Library, 2016), 164.

⁷ NATO Public Diplomacy Division, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2020)*, Communique PR/CP(2020) 104 dated October 21, 2020: 8 (Table 3). Accessed February 12, 2021, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/10/pdf/pr-2020-104-en.pdf. As a percentage of real GDP, the other NATO members spending over 2% on defense expenditure are: US, Bulgaria, France, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Romania.

national defense.⁸ The U.S. regards the UK as an “indispensable ally” in NATO, even when President Trump called NATO “obsolete” and questioned some members’ commitment.⁹ However, Brexit means the United States can no longer call on the UK as an ally in both NATO and the EU. Can the UK continue to provide a “voice of reason” in Europe and the EU, or will the U.S. look more towards other EU and NATO members like France or Germany?¹⁰

Following the invocation of Article 50 in March 2017, the EU has increased its efforts to realize the objectives of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) set out in the 2007 Lisbon Treaty. The UK, notably under Prime Minister Tony Blair, supported the development of the CSDP’s predecessors. Subsequent UK governments adopted more of a “blocking” position regarding the EU’s proposals, citing NATO’s primacy for European collective defense and the risk of capability duplication.¹¹ However, the CSDP is not an EU collective defense agreement. Instead, its focus is on security, with tasks ranging from humanitarian response, peacekeeping, and crisis management (including conflict prevention) to partner nation capacity building. The 2016 European Union Global Strategy sets out the EU’s ambition for “strategic autonomy,”

⁸ HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom* (London: HM Government, 2015), 50.

⁹ UK Parliament, House of Commons Defence Committee, *Indispensable allies: US, NATO and UK Defence Relations*, Eighth Report of Session 2017-2019, 2018, HC 387, 24; James Masters and Katie Hunt, ‘Trump rattles NATO with “obsolete” blast’, CNN Politics, January 17, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/16/politics/donald-trump-times-bild-interview-takeaways/>

¹⁰ “Britain and Europe’s Fate; A Faltering Continent Needs the U.K. More than Vice Versa,” *Wall Street Journal (Online)*, editorial, June 20, 2016. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/britain-and-europes-fate-1466462715>

¹¹ James Black et al., *Defence and security after Brexit: Understanding the possible implications of the UK’s decision to leave the EU — Compendium report*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017): 72.

whereby the EU seeks to reduce its reliance on the United States' military strength.¹² To some observers, EU strategic autonomy is the latest chapter in a long-running challenge to the United States' pre-eminence in assuring Europe's collective defense and security through NATO and unnecessarily duplicating NATO's capabilities.¹³ To others, the EU is finally responding to sustained U.S. pressure to take more responsibility for European collective defense. How might the EU's attempts to realize its ambitions to achieve strategic autonomy impact NATO and the UK?

As a member of the EU, the UK accounted for 25% of the EU's total defense expenditure and provided 10% of the available military forces. However, the actual number of UK personnel deployed on EU missions was considerably smaller than France's contributions.¹⁴ The UK was one of only five EU members capable of deploying an operational headquarters, providing the operational HQ until 2018 for Operation Atalanta, the EU's counter-piracy mission off the Somali coast.¹⁵ Thus, while Brexit potentially enables the EU to realize the ambitions of the CSDP, the loss of the UK's military capabilities presents a challenge to the EU to fill the gaps unless the UK is prepared to support EU missions under a third-country framework participation agreement.¹⁶ Therefore until other EU members increase their defense capabilities, the

¹² European Union, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe: A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (Brussels: European External Action Service, June 2016), 4.

¹³ Jolyon Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*. 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 20. Notably, US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright responded to the Saint-Malo Declaration by seeking the EU's assurance to rule out the 'three-Ds': decoupling, duplication, and discrimination.

¹⁴ Sven Biscop, "All or Nothing? The EU Global Strategy and Defence Policy after the Brexit." *Contemporary Security Policy* 37, no. 3 (2016): 436; House of Lords European Union Committee, *Brexit: Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations*, 16th Report of Session 2017-2019, 2018, HL Paper 132, 36. Over the period 2003-2017, the UK provided 2.3% of personnel for CSDP missions, while France provided 37% and Germany 11.7%.

¹⁵ Black et al., *Defence and security after Brexit*, 68.

¹⁶ Biscop, "All or nothing," 440.

EU may need the UK's support for CSDP missions, either bilaterally or through NATO.

As the UK embarks on its journey outside of the European Union and the EU strives to implement and expand the CSDP, the UK may face substantial challenges determining and implementing its defense and security policy. While the UK's strategic interests will likely remain broadly aligned to both the EU and the United States following Brexit, the UK can no longer directly influence EU policy formulation without a seat at the EU's table. Outside one of the world's largest political and economic unions, the UK may experience further reductions in its global influence resulting from Brexit. How can the UK guard against this scenario and deliver 'Global Britain,' a concept that seeks to orient the UK away from Europe and, by implication, demands more global influence?

To that end, this thesis will propose that the UK should formalize its defense and security relationship with the EU to confirm its position as a bridge between the EU and NATO. The UK should support the EU's ambitions to increase its security and defense contributions by participating as a third country in EU missions when strategic interests align. However, the UK must also ensure that the EU's approach to collective security remains complementary to NATO's approach.

Chapter 2 examines the development of the UK's security strategy to establish the context for a future UK-EU security relationship. While defense and security matters did not dominate Brexit negotiations, this does not imply an absence of unresolved issues. The UK recently published its latest national security strategy (NSS), titled *Global Britain in a Competitive Age*.¹⁷ The 2021 Integrated Review (IR) reaffirms the

¹⁷ HM Government, *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, CP 403 (London: Cabinet Office, March 2021).

importance of NATO to the UK and Europe's security while concurrently focusing the UK's strategic objectives towards the Indo-Pacific region. However, there is little reference to the UK's future security relationship with the EU. If the UK does cooperate with the EU and supports CSDP missions, it may have to accept a loss of strategic autonomy but could choose which missions it supports.

Chapter 3 examines how the EU seeks to achieve the aims of its 2016 Global Strategy 2016, particularly following the post-Brexit emphasis on implementing CSDP. Some U.S. observers continue to see the EU's grand strategy as a threat to U.S. interests in Europe. However, the U.S. should welcome and support the EU's efforts to contribute more to European collective security since it could free up resources for the U.S. to concentrate on the Indo-Pacific.

NATO is likely to remain the pre-eminent organization for European collective defense and security. The Atlantic Alliance has experienced several challenges to its cohesion since the end of the Cold War, but what does the combination of Brexit and the EU's growing defense ambitions mean for NATO? Chapter 4 examines NATO, its relationship with the UK and EU, and how it is posturing to adapt to the changing strategic environment.

Chapter 5 develops several options for the future UK-EU-NATO relationship, identifying the issues and challenges that the UK may experience. The UK could negotiate more favorable terms with the EU as a third-country participant in CSDP missions. Alternatively, the UK could eschew closer cooperation with the EU to favor more significant support to NATO and closer defense cooperation with the United States. How might the UK's 'Global Britain' ambitions impact its relationship with the EU and

NATO? Is the UK's 'special relationship' with the United States at risk if the UK aligns more closely with the EU? The UK will continue to face resource constraints through the next decade, necessitating difficult policy choices. The UK will need to clearly articulate its strategic interests and engage closely with the EU, NATO, and the United States to ensure a common understanding of what the UK is seeking to achieve.

The UK should increase its commitment to NATO while formalizing its security relationship with the EU. The UK should support the EU's ambitions to expand the remit of CSDP and position itself as a bridge between NATO and the EU. However, post-Brexit, any move to closely align UK foreign and defense policy with the EU is likely to come under intense scrutiny, as it may be construed as surrendering strategic sovereignty. Equally, any move to align more closely with the U.S. may be anathema to many British politicians, whose political experiences have been shaped by the 2003 invasion of Iraq. There is also a danger of hubris concerning the UK's perceived level of global influence following Brexit. It will be challenging to overcome these issues. However, following the principle that "Europe's security is our [the UK's] security," the UK should increase its support to NATO and European collective defense and security. Where UK and EU strategic interests align, the UK will gain considerably more by formalizing its security relationship to support EU missions as a third party.¹⁸

¹⁸ Theresa May, "Speech at Munich Security Conference," (Speech, 54th Munich Security Conference, February 17, 2018).

Chapter 2: UK Strategic Context and Defense Policy Options

“NATO remains the cornerstone of our [the UK’s] security posture.”¹

Since NATO’s inception in 1949, the UK’s European collective defense and security approach has consistently placed NATO ahead of other international organizations and alliances, including the EU.² The UK is only one of ten NATO members to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defense – a measure British governments frequently cite to demonstrate the UK’s level of commitment to NATO.³ During its membership of the EU, the UK viewed NATO as the hard power underpinning European collective defense. In contrast, the UK saw the EU providing soft power, focusing on civil crisis response, trade agreements, and foreign aid assistance that supported the UK’s strategic goal of maintaining economic prosperity.

This chapter will briefly review the UK’s previous national security strategies. It will then examine the UK’s approach to alliances, international institutions, and bilateral relationships before analyzing recent policy and strategy documents, including Brexit policy papers and the UK’s current national security strategy.

The UK’s National Security Strategy Pre-Brexit

Between the end of World War II and the 2010 National Security Strategy (2010 NSS), the UK tended to conduct ad hoc defense reviews, approximately every decade. Two post-Cold War reviews led to significant restructuring of the UK’s defense

¹ HM Government, *National Security Capability Review* (London: Cabinet Office, March 2018), 33.

² Nele Marianne Ewers-Peters, “Brexit’s implications for EU-NATO cooperation: Transatlantic bridge no more?,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 1, no. 17 (November 2020): 1; Andrew Dorman, “The Future of British Defence Policy,” *Focus Stratégique* no. 74 (July 2017): 15.

³ NATO, *Defence Expenditure*, 8.

capabilities, based on assessments of the contemporary and future strategic environments.⁴ However, a regular schedule of defense reviews did not exist until the 2010 NSS established an annual review of national security priorities and a quinquennial cycle to update security and defense reviews and a formal national security strategy did not exist until the publication of the 2008 National Security Strategy.⁵ Before 2008, defense reviews tended to shape UK security policy rather than respond to it and primarily focused on reconfiguring defense capabilities to balance resources in response to existing or new threats.⁶ However, the Cabinet Office's National Security Committee provided the focal point and mechanism for coordinating defense and foreign policy objectives.⁷

The 2010 National Security Strategy

In 2010, the newly elected coalition government published an updated NSS, which established the UK's national strategic ends, supported by a Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), the first in over a decade, which set out the ways and means. In a marked departure from previous defense reviews, the 2010 NSS advocated an approach that favored conflict prevention over military intervention to manage threats overseas before they could impact the UK. The NSS sought to achieve the UK's national interests

⁴ The two major defense reviews that restructured the UK's defense capabilities between the end of Cold War and 2010 were Options for Change (1990) and the Strategic Defence Review (1998). An overview of UK defense reviews since 1948 can be found in Nigel Walker and Clare Mills, "A brief guide to previous British Defence Reviews," *UK Parliament House of Commons Library Briefing Paper* No 07313 (November 2015), accessed February 15, 2021, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7235/CBP07313.pdf>.

⁵ HM Government, *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy* (London: The Stationary Office, 2010), 35.

⁶ Catarina P Thomson and David Blagden, "A Very British National Security State: Formal and informal institutions in the design of UK security policy," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 20 no. 3 (2018): 576.

⁷ Thomson and Blagden, "A Very British National Security State," 576.

by upholding the rules-based international system. It also sought to maintain Britain's "active and engaged role in shaping global change" while simultaneously adjusting resources by removing specific military capabilities to enable the UK to address its growing national deficit.⁸ The 2008 global financial crisis had resulted in a ballooning budget deficit, forcing the British government to implement an austerity program that demanded severe spending cuts across departments. The Ministry of Defence's (MOD) budget experienced an 8% reduction in defense spending, a better result than other government departments.

Both the 2010 NSS and SDSR received substantial criticism from all sides. Some defense commentators argued that the NSS was not strategic enough and prioritized economic factors over strategic threats.⁹ However, the NSS explicitly stated that national economic security was vital to enable the UK to maintain and project its influence.¹⁰ Other observers suggested the NSS and SDSR incorrectly prioritized the UK's operations in Afghanistan in the short-term over other emerging threats and long-term capability development, resulting in piecemeal capability cuts rather than enacting difficult decisions about the future force structure.¹¹

Despite the reductions in defense spending that accompanied the 2010 NSS and SDSR, the UK's defense budget remained above the 2% NATO target. However, several key defense capabilities were either deleted (maritime surveillance) or delayed (carrier

⁸ HM Government, *National Security Strategy 2010*, 21.

⁹ Robert Dover and Mark Phythian, "Lost over Libya: The 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review – An Obituary," *Defence Studies* 11, no. 3 (2011): 420–444; HM Government, *National Security Strategy 2010*, 10

¹⁰ HM Government, *National Security Strategy 2010*, 17.

¹¹ Geoffrey Till, "British Strategy After Afghanistan," in *A Question of Security: The British Defence Review in an Age of Austerity*, eds. Michael Codner and Michael Clarke (London: I.B. Taurus, 2011); Mark Phillips, "Policy-Making in Defence and Security," *RUSI Journal* 157, no. 1 (2012): 34.

strike). The 2010 NSS and SDSR reiterated the UK's commitment to its alliances and bilateral relationships, recognizing that the UK rarely acts alone, and emphasized the importance of the UK-U.S. relationship to the UK's security. It also maintained the UK's support to NATO for the provision of European collective defense and security.

The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review

The 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review (2015 SDSR) sought to address the shortfalls in the 2010 NSS and SDSR exposed by events in Libya, Ukraine, and Syria. In comparison to the 2010 strategies, the 2015 SDSR emphasized the increased importance of alliances and international relationships to enable the UK to achieve its national strategic objectives of protecting UK citizens at home and abroad, projecting UK global influence, and promoting UK prosperity.¹² Notably, the 2015 SDSR prioritized strengthening “the rules-based international order and its institutions,” whereas previous strategies had referred to the need to preserve it.¹³

Following the reduction in the UK's defense budget over the previous five years, the British government committed to increasing the defense budget in real terms between 2015-2020 to meet NATO's target of 2% of GDP while also increasing the defense equipment budget to fund the defense modernization program. The 2015 SDSR maintained the relative importance of NATO compared to the EU for enabling UK defense and security and committed to ensuring the EU's security policy complemented rather than duplicated NATO's approach. The 2015 SDSR was generally received more positively than the 2010 NSS and SDSR, mainly due to the reversal of the previous

¹² HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous Britain* (London: Cabinet Office, 2015), 9.

¹³ HM Government, *National Security Strategy 2015*, 10.

decline in defense spending. However, doubts remained regarding the long-term affordability of the defense equipment program.¹⁴

UK Defense Spending

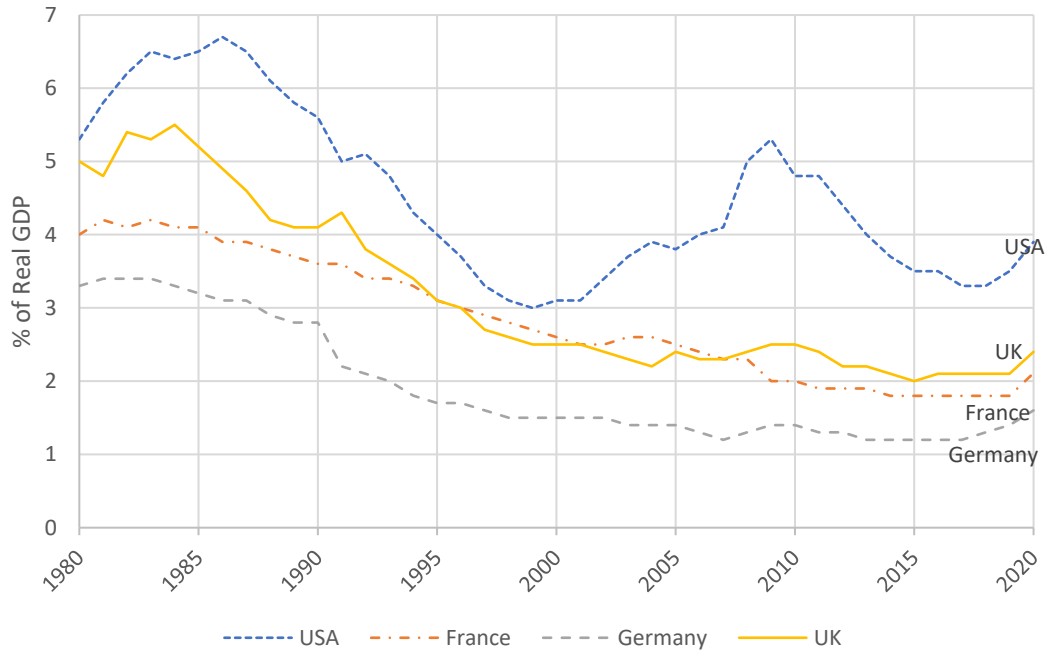


Figure 1. Defense Expenditure as % of Real GDP, 1980-2020.

Source: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2020)*, Communique PR/CP(2020) 104 dated October 21, 2020: 8 (Table 3).

Since 1984, the UK's defense spending has fallen from a peak of 5.5% of GDP to 2.1% in 2019 (Figure 1), a similar trend shown by France and Germany over the same period. In contrast, while US defense expenditure underwent a similar decline following the end of the Cold War, it increased during the 2000s due to Iraq and Afghanistan. In November 2020, Prime Minister Boris Johnson made a surprise announcement that the UK's defense budget would increase by US\$20 billion over 4 years.¹⁵ Thus, the UK's defense expenditure looks set to continue to rise in real terms over the next four years and

¹⁴ Daniel Keohane, "Is Britain Back? The 2015 UK Defense Review," *CSS Analyses in Security Policy* 185 (February 2016): 3.

¹⁵ "Defence funding boost 'extends British influence', says PM," BBC, November 19, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-54988870>.

remain above the 2% NATO target. Nevertheless, even accounting for the expenditure uplift in the November 2020 announcement, concerns remain regarding the UK's defense equipment program's affordability.¹⁶ The 2021 Integrated Review has attempted to address the defense equipment program's funding by retiring legacy equipment and scaling back planned upgrade programs.

However, Brexit has raised questions regarding the UK's long-term financial prospects. Immediately following the referendum, some more negative forecasts suggested the UK's GDP would decline 4.5% in the event of a 'hard' Brexit.¹⁷ While the UK has avoided the hard Brexit scenario, the COVID-19 pandemic has delivered a significant short-term blow to the UK's finances, with GDP falling 9.9% in 2020.¹⁸ Brexit's impact is unlikely to be felt immediately, and while the UK economy should recover from the impact of COVID-19, longer-term effects of Brexit may cause the UK's GDP to fall further in 2021/22. Although it remains uncertain exactly how the combination of Brexit and COVID-19 will impact future defense expenditure, the additional pressures on the UK budget may threaten the British government's ability to honor the November 2020 commitment. The UK government's decision to cut the international aid budget from 0.7% of GDP to 0.5% demonstrates its willingness to make difficult decisions to balance the budget due to COVID-19.¹⁹

¹⁶ George Allison, "UK defence equipment plan 'remains unaffordable,'" January 12, 2021, <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/uk-defence-equipment-plan-remains-unaffordable/>

¹⁷ Maria C. Latorre et al., "Brexit: Everyone Loses, but Britain Loses the Most," *PIIE Working Paper 19-5*, Accessed on February 13, 2021, <https://piie.com/publications/working-papers/brexit-everyone-loses-britain-loses-most>; 'Hard' Brexit was the term given to the UK's reversion to World Trade Organization (WTO) rules for trade with the EU due to the lack of a UK-EU agreement.

¹⁸ "UK suffered record annual slump in 2020," BBC, February 12, 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56037123>.

¹⁹ "Spending review: Backlash over Rishi Sunak's overseas aid cut," BBC News, November 25, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55064019>

The UK, Alliances, and International Institutions

Historically, the UK has sought to prevent European wars by ensuring a balance of power on the European continent.²⁰ In the 18th and 19th centuries, through careful diplomacy, defense treaties, and partnerships, the UK routinely shifted its allegiances with European states to counter the prevailing continental threat.²¹ Such an objective also ensured that no single European state or continental alliance could amass sufficient power to challenge the UK's maritime dominance, allowing it to pursue its overseas economic interests and promote its ideals.²² However, following the end of World War I, the UK's national power declined significantly. It fell even more sharply after World War II as the United States and the Soviet Union rose to become the two global superpowers.

The post-WWII bipolar world forced the UK to acknowledge it no longer possessed the requisite military and economic power to maintain the balance of power in Europe. Thus, the UK played a leading role in persuading the United States to support creating a permanent transatlantic alliance, in the form of NATO, to preserve peace in Europe and "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."²³ The UK became the second-largest member of NATO and secured the key position of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR).

²⁰ Andrew Dorman, "The Future of British Defence Policy," *Focus Stratégique* no. 74 (July 2017): 13.

²¹ Dorman, "The Future of British Defence Policy," 13.

²² Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, "Balancing on Land and at Sea," *International Security*, Vol 35 No 1 (Summer 2010): 18.

²³ Sven Biscop, *European Strategy in the 21st Century: New Future for Old Power* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 127; Timothy Andrews Sayle, *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order*. (2019), 3. Lord Hastings Ismay, first NATO secretary-general, reportedly uttered this now well-used phrase regarding NATO's purpose. See also https://www.nato.int/cps/us/natohq/declassified_137930.htm.

The UK and Europe

Although the UK was, and continues to be, a strong advocate for the Atlantic Alliance, for several reasons it was less enthusiastic regarding economic integration with Europe following WWII. Firstly, the UK saw its post-war economic recovery as contingent on its links with the Commonwealth. The UK believed joining the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, and later the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, would hamper the UK's global trade ambitions.²⁴ Secondly, the UK sought to maintain sterling as an international reserve currency, further supporting its free-trade ideals. Finally, the UK did not wish to surrender its sovereignty unduly. It remained wary of the ECSC and EEC's supranational ambitions, a theme that would continue throughout the UK's membership of the EU.

The EEC succeeded where British attempts failed.²⁵ The UK has long recognized that a strong and secure Europe is essential for the UK's own security. Yet in the early 1960s, it found itself excluded from an increasingly powerful political and economic trading bloc that enabled the EEC to dictate terms to the UK. Following two French vetoes against the UK's applications to join the EEC in 1963 and 1967, the UK eventually acceded to the European Community in 1973.²⁶ The UK had to accept several recently introduced initiatives, previously considered politically unpalatable, as the cost of membership of the European club and to be able to influence its trajectory from the inside.²⁷ However, the UK remained firmly committed to maintaining its sovereignty in

²⁴ James Ellison and Robert Saunders, eds., *Britain and the European Union: Lessons from History* (London: Mile End Institute, 2016), 5. In 1955, the UK's trade with Commonwealth countries was 47.8% of its total trade compared to 27.2% with Western Europe.

²⁵ The UK established the European Free Trade Area in 1960 with Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.

²⁶ The European Community was formed from the merger of the EEC and ECSC in 1965.

²⁷ The key area of controversy was the Common Agricultural Policy, introduced by France.

critical areas such as border control, fiscal and monetary policy, foreign policy, and defense policy, electing to exercise its right to opt-out when the Economic and Monetary Union was proposed during the 1992 Maastricht Treaty negotiations.

The 1998 UK-French summit at Saint-Malo saw the UK shift its position regarding European defense in response to clear signals from the United States that NATO's European members needed to share more of the collective defense and security burden. While the Saint-Malo Declaration agreed to establish an autonomous European defence capability, the UK remained committed to NATO's primacy to provide collective defense, undertaking only to support crisis management responses that did not undermine NATO.²⁸ Increasingly frustrated by a perceived lack of commitment from fellow EU member states to realize the Saint-Malo Declaration's ambitions, the UK has historically demonstrated a low level of support for EU deployments compared to France and Germany (see Figure 2).²⁹ Although the UK supported 25 of 35 CSDP missions, it only contributed an average of 16 personnel.³⁰ The UK, like other leading EU and NATO members, has been extensively committed to operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria since the first CSDP mission in 2003. The UK's low contribution is not solely reflective of the UK's waning support for CSDP.

²⁸ Peter Ricketts, "The EU and Defence," *The RUSI Journal* 162, no. 3 (2017): 38.

²⁹ Clara Marina O'Donnell, "Britain's Coalition Government and EU Defence Cooperation," *International Affairs* 87, no. 2 (2011): 423. A more detailed examination and discussion on European defense follows in Chapter 3.

³⁰ Simon Duke, *Will Brexit Damage Our Security and Defence? The Impact on the UK and EU* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 14.

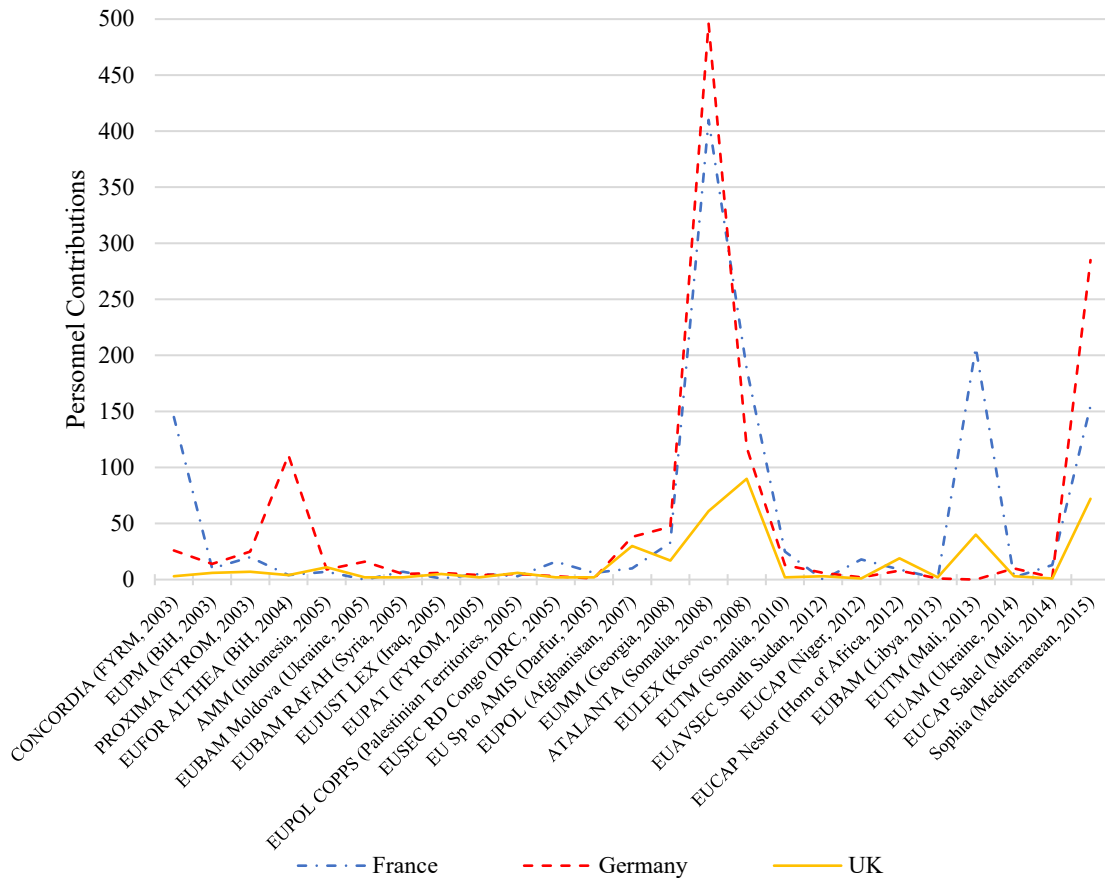


Figure 2 - Personnel Contributions to CSDP Missions by France, Germany and the UK, 2003-2017). Source: Danilo di Mauro, Ulrich Krotz, and Katerina Wright, *EU's Global Engagement: A Database of CSDP Military Operations and Civilian Missions Worldwide, Version 2.0*, European University Institute (EUI), 2017.

The UK and NATO

As a member of both NATO and the EU, the UK established itself as a 'transatlantic bridge,' leveraging its relationship with the United States to maintain NATO's primacy in European collective defense while simultaneously ensuring the United States supported the EU's economic and geographic expansion. Accordingly, the UK constrained and promoted various EU initiatives, depending on how it perceived the EU's ambitions might harm NATO's cohesion, the level of U.S. involvement in Europe, or the UK's national interests. As the UK reduced its defense expenditure and military capabilities, interoperability with NATO partners has increased in importance for the

UK's defense capability development.

The UK retains a leading role in NATO, providing between 12-14% of NATO's total capability, around a thousand personnel in staff appointments, and is the only European country to commit its nuclear deterrent to NATO.³¹ It provides NATO's Maritime Command Headquarters, a rapid reaction Corps, and regularly contributes to the Baltic Air Policing missions. Since 2017, the UK has provided the framework battlegroup for NATO's deployment in Estonia, and supported the U.S. battlegroup in Poland, as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence to protect and reassure the Baltic states, and deter Russian aggression.

The UK has traditionally encouraged increased European defense cooperation insofar as it would neither duplicate nor detract from NATO or result in the U.S. reverting to isolationism. Confronted by the EU's increasingly supranational goals, which the UK viewed as a threat to its sovereignty, the UK advocated a widening of EU membership to counteract efforts to achieve deeper integration. Yet the UK's opposition to deeper integration, often heavily criticized by other EU members and the press, also gave a voice to smaller EU member states who also objected to increased integration.³²

The UK's European Bilateral and Multilateral Relationships

While NATO remains the cornerstone of UK defense and security, the UK has established bilateral and multilateral defense agreements with several European states that will endure after Brexit. The 2010 UK-France Defence and Security Co-Operation

³¹ UK Parliament, House of Commons Defence Committee, *Indispensable allies: US, NATO, and UK Defence Relations*, Eighth Report of Session 2017-19, 2018, HC 387, 25.

³² Michelle Cini and Amy Verdun, "The implication of Brexit for the future of Europe," in *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe*, eds. Benjamin Martill and Uta Staiger (London: UCL Press, 2018), 67.

Treaty, commonly referred to as the Lancaster House Treaty, is the most notable given the historical relationship between the UK and France. It is also the most advanced in its ambition for interoperability and scale. The Treaty has established, tested, and validated the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) concept which can contribute to NATO, EU, or UN missions.³³ Alongside CJEF, France has supported the UK's NATO Enhanced Forward Presence deployment in Estonia. In return, the UK has deployed helicopters and logisticians on Operation Barkhane, the French counter-terrorism operation in the Sahel. Although the political rhetoric has often indicated a rift between the UK and France due to Brexit and disagreements over the relationship between NATO and the EU, UK-French defense cooperation continues to gather momentum.

In addition to its bilateral relationships, the UK is also a member of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), which delivers a high readiness, adaptable force in conjunction with several NATO and non-NATO members.³⁴ JEF is available for use by NATO, or other coalition operations, and conducted a maritime exercise in the Baltics in 2019.

UK Defense Policy Post-Brexit

Following the 2016 EU Referendum, the UK government conducted a National Security Capability Review (NSCR), accompanied by a defense review, to confirm whether the 2015 SDSR's resource allocation remained correct.³⁵ Despite taking place

³³ "Defence Secretary welcomes deployable UK-France joint force," Ministry of Defence, April 21, 2016. Accessed on February 10, 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/defence-secretary-welcomes-deployable-uk-france-joint-force--2>

³⁴ The other signatories to the Joint Expeditionary Force are Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway.

³⁵ HM Government, *National Security and Capability Review*. London: Cabinet Office, March 2018.

outside of the regular quinquennial SDSR cycle, Andrew Curtis argued that the strategic security environment had changed sufficiently to warrant a complete review of the 2015 SDSR.³⁶ While the UK Parliament’s Joint Committee on National Security Strategy (JCNSS) agreed with the requirement for the NSCR, it criticized the NSCR for focusing on capabilities without considering broader strategy and policy issues and attempting to conduct a cost-neutral review without addressing the significant defense budget deficit.³⁷ Although the NSCR reaffirmed the UK’s “unconditional commitment to Europe’s security,” and indicated the UK’s intention to seek a security partnership with the EU that would complement the UK’s membership of NATO, it did not set out what the future UK-EU partnership might look like.³⁸

As part of the Brexit negotiations, the UK set out an ambitious proposal for its defense and security relationship with the EU in its 2017 Future Partnership Paper, proposing an arrangement that would be “deeper than any current third country relationship.”³⁹ During early Brexit negotiations, the UK aspired to play a more significant role in developing CSDP mandates and planning missions than is currently permitted for non-EU members. Michel Barnier, the EU’s Chief Negotiator for Brexit, swiftly rejected this approach that would have granted the UK, as a third country, equivalent status in the CSDP decision-making process to all EU member states combined.⁴⁰ Encouragingly, the EU has not wholly ruled out UK participation in future

³⁶ Andrew Curtis, “When is a Defence Review Not a Defence Review?” *RUSI Journal* 164, no. 2 (2019): 63.

³⁷ UK Parliament, Joint Committee on National Security Strategy, *National Security Capability Review: A changing security environment*, First Report of Session 2017-19, March 23, 2018, HC 756, 20.

³⁸ HM Government, *National Security and Capability Review*, 8.

³⁹ HM Government, *Foreign policy, Defence and Development: A future partnership paper*, Policy Paper (2017), 18.

⁴⁰ Michel Barnier, Speech at Berlin Security Conference, November 29, 2017. Accessed on February 10, 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_17_5021; European

CSDP missions, eventually proposing an “ambitious, close and lasting cooperation,” as one of the principles for negotiating the UK-EU’s future security relationship to enable the UK to participate under the CSDP’s framework provisions.⁴¹

However, despite the EU’s positive offer, foreign and defense policy did not feature in the UK’s final approach to the Brexit negotiations. The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement that came into effect on January 1, 2021, states that the UK and the EU recognize the “importance of global cooperation to address issues of shared interest.”⁴² Thus, until the UK, or the EU, seeks to establish a formal arrangement, an ad hoc approach will exist regarding UK-EU defense cooperation, achieved through constructive dialogue.

The European Intervention Initiative (EI2) offers a potential alternative to CSDP for the UK to participate in defense and security matters with European states.⁴³ Established by France in 2017, it aspires to overcome perceived inertia in EU defense and security by bringing together politically willing and militarily capable states to respond to issues that affect European security interests, acting outside of the EU’s CSDP framework. The UK signed a Letter of Intent alongside eight other nations in June 2018, and the proposal remains under development. UK support for EI2 is likely to continue, provided it does not duplicate NATO.

Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, *CSDP after Brexit: The Way Forward* (2018), 14. <https://www.doi.org/10.2861/988248>.

⁴¹ Council of the European Union, *Directives for the negotiation of a new partnership with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, ST 5870/20 ADD 1 REV 3, February 25, 2020, 37 para 127.

⁴² European Union, *Trade and Cooperation Agreement Between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part* (Official Journal of the European Union L444/14 Vol 63, December 2020), 19.

⁴³ Sarah Raine, *Europe’s Strategic Future: From Crisis to Coherence* (London: IISS, 2019), 163-164.

The 2021 Integrated Review

The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (IR), published in March 2021, sets out the UK government’s view of Britain’s post-Brexit role in the world following a turbulent period in British domestic politics.⁴⁴ The new strategy proposes a distinctly more realist approach to Britain’s role in the world compared to previous strategies, continuing a recent trend in UK politics, while maintaining Britain’s long-held values of promoting liberal democracy and free trade, and its support for multilateral institutions.⁴⁵ The IR explicitly states a shift in UK policy away from previous strategies’ attempts to preserve “the post-Cold War ‘rules-based international system’” towards a more dynamic approach that can adapt to a “more competitive and fluid international environment.”⁴⁶

The IR declares the UK’s intention to “tilt to the Indo-Pacific,” identifying the region’s increasing importance to the UK’s future prosperity, and that this tilt will drive the UK’s interaction with China over the term of the current parliament.⁴⁷ Concurrent to the Indo-Pacific tilt, the IR maintains the UK’s commitment to European defense and security through NATO. It highlights the UK’s role and capabilities as “the leading European Ally in NATO,” and the UK’s ambition to be the “greatest single European contributor to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area” over the next decade.⁴⁸ While the IR identifies China as a “systemic competitor,” with “increasing power and international

⁴⁴ HM Government, *The Integrated Review*.

⁴⁵ Robin Niblett, “Global Britain Lays out Its Stall, but EU Missing in Action,” *Chatham House Expert Comment*, March 23, 2021, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/03/global-britain-lays-out-its-stall-eu-missing-action>; Malcolm Chalmers, “The Integrated Review: The UK as a Reluctant Middle Power?” *RUSI Occasional Paper* (March 2021): 1.

⁴⁶ HM Government, *Integrated Review*, 11-12.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6; *Ibid.*, 60.

assertiveness,” it cites Russia as the “most acute threat to our [UK and European] security,” underlining the importance of NATO as the “foundation of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic area.”⁴⁹ The UK’s view of Russia demonstrates the importance of the UK’s contributions to NATO, and its support for European collective defense.

Although the IR recognizes the “important role played by the EU in the peace and prosperity of Europe,” it does not propose how the UK might cooperate with the EU on defense and security matters beyond the ad hoc arrangements agreed during Brexit negotiations.⁵⁰ Instead, the IR focuses on the UK’s bilateral relationships with individual EU member states. The omission is hardly surprising given the current UK government’s position towards the EU, with the publication of the IR coming just three months after Britain concluded its period of transition from EU rules and regulations. However, the UK may not be able to indefinitely ignore the EU’s strategic security ambitions without articulating its position. Nor can the UK expect other nations to support its aim to shape the future international order as “convening power,” if it remains in constant dispute with the EU.⁵¹

Although the UK has existing bilateral defense agreements with several EU member states, it may find it increasingly difficult to turn those agreements into action to support the UK’s national security objectives, particularly if the EU has already established a policy position that is binding for member states or if member states perceive greater advantages in supporting the EU’s position on defense and security issues.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 26; Ibid., 71.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 60.

⁵¹ Ibid., 18. The UK has yet to formally recognize the EU’s Ambassador to the United Kingdom, appointed during the Brexit negotiations.

Through its national security strategies, the UK has consistently recognized the importance of Europe's security for its own security. Brexit does not change that level of importance, as demonstrated in the 2021 Integrated Review. Nor does the UK's departure from the EU prevent direct and indirect threats to the European continent, such as terrorism or illegal immigration, from impacting or spreading to the UK.

Despite its relative decline in power and the associated limitations in terms of what it can achieve when acting independently, the UK has sought to maintain its ability to influence the international rules-based order, primarily by leveraging its soft power, supported by a diminished, but still capable military power. British politicians often celebrate the UK's ability to "punch above its weight," although critics also use the same term pejoratively.⁵² Although it is no longer a member of the EU, the UK still has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and is a member of the G7, remains a nuclear power, and ranks sixth in the world for GDP and defense expenditure.⁵³

Prior to Brexit, EU member states often regarded the UK as an 'awkward partner' due to its comparatively poor engagement with CSDP and blocking of measures such as the creation of EU operational headquarters. In the near-term, that view is likely to hinder the UK's aspirations to contribute to the planning of CSDP missions but should not prevent the UK from participating in them. A future UK-EU relationship that enables both sides to collaborate fully on security issues and allows the EU to benefit from the UK's defense capabilities remains a possibility.

⁵² Now somewhat of a cliché, this phrase was first used by Douglas Hurd at The Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House) in 1993 and has since been widely adopted as a description of many aspects of British policy. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk_politics/2001/open_politics/foreign_policy/uks_world_role.stm (accessed February 12, 2021).

⁵³ World Bank, "GDP (current US\$)," https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?most_recent_value_desc=true; International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2021* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2021).

The UK continues to regard NATO as the cornerstone of UK and European defense. However, with its loss of direct influence in the EU's decision-making processes, the UK may find it challenging to ensure that the EU's future defense and security policy complements NATO, particularly given the progress that the EU has made enacting CSDP since Brexit which will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: The EU and European Defense

Shortly after the UK's EU Membership Referendum in 2016, the EU formally adopted a new European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) to enact its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). The EUGS reflected not only the considerable changes in the strategic environment since the 2003 European Security Strategy, but also recognized that the EU needed to "take greater responsibility for our security. We must be ready and able to deter, respond to, and protect ourselves against external threats."¹ While acknowledging NATO's continued primacy regarding European collective defense, the EUGS called for increased European security and defense capabilities that would enable it to achieve "strategic autonomy."² More significantly, the EUGS introduced the EU's vital interests and priorities:

- To promote peace and guarantee the security of its citizens and territory
- To advance the prosperity of its people
- To foster the resilience of its democracies
- To promote a rules-based order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core.³

These vital interests are very similar to the UK's national strategic objectives seen in Chapter 2, suggesting that cooperation between the UK and the EU on defense and security issues should be possible. This chapter will examine the development of the EU's defense and security policy and the UK's role in its development. It will then examine the EU's post-Brexit strategic ambitions to identify ways in which the UK and

¹ European Union, *Global Strategy*, 19.

² European Union, *Global Strategy*, 20.

³ European Union, *Global Strategy*, 7-8.

EU might cooperate on defense and security issues, as well as examining cooperation between the EU and NATO.

Towards a European Defense Capability

The concept of a European defense capability traces its roots back to an earlier failed attempt by the ECSC to establish a European Defense Community in the 1950s. NATO's creation in 1949, and its position as the pre-eminent provider of European collective defense and security overshadowed any other attempts to establish a European security policy until the end of the Cold War. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty that established the European Union also laid the foundations for the Common Security and Defence Policy through the Treaty's second pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The Maastricht Treaty was Europe's response to the end of the Cold War in 1989, Germany's reunification in 1990, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Under the EEC, foreign policy issues remained strictly within member states' purview, although policy coordination did occur on an intergovernmental basis. However, the 1991 Gulf War demonstrated Europe's "geopolitical irrelevance and disunity."⁴ In the absence of consensus in the EEC regarding how to respond to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, member states reverted to pursuing their separate national interests.⁵

The transition from the bipolar Cold War, through a brief period of US unipolarity, to a multipolar world with increasing strategic uncertainty and competition for resources and influence, emphasized Europe's strategic and military dependence on the United States through NATO. The EEC faced several choices when considering how

⁴ Raine, *Europe's Strategic Future*, 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

to reform its foreign, defense, and security policies to adapt to the shifting balance of power: reduce dependence on NATO by increasing national security capabilities; reform existing European institutions such as the Western European Union (WEU); seek to transform NATO from a collective defense organization into a European defense and security institution; or create a new institution capable of developing and enacting European foreign policy and security.⁶ The EEC selected the latter option as a compromise, creating the CFSP and later a European defense policy. Persuading member nations to increase their national security capabilities ran counter to the European principles of increased integration and ‘supranationalism.’ The WEU was an adjunct of NATO that had become an “empty shell” during the Cold War.⁷ NATO’s transformation was already underway that would see an expansion in its tasks. Any attempts to draw NATO into the European Community would likely have met US resistance and potentially US withdrawal, leaving Europe exposed to external threats.

However, the CFSP’s initial implementation adopted the same intergovernmental aspects as the EEC’s previous foreign policy approach. It did not attempt to tackle the more troublesome areas of defense policy and strategy, allowing member states to retain sovereignty in these areas. The EU also lacked organic capabilities to implement the CFSP.⁸ Encouragingly, the Maastricht Treaty signaled Europe’s ambition to eventually establish “a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence.”⁹

⁶ Stephanie C. Hofmann, *European Security in NATO’s Shadow: Party Ideologies and Institution Building* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 77.

⁷ Biscop, *European Strategy*, 127.

⁸ Raine, *Europe’s Strategic Future*, 27.

⁹ European Communities, *Treaty on European Union* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1992), 127. To distinguish each Treaty on European Union (TEU), they are referenced by the location and year in which they were signed, hence Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1997), and Lisbon (2007). Article J.4.1 of the Maastricht Treaty has been carried forward to the Lisbon Treaty in Article 24 (CFSP) and Article 42 (CSDP).

The 1997 Amsterdam Treaty made significant progress by strengthening the links between the CFSP and the WEU. The EU subsequently adopted the WEU's Petersberg Tasks, which included humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping, and crisis management.¹⁰

The EU's defense policy ambitions met with mixed reactions from the United States. On the one hand, Europe had derived considerable economic benefit from U.S. protection during the Cold War, and the United States wanted to see Europe take greater responsibility for its security and share collective defense and security burden. Accordingly, NATO sought to reinforce the transatlantic partnership and enhance the European pillar of the Alliance through the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). The ESDI also enabled the WEU to draw on NATO's capabilities to undertake any of the Petersberg Tasks. On the other hand, the U.S. remained wary of any European ambitions for defense and security that might undermine or threaten NATO's cohesion, a position taken by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in December 1998:

The key to a successful initiative is to focus on practical military capabilities. Any initiative must avoid preempting Alliance decision-making by *de-linking* ESDI from NATO, avoid *duplicating* existing efforts, and avoid *discriminating* against non-EU members [emphasis added].¹¹

The '3 D's' are still referenced today by the United States in response to the EU's attempts to increase its defense capabilities, reinforced by concerns that an autonomous

¹⁰ The 'Petersberg Tasks' were adopted by a ministerial meeting of the WEU at the Petersberg Conference Centre near Bonn, Germany, in 1992.

¹¹ Madeleine K. Albright, "Statement to the North Atlantic Council," (Brussels, December 8, 1998). Accessed on February 12, 2021, <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/1998/981208.html>.

European defense capability might one day enable the EU to challenge the established balance of power and compete with the U.S.¹²

A Breakthrough? The Saint-Malo Agreement

Secretary Albright's comments came in response to a joint UK-French summit at Saint-Malo a week earlier that had unexpectedly overcome the hitherto divergent views held in London and Paris regarding the future of European defense. France, reflecting deeply held reservations regarding the United States' influence in NATO, favored a European defense capability that could operate independently of NATO.¹³ However, the UK, which had reluctantly agreed to the inclusion of 'common defense' in the Maastricht Treaty, remained committed to the principle that any integration of European defense capabilities should serve to maintain and strengthen NATO and favored the WEU as the primary institution for European defense.¹⁴

As discussed in Chapter 2, the UK changed its position following the election of the Labour government in 1997 under Prime Minister Tony Blair, who held a more pro-European view than the previous Conservative Prime Ministers. Blair, along with other European leaders, did not wish to see a repeat of the Balkans crisis in the early 1990s when the EU could not build a consensus between member states or generate the means to respond.¹⁵ Finally, the UK was acutely aware of US criticisms of European defense, that "unless Europe got its security act together, NATO was dead in the water."¹⁶

¹² Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, 20-21.

¹³ Ricketts, "The EU and Defence," 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁵ Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, 145.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

The Saint-Malo Declaration stated that “the [European] Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.”¹⁷ The initial optimism that greeted the Saint-Malo Declaration quickly receded when it became apparent that the EU’s ability to act autonomously required considerable investment. Three events indicated the scale of the challenge. Firstly, the EU’s inability to react swiftly and coherently to the events in Kosovo in 1999, although arguably Kosovo came too soon after Saint-Malo for the EU to fulfill the Declaration’s ambitions. Secondly, following 9/11, the UK focused its foreign policy efforts away from Europe and the ESDP towards the U.S. and NATO, which brought back the policy divisions between the UK and France.¹⁸ Finally, the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 sharply divided opinions among member states, with Germany and France, among others, opposing the invasion, while the UK supported the United States.

Despite these challenges, following the Saint-Malo Declaration several pieces started to fall into place that would enable the EU to act on its defense and security policy ambitions. The 1999 NATO Summit in Washington resulted in a more accommodating response from the U.S. and NATO to the EU’s ambitions.¹⁹ Following the Amsterdam Treaty, EU member states signed a declaration in June 1999 giving the EU the means and capabilities to “play its full role on the international stage.”²⁰ The Helsinki Headline Goal, agreed in December 1999, established ambitious military capability targets to

¹⁷ Ricketts, “The EU and Defence,” 38.

¹⁸ Jolyon Howorth, “The Euro-Atlantic Security Dilemma: France, Britain, and the ESDP,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2005): 42.

¹⁹ NATO, “Washington Summit,” April 23, 1999, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_27286.htm.

²⁰ Cologne European Council, Conclusions of the Presidency: Annex III, (June 3-4, 1999), paragraph 1. Accessed February 12, 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/kol2_en.htm#an3.

generate the capacity to rapidly deploy and sustain military forces to undertake the full range of Petersberg Tasks by 2003.²¹ Additionally, the ‘Berlin Plus’ agreement, reached with NATO in 2003, allowed the EU to draw on NATO’s resources to support EU-led CSDP missions, for example, using NATO’s planning capabilities.²²

Berlin Plus also enabled greater cooperation and transparency between NATO and the EU and supported the established principle of avoiding duplication of capabilities.²³ It established NATO’s DSACEUR as the operational commander for the EU’s NATO-supported CSDP missions. However, following Brexit, the UK can no longer participate in CSDP missions as a member state. Consequently, some defense observers have raised questions regarding the UK’s suitability to continue filling the DSACEUR role in NATO.²⁴ For the time being, these questions remained unanswered. However, to address concerns regarding UK command and control of the EU’s NATO-supported CSDP missions, in March 2019 NATO replaced DSACEUR as Operational Commander of Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina with its Vice Chief of Staff (a French 3-star).

Following the accession of ten countries to the EU in 2004, the EU identified the requirement to improve its institutional structures. The 2007 Lisbon Treaty introduced several key changes to the EU’s foreign, defense, and security policy. Firstly, it removed the Maastricht Treaty pillars, aligning the intergovernmental and supranational aspects of EU foreign affairs. Secondly, it established a diplomatic corps and a foreign affairs

²¹ Raine, *Europe’s Strategic Future*, 27-28.

²² *Ibid.*, 28.

²³ Lorenzo Cladi and Andrea Locatelli, “Keep Calm and Carry On (Differently): NATO and CSDP after Brexit,” *Global Policy*, Vol 11, no 1 (2020): 6.

²⁴ Black et al., *Defence and Security after Brexit*, 65; Malcolm Chalmers, “UK Foreign and Security Policy after Brexit.” *RUSI Briefing Paper* (January 2017): 6.

department (the European External Action Service). Thirdly, it added military advice and assistance, post-conflict stabilization, and disarmament operations to the existing Petersberg Tasks. The Lisbon Treaty also established the European Defence Agency to coordinate the development of European defence planning and military capabilities and proposed establishing a ‘Permanent Structured Cooperation’ (PESCO) between member states to improve military integration. Finally, Article 42(7) of the Treaty established a mutual assistance clause.²⁵

In addition to the increasing terrorist threat following 9/11, the EU’s expansion brought other fresh challenges to European security: in the East, with rising tensions with Russia caused by the EU’s increased engagement with Ukraine; to the south following the Arab Spring and the rise of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other violent extremist organizations; and more broadly with illegal immigration and its disproportionate impact on southern EU states. These challenges have defined how the EU has developed its security apparatus. The Lisbon Treaty attempted to unify member states’ foreign policies, addressing one of the principal shortcomings of the EU’s foreign policy decision-making. Yet for now, the EU has retained an intergovernmental approach to CSDP, and as each member state perceives the threats in different ways, the EU’s ability to deliver a coherent response has been limited.

Evaluating CSDP Missions

Since 2003, the EU has deployed 36 operations and missions under CSDP across three continents, of which 17 are ongoing.²⁶ Mission mandates have covered military

²⁵ European Union. Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union. Official Journal of the European Union, OJ C 326/13, 2012.

²⁶ European External Action Service, “EU Missions and Operations,” July 2020. Accessed on February 12, 2021,

stabilization, counter-piracy, mentoring and training, rule of law, support and assistance to other international agencies, and border missions. An examination of CSDP deployments shows that while 23 missions took place between 2003 and 2008, there were only 6 missions between 2009 and 2013, and there have been only 7 missions since 2014.²⁷ Financial pressures caused by the global financial crisis in 2007-2008 and the associated impact on government budgets and defense spending partly explain the reduction in appetite. Member states were also extensively committed to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Launching CSDP missions requires unanimous consent, even though member states are not obliged to participate. Establishing that consent takes time and political capital. France, which successfully lobbied for a CSDP mission to Chad in 2008, has also shown its willingness to act independently to respond more quickly to emerging crises than CSDP might otherwise allow, demonstrated by its intervention in Mali in 2013. Recent civilian CSDP missions have been modest in size, averaging less than 100 personnel, but have tended to last longer than military deployments. Large-scale military deployments, such as those to Chad or the DRC, have tended to last less than a year, potentially reflecting the degree of risk involved.²⁸

Evaluating CSDP's success is more challenging due to the broad range of the missions, and the mission mandates' political dimensions, which sometimes makes it

https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_military_operations_and_civilian_missions_july_2020.pdf. There are 11 civilian missions and 6 military CSDP missions ongoing with 5,000 personnel deployed. The EU uses the term 'operation' for military deployments with an executive mandate, otherwise it uses the term 'mission' for civilian and military deployments.

²⁷ Raine, *Europe's Strategic Future*, 78; EEAS, "EU Missions and Operations;" Thierry Tardy, "CSDP in action: what contribution to international security," *Chaillot Paper* 134 (May 2015): 19.

²⁸ Tardy, "CSDP in action," 23.

difficult for the EU to acknowledge failure.²⁹ The EU has not implemented a comprehensive, and therefore comparative, approach to measure mission effectiveness, although it is making progress.³⁰ CSDP missions often operate alongside or in conjunction with other actors (e.g., the UN, NATO, and NGOs), making it challenging to attribute ‘success,’ when measured, solely to CSDP. As a result, critics have frequently queried the strategic value of CSDP missions, and the media has been less than sympathetic in its portrayal of CSDP, although it has tended to focus on the EU’s strategic decision-making processes rather than in-country developments.³¹

The EU’s Response to Libya – A Missed Opportunity?

The 2011 Libyan crisis demonstrated that the updated CSDP still fell short of delivering a coherent EU defense and security capability. Although EU leaders had collectively condemned President Gaddafi’s actions and urged him to step down, member states’ divergent national interests and inability to achieve consensus called into question the EU’s ability to fully enact its foreign and defense policy ambitions. Despite Libya’s proximity to Europe, the EU’s long-standing interests in Libya, and two UN Security Council Resolutions (UN SCR), the EU could not achieve unanimous consent to launch a CSDP mission. France, backed by the UK, advocated military intervention to remove Gaddafi, although they ultimately required considerable U.S. support to sustain the operation. Germany, however, prevaricated and ultimately abstained from the UN Security Council vote. Sweden, providing one of the rotational EU Battlegroups at the

²⁹ Howorth, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, 187; Tardy, “CSDP in action,” 38.

³⁰ Tardy, “CSDP in action,” 38.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

time of the crisis, blocked the approval of the EU's concept of operations.³² However, the EU did implement economic sanctions against Libya, and ultimately became the largest provider of humanitarian aid.³³

Given the substantial military support provided by the U.S., the Libyan crisis raised doubts regarding the EU's ability to achieve strategic autonomy and its credibility as a security actor. Critics cite the UK's reluctance to fully support CSDP, specifically the UK's opposition towards the EU establishing its own operational headquarters, as one of the reasons that has prevented the EU from developing the defense capabilities necessary to implement CSDP.³⁴ Yet the UK supplied the operational headquarters for Operation Atalanta, the EU counter-piracy mission off the Horn of Africa, from 2008 until 2018 when the HQ moved to Spain. It is perhaps too easy to attribute any failures in the CSDP to the UK's opposition to elements of the CSDP. Although European states have willingly surrendered some sovereignty in exchange for EU membership, most member states remain reluctant to hand over complete control of their foreign, defense, and security policies to the EU.

However, CSDP has succeeded in integrating the EU's instruments of power and facilitating participation from non-member states, with around 30 non-EU states taking part in CSDP missions since 2003.³⁵ Two early CSDP missions, Operation Concordia and Operation Althea, successfully demonstrated that the EU could take over from existing NATO deployments under the Berlin Plus Agreement and utilize NATO's planning

³² Sergio Fabbrini, "The European Union and the Libyan crisis," *International Politics* Vol 51, no. 2 (2014): 187

³³ Sergio Fabbrini, "The European Union and the Libyan crisis," 187.

³⁴ Sven Biscop, "The UK and European Defence: leading or leaving?" *International Affairs* 88, no. 6 (2012): 1297-1298.

³⁵ Tardy, "CSDP in action," 31.

capabilities.³⁶ Yet, to date, no other EU missions have called upon NATO's support through Berlin Plus. All NATO members must agree to support each CSDP mission, and the political tension between Turkey and Cyprus is commonly cited as one reason for a lack of further NATO supported CSDP missions.³⁷ Another reason for the lack of EU-NATO formal cooperation is often attributed to France's continued ambitions for an autonomous European military capability which could ultimately lead to a "true European Army" or European Defence Union in line with the aims of Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty.³⁸

CSDP has also demonstrated the EU's ability to execute missions that support or complement other international organizations, such as the African Union. While CSDP missions have been relatively modest in size, the process has promoted interoperability among EU member states and encouraged the development of Europe's military capacity.³⁹ Despite the lack of formal NATO support to CSDP, informal cooperation has taken place, particularly where NATO and the EU have deployed similar missions in parallel, such as NATO's Ocean Shield which operates alongside Operation Atalanta.

EU Security and Defense Post-Brexit

In many ways, Brexit could not have come at a more opportune time for the EU, which has accelerated its defense and security policy to the extent that Frederica Mogherini, the EU's High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security

³⁶ Operation Concordia replaced NATO's Allied Harmony mission in March 2003 in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and lasted for 9 months. Operation Althea replaced NATO's SFOR in December 2004 in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is ongoing.

³⁷ Ricketts, "The EU and Defence," 34; Cladi and Locatelli, "Keep Calm and Carry On," 7.

³⁸ "France's Macron pushes for 'true European army'," BBC, November 6, 2018. Accessed February 12, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46108633>

³⁹ House of Lords European Union Committee, *Brexit: Common Security and Defence Policy*, 54.

Policy (HR), remarked in the EU's 2017 Global Strategy that "more has been achieved in the last ten months than in the last ten years."⁴⁰ In addition to the UK's EU Referendum, the U.S. had indicated its continued frustration with a perceived lack of European commitment to NATO, although President Biden's election has significantly tempered U.S. rhetoric compared to the previous administration. The United States' strategic focus on China and the Indo-Pacific provides additional rationale for the EU to strengthen its defense and security policy. Achieving strategic autonomy to underwrite European collective security is a logical step for the EU, either as a hedge against potential U.S. disinvestment from Europe, or to enable the U.S. to focus its efforts on the Indo-Pacific.

'Strategic Autonomy' is a frequently used, but poorly understood, phrase. A lack of a clear definition until the EUGS has prevented the EU from winning over its critics. The EU's ambition for strategic autonomy does present a dilemma for non-European countries with long-standing interests in Europe's security, such as the United States. Provided the EU's approach remains complementary to NATO, non-EU NATO members should welcome the EU's efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities, as it could eventually address the burden-sharing issue which has permeated NATO's history. It is also possible to foresee how U.S. interests and influence in Europe may be threatened if the EU actually achieves strategic autonomy. Some critics advocate that the U.S. should oppose EU attempts to improve its defense and security capabilities where it might threaten the United States' role in guaranteeing European collective defense through NATO.⁴¹ Such attitudes are unlikely to persuade the EU to abandon its ambitions,

⁴⁰ EU Global Strategy. *From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy, Year 1*. (2017, June), 5

⁴¹ Daniel Kochis, "Recent EU Strategic Autonomy Advances Threaten the Transatlantic Link," *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder* No 3470 (March 2020).

particularly as it is currently focused on enhancing security rather than defense capabilities, an area in which the U.S. has previously displayed some hesitation (for example, Kosovo). The U.S. should support the EU and welcome the opportunity to transfer military resources elsewhere to deal with global threats.

In December 2016, the EU adopted a Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP) and has focused its attention on increasing EU-NATO cooperation. SDIP identified five complementary areas required to deliver CSDP: deepening defense cooperation through an annual review process; improving the EU's speed of response to conflict and crisis; improving the planning and conduct of missions; enhancing CSDP partnerships with other international institutions such as the UN, NATO, and the African Union; and establishing the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), first proposed in the Lisbon Treaty.⁴²

PESCO aims to improve military integration through collaboration on defense capability development. The UK can participate in PESCO capability projects as a third state but would not have any influence over current or future projects, and UK companies are also permitted to participate. However, the UK's participation as a third state would require unanimous agreement from each PESCO project's member states. UK companies can only join a PESCO project after December 31, 2021 if all 25 PESCO members approve. For the time being, while the UK's ad hoc approach to defense cooperation with the EU does not rule out its involvement in PESCO projects, the UK has not indicated any plans to take part in any projects. However, the EU has strict rules governing third-

⁴² European External Action Service, "Implementation Plan on Security and Defence," EEAS Factsheet, March 2018. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/implementation_plan_on_security_and_defence_02-03-2018.pdf

country participation in PESCO, notably that participating nations must not contravene the EU's security and defense interests, and they must contribute to strengthening CSDP. While the UK and EU share common interests and values, formally aligning the UK's security and defense policy to the EU's is likely to remain a step too far for the UK in the near-term.

The EU's ability to plan and execute operations independently of NATO, first proposed in 2003, took a step closer to realization with the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in 2017 to oversee non-combat military missions. While the UK initially agreed to the MPCC, after the EU referendum it argued for, and secured, a reduced version citing duplication of NATO's capabilities.⁴³ However, France and Germany still hold ambitions for an independent operational planning headquarters that can oversee all EU military operations, and post-Brexit the MPCC's role and remit will continue to expand.

The creation of the European Defence Fund (EDF), the first time that the EU budget will be used to pay for defense research and capability development, is another significant step for the EU.⁴⁴ EDF seeks to enhance defense cooperation between member states and overcome underinvestment in the research development of future capabilities. While the EU will finance the EDF, member states will retain ownership of all capabilities developed through the EDF. However, the initial optimism that greeted the EDF's launch has been tempered by the impact of COVID-19 which has led to a significant reduction in the EU's budget for EDF.

⁴³ Jolyon Howorth, *For a True European Defence Union* (Brussels: Wilfred Martens Centre for European Studies, 2017), 5-6.

⁴⁴ European Commission, "The European Defence Fund Factsheet," <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/34509/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native>.

Although the UK has left the EU, it can still participate in the EU's CSDP missions as a third country under a Framework Participation Agreement (FPA). Third country participation is attractive for the UK as it does not bind the UK into each and every CSDP mission. However, the EU has explicitly stated that, while the UK can participate in CSDP missions under FPA, it will not have a role in the planning or design of CSDP missions. The EU's position is understandable. It does not wish to confer any benefits to a recently departed state in case it undermines the Union's cohesion. While the UK could propose a security area for EU involvement or intervention, it could not guarantee the EU would support it, a situation that Norway has experienced.⁴⁵

It is perhaps facile to dismiss the EU's security strategy purely as an exercise in political rhetoric; the initiatives implement post-Brexit demonstrate its intent to confirm its position as a credible security actor. The EU remains committed to ensuring that CSDP will complement NATO and does not appear inclined to take over NATO's role in European collective defense. Yet the EU has previously missed several key opportunities to utilize CSDP. Following Brexit, the real test for the EU's Global Strategy will be its response to the next regional security crisis – will the EU respond through CSDP, or will France, or even Germany, opt to form a coalition of the willing?

⁴⁵ Benjamin Martill and Monika Sus, "Post-Brexit EU/UK Security Cooperation: NATO, CSDP+, or 'French Connection'?" *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 20, no. 4 (2018): 856.

Chapter 4: NATO and European Collective Defense

“NATO is the most successful political and military alliance in modern history.”¹

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact did not result in NATO’s demise, as predicted by many observers. In one of the seminal works on alliance theory, Stephen Walt proposed that “alliances formed during wartime will disintegrate when the enemy is defeated.”² Instead, NATO has endured by adapting, transforming, and expanding to retain its relevance on the international stage. For over 70 years, NATO has been the ‘bedrock’ of European defense and security, maintaining the balance of power in Europe through deterrence, mutual defense, cooperation, and integration, underwritten by the United States’ military capability and adherence by member states to NATO’s core values. However, defense commentators continue to question NATO’s relevance, particularly as the EU seeks to strengthen its defense capabilities to achieve strategic autonomy.

This chapter will briefly examine NATO’s foundation, primarily focusing on the UK’s role. It will then explore NATO’s post-Cold War trajectory, including the UK-NATO relationship. Finally, it will examine recent developments in EU-NATO cooperation, drawing on the 2016 EU-NATO Joint Declaration.

Origins of the Transatlantic Alliance

The end of WWII saw Europe in economic and financial ruin, and the threat of Soviet expansion into Europe brought the risk of renewed conflict into sharp focus. Although the Marshall Plan would sow the seeds of Europe’s economic recovery, the UK

¹ John Andreas Olsen, “Understanding NATO,” *RUSI Journal* 165, no. 3 (April 2020): 60.

² Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), 32.

government concluded that economic recovery alone would be insufficient to resist Soviet pressure. The UK, together with other European states, recognized the requirement for a defensive treaty.³ Through the 1947 Treaty of Dunkirk, the UK and France agreed to cooperate on defense issues, primarily to prevent the resurgence of a threat from Germany. The Soviet-backed February 1948 Communist Party coup in Czechoslovakia and the prospect of a Norwegian-Soviet pact further raised fears in Western Europe and the United States regarding the European states' vulnerability to communism. The 1948 Treaty of Brussels, signed by the UK, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, established the Western Union (later the Western European Union), a defensive alliance to meet external threats that included a mutual defense clause. However, the UK no longer possessed the necessary military and economic power to underwrite a defensive pact that would reassure other European countries and deter Soviet aggression. London looked west to Washington for support, lobbying hard to overcome the United States' tendency to revert to isolationism and U.S. doubts regarding the necessity of a formal treaty.⁴

The 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, ratified by 12 member states, ensured the United States' commitment to Europe's defense with three broad objectives: "detering Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration."⁵ NATO's members committed to the principles of promoting stability, economic collaboration, consultation, military capacity development, and crucially,

³ Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 12.

⁴ Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 14.

⁵ NATO, "A Short History of NATO," (2020) Accessed on February 12, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_139339.htm.

collective defense in the event of an attack on a member, enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.⁶ The phrasing of Article 5 received considerable attention, particularly from the United States, which did not wish to commit itself unconditionally to Europe's defense. Throughout the course of negotiations on the Treaty, the United States remained committed to the idea that a military alliance would enable Europe to achieve political and economic integration by leveraging the Treaty of Brussels, thus reducing the risk of a future conflict between European states. Alongside financial and economic assistance, the U.S. agreed to provide substantial military assistance in the hope that European states would eventually recover economically and take responsibility for Europe's collective defense against the Soviet threat, thus avoiding the requirement for the U.S. to shoulder the burden indefinitely.⁷ The issue of burden-sharing remained a constant theme for U.S. policy and continues to this day.

The North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950 had several implications for NATO's development, although it did not directly involve the Alliance. Firstly, it called into question European members' ability to rebuild sufficient military capacity in time to defend against a Soviet attack, which was now seen as more likely given Soviet assistance to North Korea. Secondly, it emphasized the need to establish a genuine military command structure with available forces, as opposed to continual committee meetings and planning. Finally, it raised the issue of how to incorporate the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or 'West Germany') into the defense of Europe "without

⁶ NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

⁷ Wallace J. Thies, *Friendly Rivals: Bargaining and Burden-Shifting in NATO* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), Chapter 2.

putting Germany into a position to act as the balance of power in Europe.”⁸

The latter point regarding West Germany’s role had already created tension between the U.S., the UK, and France. The United States saw West Germany’s industrial strength, rearmament, and eventual membership of NATO as vital to balance the Soviet Union’s power and ensure Europe’s future security. France, however, had strong reservations regarding West Germany’s rearmament and how it might affect the balance of power on the European continent.

In response to the United States’ proposals, France tried to establish the European Defence Community (EDC), a pan-European defense force that permitted West Germany’s rearmament but prevented the West German government from joining NATO or exercising direct control over its military forces. While the United States supported the EDC concept, it failed to gain the French parliament’s approval. The UK, which was not a party to the EDC proposal, was reluctant to deviate from its preferred position as an offshore balancer, although it lacked the power to maintain that position. Although the UK fully supported a transatlantic alliance, it did not want to commit its military forces to Europe, preferring to keep its limited military power free to support its global interests through its colonies and the Commonwealth.⁹

The U.S., the UK, and France also disagreed on NATO’s strategy and remit. Initially, the U.S. and the UK favored a global role for NATO. When it became apparent that France had the same ambitions for NATO and expected to participate in developing

⁸ Dean Acheson, “Memorandum by the Secretary of State on a Meeting with the President, July 31, 1950,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950*, vol. III, no. 106, quoted in Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 18.

⁹ Stanley R. Sloan, *Permanent Alliance? NATO and the Transatlantic Bargain from Truman to Obama* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2010), 20-22.

NATO's global strategy, the UK feared that France's inclusion in planning would undermine the U.S.-UK Combined Chiefs of Staff. Thus, the UK, and the U.S, sought to keep NATO focused on regional planning, while France continued to push for a global role for NATO.¹⁰

The United States supported Europe's economic recovery to enable NATO's European members to increase their share of the collective defense burden. However, Europe's economic recovery started to slow down through the 1950s and 1960s. European states found it increasingly difficult to achieve the levels of defense spending necessary to generate the forces that NATO needed, increasing Europe's military dependence on the United States. European members also struggled to sufficiently integrate their military, judged essential to present a credible defensive pact. Additionally, as NATO's strategy shifted from conventional defense against a Soviet attack towards deterrence based on nuclear weapons, NATO members took the opportunity to reduce defense spending on conventional military forces further.

Threats to Alliance Cohesion

NATO is regarded as the most successful alliance ever formed, with political and defense commentators constantly lauding its accomplishments. However, it often seems that for every supporter, there are critics who claim either that NATO is redundant or that it cannot survive internal frictions caused by members' independent actions.¹¹ The Suez Crisis in 1956, France's departure from NATO's military structure in 1966, the end of the

¹⁰ Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 18; Memorandum from Secretary of Chiefs of Staff Committee to Secretary to the Cabinet and Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, June 30, 1949, Documents on Canadian External Relations, vol. 15, no. 362. Accessed on February 10, 2021, <https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/faitc-aecic/history/2013-05-03/www.international.gc.ca/departement/history-histoire/dcer/details-en.asp@intRefid=8974>

¹¹ Wallace J. Thies, *Why NATO Endures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

Cold War, and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 are just some of the many occasions where it seemed that NATO faced an existential crisis and would collapse. The Suez Crisis merits examination as it set the course for UK-U.S. relations over the following decades.

The Suez Crisis. The 1956 Suez Crisis threatened to undermine NATO's cohesion and the United States' relationships with the UK and France. Historians regard the crisis as the defining moment when the UK lost its claim as a great power, although arguably it lost that status at the end of WWII.¹² The United States' swift rejection of support to the secretive joint UK-French operation to reclaim the nationalized Suez Canal, and its pressure on the UK and France to withdraw, elicited very different reactions from London and Paris.

Post-Suez, France opted to pursue a defense policy that reduced its reliance on the United States, developing an independent nuclear deterrent, and ultimately withdrawing its forces from NATO's military command structure in 1966. In contrast, the UK concluded that to retain global influence, it needed to draw closer to the United States even if that meant becoming a "junior partner" to the U.S.¹³ Rather than weakening the UK-U.S. relationship, the Suez Crisis strengthened it, ensuring NATO's continued relevance, albeit with an Anglo-American focus. The rejuvenated UK-U.S. relationship also enabled the UK to develop its nuclear deterrent with U.S. support, although arguably at the cost of the UK's application to join the EEC in 1963.¹⁴

¹² Steve Marsh, "The US, BREXIT and Anglo-American relations," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 16, no. 3 (2018): 273.

¹³ Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 37.

¹⁴ Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 38-41.

NATO's Ability to Adapt and Transform

Aside from the Suez Crisis, NATO has faced several tests throughout its existence, both internally, as the European Economic Community grew, and externally, as the Soviet threat evolved. In response, NATO has regularly updated its Strategic Concept, demonstrating its continued utility, agility, and adaptability while striving to adhere to its core values of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.

Prior to the Suez Crisis, NATO had commissioned the Committee on Non-Military Cooperation to investigate “ways and means to improve and extend NATO cooperation in non-military fields and to develop greater unity within the Atlantic Community.”¹⁵ Suez emphasized how a lack of political agreement regarding out-of-area issues and member states’ pursuit of independent foreign policies could undermine the transatlantic military alliance. Consequently, NATO approved the Committee’s recommendations, improving political consultation and strengthening its strategic framework, which laid the foundations for improved cooperation on security issues and maintained its collective defense remit.

The 1967 Harmel Report, commissioned to identify the Alliance’s future tasks, laid the foundations for NATO’s continuing adaptation and relevance. The Harmel Report recognized the stabilizing nature of collective defense in global politics and proposed two complementary tasks, deterrence and détente, to deal with the Soviet threat. Sloan argues that the Harmel report revitalized NATO by confirming NATO’s commitment to maintaining a strong collective defense and expanded the Alliance’s goals

¹⁵ NATO, “Report of the Committee of Three,” October 5, 2017, accessed on February 10, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_65237.htm. The Committee on Non-Military Cooperation, more frequently referred to as the “Committee of Three” or “Three Wise Men,” comprised the Foreign Ministers of Canada, Italy, and Norway.

in a manner that would enable NATO to deal with the end of the Cold War.¹⁶

The United States has remained committed to the principle of European collective defense despite never solving the burden-sharing issue with European member states. Tensions regarding burden-sharing have existed since NATO's formation and continued throughout the Cold War period. While NATO's EU members' share of NATO's defense expenditure increased from 7.9% in 1952 to 30.3% in 1991, it has since fallen to 19.8% in 2020, reflecting both the UK's departure from the EU (which accounted for 4.7%) and a general reduction in EU members' defense spending following the end of the Cold War.¹⁷ Within an alliance such as NATO, it is natural for each member to reduce their share of the collective burden to devote resources to domestic expenditure without undermining the alliance's ability to provide security. Wallace Thies proposes that "NATO is an alliance of friendly rivals who bargain, cajole, and seek to outwit each other."¹⁸ It is therefore not wholly incongruous for member states to emphasize NATO's essentiality and their level of commitment to NATO even as they reduce defense expenditure.

The tendency to focus on the disparity between the United States' military contributions and those of NATO's European members often overlooks the broader benefits afforded to the United States by guaranteeing Europe's stability and security. Responding to U.S. criticisms regarding burden-sharing, European members refer to the quantity of U.S. military equipment purchased by them compared to the amount of

¹⁶ Sloan, *Permanent Alliance*, 51-52.

¹⁷ Author's calculation using data from SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2020, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>; Sloan, *Permanent Alliance*, 85.

¹⁸ Wallace J. Thies, *Friendly rivals: Bargaining and Burden-shifting in NATO* (London: Routledge, 2015), 263.

European equipment purchased by the United States.¹⁹ Similarly, European members' complaints about excessive U.S. influence in NATO ignore the reality that every member, regardless of size, has an equal say in NATO's actions. Moreover, the fixation on comparative spending as a means of determining member states' commitment to NATO obscures the lack of military integration, particularly the failure to standardize equipment and weaponry and the level of duplication across member states' armed forces.

NATO's Post-Cold War Transformation

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 led many observers to question the continued requirement for NATO, even as they acknowledged the indispensable role that NATO had played during the Cold War. Realists supported Stephen Walt's theory that the alliance should dissolve given the lack of an existential threat from the Soviet Union. However, rather than dissolving NATO, its members opted to transform NATO, redefining its role in the post-Cold War strategic environment to leverage its core values to enable member states to work together to tackle new challenges and provide the foundation for a more comprehensive European security architecture. NATO had gradually increased its membership through the Cold War, and the Warsaw Pact's dissolution saw states such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic eager to join NATO. However, NATO did not immediately expand, in part because of the requirement for prospective member states to demonstrate their democratic and free-market credentials in line with NATO's core values but also out of a fear that NATO's rapid expansion eastwards would marginalize Russia and potentially resurrect Cold War

¹⁹ Sloan, *Permanent Alliance*, 88.

tensions.

The UK, along with other European NATO members, supported NATO's expansion. It would provide a catalyst for helping other European states develop liberal democracies, promote European stability, and open additional markets for economic trade. For prospective members, joining NATO after the dissolution of the Soviet threat presented the opportunity to bandwagon with NATO and leverage the United States as a security guarantor against regional threats and challenges to their sovereignty. Although initially wary of expanding NATO, the United States recognized the opportunity that enlargement presented to enhance deterrence, increase the Alliance's strength in depth, and retain U.S. influence in Europe.²⁰

While NATO retained its primary purpose of European collective defense under Article 5, it expanded its remit to incorporate collective security tasks, including conflict resolution and peace enforcement operations, not just within Europe but globally. Concurrently, NATO's members capitalized on the peace dividend brought about by the end of the Cold War and reduced defense expenditure. The UK's defense expenditure fell from over 4% of GDP in 1990, to just over 2.5% in 2000.

NATO's first post-Cold War test came in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it initially enforced the UN Security Council resolutions to support the UN's peacekeeping operations, and ultimately conducted a bombing campaign, Operation Deliberate Force, in 1995. The U.S.-brokered Dayton Accords led to a NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) deployment in December 1995 that became the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in 1996. The UK contributed a division headquarters and a brigade to IFOR. The EU's

²⁰ Mark Webber, James Sperling, and Martin A. Smith, *NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory: Decline or Regeneration* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 94

Operation Althea took over from SFOR in 2004, utilizing the Berlin Plus agreement.

NATO also demonstrated a willingness to act with UN approval when it launched Operation Allied Force in Kosovo in 1999. Following the air campaign, NATO deployed the multinational Kosovo Force (KFOR), led by the UK's ARRC headquarters and supported by a UK brigade. NATO's intervention in Kosovo received widespread criticism, principally from Russia, over its legality.

Following Al-Qaeda's attack on the U.S. on 11 September 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. NATO deployed forces to Afghanistan in December 2001, and led the International Security Assistance Force, under a UN mandate, from 2003 to 2014.²¹ NATO also deployed non-combat training missions to both Iraq and Afghanistan, with Operation Resolute Support continuing NATO's presence in Afghanistan after ISAF's withdrawal in 2014. The UK supported each of these deployments.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014 triggered condemnation from NATO's members and an agreement to support the EU's sanctions against Russia. More significantly, it triggered a realization that NATO's readiness and responsiveness required urgent attention and led to all members, less Iceland, agreeing to spend 2% of GDP on defense by 2024.²² At NATO's Warsaw Summit in 2016, the Alliance committed to deploying four multinational battlegroups to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland under the Enhanced Forward Presence initiative to demonstrate its commitment to collective defense under Article 5 and to deter any further Russian malign

²¹ Olsen, "Understanding NATO," 62. For a detailed discussion of NATO's operations up to 2014, see Webber et al, *NATO's Post-Cold War Trajectory: Decline or Regeneration*, Chapter 3.

²² Olsen, "Understanding NATO," 63. The 2% target was agreed at NATO's Wales Summit in July 2014.

activity or aggression.²³

Since its foundation, NATO has ably demonstrated its adaptability. It continues to do so today as it seeks to update its strategic concept to deal with hybrid threats and cyber-attacks. There are calls for NATO to increase its presence in Asia, potentially including closer interaction with Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. China's increasing regional influence and a growing investment portfolio that includes EU member states' critical national infrastructure has the potential to threaten the Alliance's cohesion and interoperability.²⁴

Implications of Brexit for NATO

“NATO's real power derives from the fact that it combines the United States' military capabilities and economic power with Europe's collective political and economic weight (and occasionally some limited European military forces).”²⁵

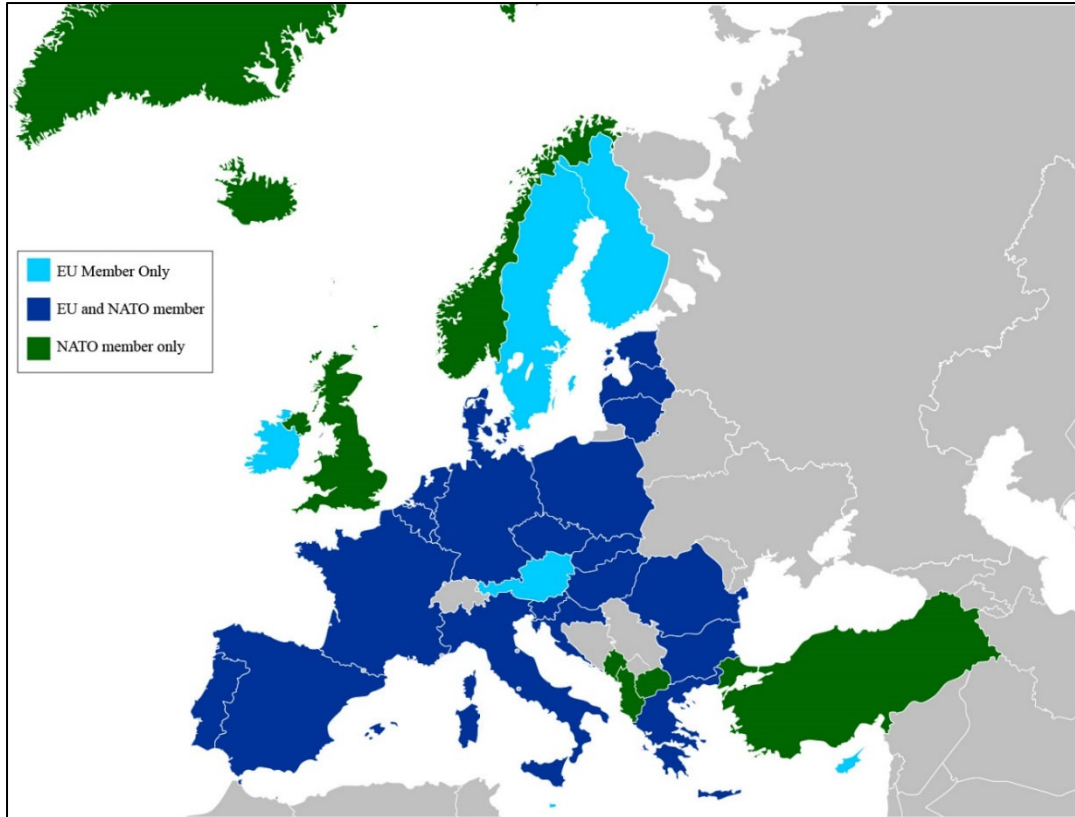
Just two weeks after the UK's referendum, acknowledging that “a stronger NATO and a stronger EU are mutually reinforcing,” the EU and NATO issued a Joint Declaration that sought to “give new impetus and new substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership.”²⁶ The 2016 Joint Declaration identified seven priority areas to enhance cooperation including cyber threats, security sector reform, capacity building,

²³ NATO, “Warsaw Summit Communique,” July 9, 2016.

²⁴ Olsen, “Understanding NATO,” 70. For an excellent discussion on the Future of NATO, see John Andreas Olsen, ed. “Future NATO: Adapting to New Realities.” *RUSI Whitehall Paper* 95, no. 1 (2019).

²⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, “An Agenda for NATO: Toward a Global Security Web,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5 (2009): 10.

²⁶ Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, July 8, 2016.



*Figure 3 - European Members of NATO and the EU.
Source: Author's own product compiled from NATO and EU websites.*

exercises, and hybrid warfare. An implementation statement followed in December 2016 that proposed 42 action items, later increased to 74 items in 2018.

The 2016 and 2018 EU-NATO Joint Declarations aim to build on the synergies between the two organizations, noting that 21 NATO member states are also EU member states (Figure 3). Initial criticism suggested the Joint Declarations were little more than a rhetorical exercise. However, when viewed together with the EDF, PESCO, and the EU's broader commitment to improving its security capabilities, there are strong indications that the EU is serious about increasing its share of the collective security burden without undermining NATO.

NATO remains indispensable to European defense and security, not least because of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. It also provides a critical function by enabling

political and military discussions in a community of shared values and interests.²⁷ From the Suez Crisis to Iraq, NATO has endured many threats to its cohesion. It will continue to adapt, as it has done over the 71 years of its existence. The UK's latest national security strategy demonstrates its continued commitment to NATO. Furthermore, the UK intends to modernize its armed forces to provide niche defense capabilities otherwise lacking from NATO's available forces, including its national cyber capabilities to support the Atlantic Alliance.

Burden-sharing will remain a constant issue within NATO, particularly from the United States' perspective. However, member states are making progress in meeting the 2% target agreed in 2014. The combination of the EU's PESCO initiative, the EDF, and NATO members' commitment to spend at least 20% of their defense budgets on new equipment indicates that NATO and the EU are serious about enhancing their defense capabilities and interoperability. Whether the UK's calls for NATO's EU members to meet the defense spending target will carry as much weight following its departure from the EU remains to be seen. The UK is determined to enhance its leadership role in NATO, although NATO's EU members may increasingly defer to France and Germany, who have different visions for EU-NATO cooperation compared to the UK.

²⁷ NATO 2030 Reflection Group, *NATO 2030: United for a New Era* (Brussels: NATO, 2020), 7.

Chapter 5: Options for UK support to European Collective Defense and Security

The UK's departure from the EU does not diminish the importance of European security for the UK's security. The English Channel does not protect the UK from contemporary security challenges and threats, evidenced by the London bombings in July 2005, the Westminster Bridge attack in March 2017, and the increase in illegal immigration. The 2021 Integrated Review maintains NATO's primacy in the UK's strategic approach to European collective security and recognizes that the UK faces the same threats and security challenges as continental Europe. Meanwhile, the EU has made significant progress since 2016, at least on paper, to realize its ambitions for strategic autonomy, in part due to the UK's departure from the EU, but also driven by France and Germany's leadership, and a desire to reduce EU dependency on the United States. Although the UK has left the EU, it has not abandoned its long-held aim to maximize the EU's defense capabilities and capacity, provided it remains complementary to NATO.

This chapter will review three options regarding UK engagement with European collective defense, focusing on the UK-EU security and defense relationship. The primacy afforded by the UK to NATO is common to all options. The first option examines the ad hoc approach put forward in the 2021 Integrated Review, whereby the UK supports EU CSDP missions on a case-by-case basis without any formal agreement. The second option proposes a formalized relationship between the UK and the EU based on a strategic or framework agreement that could better enable the UK to support CSDP missions and participate in PESCO and EDF initiatives.¹ The third option eschews any

¹ The EU has a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Canada that was signed in 2016 but has yet to be ratified by all EU members. The EU has a Framework Partnership Agreement with Norway.

direct UK support to the EU and instead proposes the UK works only through NATO to strengthen NATO's European pillar.

Option 1: The Ad Hoc Approach

The 2021 Integrated Review establishes the UK's intent to pursue an ad hoc approach in working with the EU on defense and security matters.² In addition to the UK's membership of NATO, the ad hoc approach emphasizes the UK's bilateral security agreements, such as its treaties with France and Germany, and its multilateral agreements, such as the Joint Expeditionary Force. However, where the EU has already established a policy position on a security issue, the UK may struggle to improve its bilateral agreements with EU member states. Furthermore, as the EU moves closer to realizing its strategic ambitions, the UK's closest European allies, like France, may find it more beneficial to work through the EU than with the UK.

The ad hoc position offers advantages to both the UK and EU. Following Brexit, it is politically more acceptable for the UK not to have a formal agreement that might bind, or be perceived to bind, the UK to EU policies. For the EU, the ad hoc approach does not automatically preclude UK participation in EU CSDP missions but does ensure that the UK does not have undue influence in the planning or design of those missions. The EU has made its position clear regarding the UK's ambition to play a more prominent part in the development of CSDP missions, and in the short term, it seems highly unlikely that the UK will contribute to planning CSDP missions in which it agrees to take part. While the EU could opt to account for potential UK contributions when

² HM Government, *Integrated Review*, 72.

planning future CSDP missions, particularly where the UK holds niche capabilities, the EU is unlikely to adopt this approach as it cannot guarantee the UK's participation.

UK participation in each CSDP mission under third country participation terms will require negotiation of bespoke framework agreements, often a lengthy process. The EU is unlikely to offer any concessions to the UK. Lengthy negotiations may deter the UK from participating in CSDP missions, leading the UK to work through either NATO, bilateral agreements, bespoke coalitions, or other initiatives such as E12.

While the UK and the EU acknowledge their shared values and interests, the ad hoc approach does not provide the degree of certainty and predictability that the EU seeks to achieve through its structured approach to foreign and security cooperation. Equally, it remains unclear how the EU will react to situations where the UK chooses not to support CSDP missions, particularly those in Europe, but benefits from them as a free rider.

Furthermore, the ad hoc approach may allow malign actors such as Russia to exploit any gaps between the UK's and the EU's security policy positions. Outside of the EU, the UK has significantly more flexibility to impose sanctions against states which demonstrate unacceptable behavior. However, it is questionable whether the UK's sanctions alone could bring about a change in behavior. The UK will likely need to build a broad consensus to achieve any tangible effect.

Option 2: Formalized Security Agreement

The second option proposes that the UK and EU reach a formal agreement to enable the UK to support European collective security through CSDP missions, negating the requirement to negotiate separate framework agreements for each CSDP mission.

The ability to reach a formal agreement will depend on what each party expects to get out of it. Like the ad hoc approach, provided the UK does not seek the ability to influence the planning and design of CSDP missions, a proposal the EU dismissed during Brexit negotiations, the EU remains open to establishing a formal agreement. It would remove some of the ambiguity presented by the ad hoc approach without necessarily committing the UK to support every CSDP mission. It would also enable the UK to retain a broad range of options to support European collective security.

A formal agreement could also enable the UK to participate in PESCO and contribute to the EDF. The 21 EU member states who are members of NATO are all also members of PESCO. Thus, there are significant opportunities to improve both EU and NATO interoperability and capability development. However, the UK's involvement in PESCO will likely remain politically unacceptable in the short term due to the requirement to formally align its defense and security policy with the EU as one of the conditions for participation. Encouragingly, the UK's recent recognition of the EU's Ambassador to London is a step towards overcoming some of the damaging rhetoric seen during the Brexit negotiations.

Like the ad hoc approach, as the EU moves closer to establishing a true European Defence Union (EDU) that will align member states' defense and security policies, the UK may find it increasingly difficult to maintain its bilateral agreements with individual member states. Germany strongly supports the EDU proposal as the route to achieving greater integration of EU defense capabilities. Opponents argue that greater European defense integration, specifically the EDU, risks undermining NATO. However, there is currently no suggestion that the EU is ready, or inclined, to take over NATO's collective

defense responsibilities, particularly towards Russia, or more globally, like NATO's deployments to Afghanistan or Iraq.

Option 3: Increased UK Support for NATO

Under the first two options, British support to the EU through NATO under the Berlin Plus agreement is one way the UK can indirectly support EU missions. The third option proposes a formal UK policy position where the UK only supports European collective security and EU CSDP missions through NATO. It would not preclude the possibility of working bilaterally with EU member states, multilaterally through the Joint Expeditionary Force, or through bespoke coalitions.

The EU-NATO Joint Declaration indicates the EU's intent to remain complementary to NATO. By acting solely through NATO, France may assume the UK's traditional position as the 'transatlantic bridge' between NATO and the EU, and France has a markedly different vision for European collective defense and security than the UK. It is doubtful whether the UK could leverage its position within NATO to ensure that capability development, through PESCO, benefits NATO as well as the EU. Although the Baltic states remain fully committed to NATO for collective defense, they also derive considerable economic benefits from their membership of the EU.

A NATO-only approach might remove some of the ambiguity regarding the UK's security relationship with the EU. However, it would effectively place part of the UK's security and defense policy in the hands of NATO and EU decision-making, relying on the EU requesting support from NATO under the Berlin Plus agreement and unanimous consent in NATO to support the EU's request. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the EU has only called on Berlin Plus twice since 2004. Furthermore, a NATO-only approach

may also lead to greater reliance on the UK's bilateral relationships with the U.S. and France, potentially undermining EU-NATO cooperation as a bilateral response to a security crisis would be simpler to enact.

Given the EU's pursuit of strategic autonomy to reduce its dependency on the United States and challenges reaching consensus between the EU and NATO due to Turkish-Cypriot relations, the UK may find that supporting European collective security solely through NATO requires considerable diplomacy and bargaining.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The UK has sought to maintain NATO's primacy in European defense and security by leveraging its NATO membership and bilateral and multilateral relationships with European partners to strengthen European defense cooperation. The UK has attempted to offset its declining hard power by increasing its emphasis on soft power through international institutions, diplomacy, conflict prevention, capacity building, and a commitment to international aid spending.

The 2021 Integrated Review acknowledges the UK's status as a middle power and proposes that "influence of middle powers is likely to grow . . . particularly when they act together."¹ The UK is a European power with global interests and long-standing goals to promote international trade, multilateralism, and security. However, increased competition between the United States and China may challenge the premise that middle powers can achieve the level of influence the 2021 IR predicts by grouping together. Instead, middle powers may face a similar predicament to the Melians during the Peloponnesian War and find themselves caught between the U.S. and China. The UK aspires to improve its economic relationship with China. However, the UK may come under increasing pressure to conform to U.S. policy as it experienced regarding the use of Huawei's equipment in the UK's 5G network in 2018.

The UK's soft power may enable it to form bespoke coalitions, but where it seeks to leverage its relations with European states, the EU's rise as a security actor in its own right may challenge the UK's bilateral relationships, particularly with France and Germany. Furthermore, the UK's departure from the EU was far from harmonious, and

¹ HM Government, *Integrated Review*, 27.

the UK's approach to the Brexit negotiations and its interactions with the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic may have damaged its international standing and credibility.

From the UK's perspective, NATO remains the bedrock of European collective defense and security. The UK's departure from the EU lends NATO even greater importance in the UK's security strategy. Although not deterministic, the UK has demonstrated a tendency to protect its special relationship with the United States over its relations with Europe and the EU. Post-Brexit, the special relationship may hold even greater significance for the UK, but without the UK as a 'voice of reason' in EU, the U.S. may look more towards other European states. Furthermore, many British politicians remain wary of aligning too closely with the United States following the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Meanwhile, the EU intends to become a credible security actor in its own right, and the EU-NATO Joint Declaration has assuaged some of the concerns regarding potential duplication or decoupling of Europe from NATO. While the EU's response to COVID-19 has potentially undermined some of the arguments for increased European integration and supranationalization, the initiatives resulting from the EU's Global Strategy are a step in the right direction to increase the EU's security capabilities.

The current UK national security strategy advocates cooperation with the EU on security and defense issues where those issues are in the UK's interest. While it does not explicitly rule out cooperation, any move to closely align UK foreign and defense policy with the EU post-Brexit is likely to come under intense scrutiny, as it may be construed as surrendering sovereignty when Brexit was intended to 'take back control.' However, following the principle that "Europe's security is our [the UK's] security," the UK should

increase its support to European collective defense and security by formalizing its security relationship with the EU. Where UK and EU strategic interests align, the UK will gain considerably more influence and credibility by supporting EU missions as a third party under a formal agreement than acting independently or objecting to them from an external position.

As the UK sets out on its path outside of the EU and seeks to implement its Global Britain agenda, establishing a formal security agreement with the EU will do much to project European stability. It will also confirm the UK's position as a reliable partner and security actor to the rest of Europe and the world.

Bibliography

To assist the reader, the Bibliography has been arranged by official publications (UK, EU, NATO, and U.S.), books, reports, journals, and speeches.

UK Government and Parliamentary Sources

- HM Government. *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, Cm 7953. London: The Stationery Office, October 2010.
- . *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, Cm 7948. London: The Stationery Office, October 2010.
- . *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous Britain*, Cm 9161. London: Cabinet Office, November 2015. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-strategy-and-strategic-defence-and-security-review-2015>.
- . *Foreign policy, Defence and Development: A Future Partnership Paper*. London, September 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-policy-defence-and-development-a-future-partnership-paper>.
- . *National Security and Capability Review*, Cm 9161 London: Cabinet Office, March 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-capability-review-nscr>.
- . *The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union*, Cm. 9593. London: Cabinet Office, July 2018. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786626/The_Future_Relationship_between_the_United_Kingdom_and_the_European_Union_120319.pdf
- . *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, CP 403. London: Cabinet Office, March 2021.
- Miller, Vaughne, ed. *Brexit: Impact Across Policy Areas*. UK Parliament House of Commons Library Briefing Paper 7213, August 26, 2016. <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7213/CBP-7213.pdf>
- UK Parliament, House of Commons Defence Committee. *Indispensable allies: US, NATO, and UK Defence Relations*. Eighth Report of Session 2017-19, 2018. HC 387.
- UK Parliament, House of Lords European Union Committee. *Brexit: Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations*. 16th Report of Session 2017-19, 2018. HL Paper 132.

UK Parliament, Joint Committee on National Security Strategy, *National Security Capability Review: A changing security environment*, First Report of Session 2017-19, March 23, 2018. HC 756

Ward, Matthew. *Statistics on UK-EU Trade*, UK Parliament House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 7851, June 17, 2020.
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7851/>

European Union Sources

Cologne European Council, Conclusions of the Presidency: Annex III. June 3-4, 1999. Accessed February 12, 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/kol2_en.htm#an3

European Communities. *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1992. [Maastricht Treaty]

European Communities. *Treaty of Amsterdam Amending the Treaty on European Union, The Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Related Acts*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1997. [Amsterdam Treaty]

European Commission. *Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence*. COM(2017) 315, Brussels, June 2017.

European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union. *CSDP after Brexit: the way forward*, PE 603.852 (2018)

European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. “Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on Strengthening the EU’s Contribution to Rules-Based Multilateralism.” JOIN(2021) 3 Final. Brussels: European External Action Service, February 2021.

European Union. *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*. Official Journal of the European Union, OJ C 326/13, 2012. [Lisbon Treaty]

———. *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe: A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy*. Brussels: European External Action Service, June 2016. [EU Global Strategy]

———. *From Shared Vision to Common Action: Implementing the EU Global Strategy: Year 1*. Brussels: European External Action Service, June 2017.

European Union. *Political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom*. Official Journal of the European Union, C 384 I/178, November 11, 2019.

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12019W/DCL\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12019W/DCL(01)&from=EN).

European Union. *Trade and Cooperation Agreement Between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part*. Official Journal of the European Union L444/14 Vol 63, December 2020.

NATO Sources

NATO. "The North Atlantic Treaty." April 4, 1949. Accessed February 10, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

NATO, "Report of the Committee of Three," October 5, 2017. Accessed February 10, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_65237.htm.

NATO. "Washington Summit." April 23, 1999. Accessed February 10, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_27286.htm.

NATO. "A Short History of NATO," *NATO Declassified*. Accessed February 10, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_139339.htm.

NATO Public Diplomacy Division, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2020)*, Communique PR/CP(2020) 104 dated October 21, 2020: 8 (Table 3). Accessed February 12, 2021, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/10/pdf/pr-2020-104-en.pdf.

NATO 2030 Reflection Group. *NATO 2030: United for a New Era*. November 2020. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf.

President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Joint Declaration." July 8, 2016. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm

President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation." July 10, 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156626.htm

Books and Reports

Baciu, Cornelia-Adriana and John Doyle, eds. *Peace, Security and Defence Cooperation in Post-Brexit Europe: Risks and Opportunities*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019.

- Biscop, Sven. *European Strategy in the 21st Century: New Future for Old Power*. Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.
- Black, James, Alexandra Hall, Kate Cox, Marta Kepe, and Erik Silfversten. *Defence and Security after Brexit: Understanding the Possible Implications of the UK's Decision to Leave the EU—Compendium Report*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2017. Accessed January 31, 2021, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1786.html.
- Cini, Michelle and Amy Verdun. “The implication of Brexit for the future of Europe.” In *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe*, edited by Benjamin Martill and Uta Staiger, 63-71, London: UCL Press, 2018.
- Duke, Simon. *Will Brexit Damage Our Security and Defence? The Impact on the UK and EU*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- Ellison, James, and Robert Saunders, eds. *Britain and the European Union: Lessons from History*. London: Mile End Institute, 2016.
- Hofmann, Stephanie C. *European Security in NATO's Shadow: Party Ideologies and Institution Building*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Howorth, Jolyon. *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*. Second edition. European Union Series. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- . *For a True European Defence Union*. Brussels: Wilfred Martens Centre for European Studies, 2017. Accessed on February 12, 2021, <https://www.martenscentre.eu/publication/for-a-true-european-defence-union/>
- Kochis, Daniel. *Recent EU Strategic Autonomy Advances Threaten the Transatlantic Link*. Washington D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 2020. Accessed on February 12, 2021, <https://www.heritage.org/europe/report/recent-eu-strategic-autonomy-advances-threaten-the-transatlantic-link>.
- Niblett, Robin. *Britain, Europe and the World: Rethinking the UK's Circles of Influence*. London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2015.
- Raine, Sarah. *Europe's Strategic Future: From Crisis to Coherence*. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2019.
- Sayle, Timothy Andrews. *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019.
- Sloan, Stanley R. *Permanent Alliance? NATO and the Transatlantic Bargain from Truman to Obama*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2010.

Thies, Wallace J. *Friendly rivals: Bargaining and Burden-shifting in NATO*. London: Routledge, 2015.

———. *Why NATO Endures*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Walt, Stephen M., *The Origins of Alliances*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Journals

Biscop, Sven. "All or Nothing? The EU Global Strategy and Defence Policy after the Brexit." *Contemporary Security Policy* 37, no. 3 (2016): 431–445. <https://doi-org.nduezproxy.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1238120>.

Brinkley, Douglas. "Dean Acheson and the 'Special Relationship': The West Point Speech of December 1962." *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 3 (1990): 599-608.

Brzezinski, Zhigniew. "An Agenda for NATO: Toward a Global Security Web." *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5 (2009): 2-20.

Bunde, Tobias, and Wolfgang Ischinger. "European Security Policy at the End of the Post-Cold War Era." *Global Policy* 8 (2017): 27–29. <https://doi-org.nduezproxy.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12431>.

Chalmers, Malcolm. "UK Foreign and Security Policy after Brexit." *RUSI Briefing Paper*, January 2017. <https://rusi.org/publication/briefing-papers/uk-foreign-and-security-policy-after-brexit>.

———. "The Integrated Review: The UK as a Reluctant Middle Power?" *RUSI Occasional Paper*, March 2021. https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/rusi_pub_281_chalmers_final.pdf

Cladi, L. and Locatelli, A. "Keep Calm and Carry On (Differently): NATO and CSDP after Brexit." *Global Policy*, 11 (2020): 5-14. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12747>.

Dorman, Andrew. "The Future of British Defence Policy." *Focus Strategique* no. 74 (July 2017).

Dunn, David H. and Mark Webber. "The UK, the European Union and NATO: Brexit's unintended consequences." *Global Affairs* 2, Issue 5 (2016): 471-480.

Ewers-Peters, Nele Marianne. "Brexit's Implications for EU-NATO Cooperation: Transatlantic Bridge No More?" *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, (November 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148120963814>.

Fabbrini, Sergio. "The European Union and the Libyan crisis." *International Politics* Vol 51, no. 2 (2014): 177-195.

Howorth, Jolyon. "The Euro-Atlantic Security Dilemma: France, Britain, and the ESDP," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2005): 39-54.

———. "EU Defence Cooperation after Brexit: What Role for the UK in the Future EU Defence Arrangements?" *European View* 16, no. 2 (December 2017): 191–200. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12290-017-0455-5>.

Martill, Benjamin, and Monika Sus. "Post-Brexit EU/UK Security Cooperation: NATO, CSDP+, or 'French Connection'?" *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 20, no. 4 (2018): 846–863. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148118796979>.

Marsh, Steve. "The US, BREXIT and Anglo-American relations." *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 16, no. 3 (2018): 272-294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2018.1482713>.

O'Donnell, Clara Marina. "Britain's Coalition Government and EU Defence Cooperation." *International Affairs* 87, no. 2 (2011): 419-433.

Olsen, John Andreas, ed. "Future NATO: Adapting to New Realities." *RUSI Whitehall Paper* 95, no. 1 (2019).

Olsen, John Andreas. "Understanding NATO." *The RUSI Journal* 165, no. 3 (2020): 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2020.1777772>.

Ricketts, Peter. "The EU and Defence." *The RUSI Journal* 162, no. 3 (2017): 30-38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2017.1352375>.

Shea, Jamie. "European Defence After Brexit: A Plus or a Minus?" *European View* 19, no. 1 (April 2020): 88–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1781685820921617>.

Tardy, Thierry. "CSDP in action: what contribution to international security," *Chaillot Paper* 134, May 2015.

———. "What third-country role is open to the UK in defence?" *Center for European Policy Studies Policy Brief* (April 2018). Accessed February 7, 2021, <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/what-third-country-role-open-uk-defence/>

Speeches

Albright, Madeleine K. "Statement to the North Atlantic Council." Brussels, December 8, 1998. Accessed on February 12, 2021, <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/1998/981208.html>.

Barnier, Michel. "Speech at Berlin Security Conference." November 29, 2017. Accessed on February 10, 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_17_5021

May, Theresa. "PM speech at Munich Security Conference." Speech to the 58th Munich Security Conference, February 17, 2018.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-at-munich-security-conference-17-february-2018>.

Vita

Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Thompson MBE attended Durham University, where he completed an undergraduate degree in Business Economics and a Master's degree in Management. He commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst into the 1st Battalion, the (22nd) Cheshire Regiment (later the Mercian Regiment) in 2004, completing operational tours in Northern Ireland, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and exercises in Belize, New Zealand, and Kenya.

Following regimental duty, Lt Col Thompson worked on the British Army's General Staff in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) before attending the Intermediate Command and Staff College (Land) (ICSC(L)) in 2013. Following ICSC(L), he worked in the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) J5 branch, responsible for the Falkland Islands and West Africa. This assignment included planning the UK's military support to Sierra Leone to counter the Ebola Virus Disease and planning the UK's support to countering Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria. For his service at PJHQ, Lt Col Thompson was appointed a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2015.

Following PJHQ, Lt Col Thompson completed his company command appointment in an Armoured Infantry battalion, including overseas exercises in Canada and Lithuania. Following company command, he completed an operational deployment as Chief of Staff for the UK's deployment in Estonia as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence. In 2018 he was assigned as Chief of Staff of the UK's 1st Armoured Infantry Brigade, deploying the Brigade to Oman on the UK's largest overseas defense exercise since 2002 and initiating the Brigade's conversion to the new STRIKE role.

In 2020, Lt Col Thompson was selected to attend the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in Norfolk, Virginia.

Upon graduation from JAWS, Lt Col Thompson will return to the UK to work in the MOD's Strategy Unit.