

CURRENT PROBLEMS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with current issues of security and defense of Europe in cooperation with the risks and threats of the European Union, the problem of the formation of the EU army and the role of the Polish army therein or continuing cooperation within NATO, the prediction of security and defense development in Europe and starting points for the future.

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Introduction

For decades, Europe's security and defense have been based on two fundamental principles:

- A guarantee of defense within NATO (Article 5);
- cooperation of European countries within the EU.

Nowadays, however, the security and defense of Europe is totally threatened by the departure of the most powerful member of the EU through Brexit and the questioning of its commitment to European partners by NATO members of Donald Trump's US administration.

The question is, who guarantees security in Europe? What are the prospect of keeping the peace on the old continent? What are the roles of the OSCE and the political elites of the EU member states? Shall we build an EU or NATO Army? What are the starting points for the future?

1. Security of Europe

The principle that an attack on one of the Alliance members is an attack on everyone

has been a major deterrent to the aggression of every potential attacker since the Cold War era. The second pillar on which European security is based is the deepening cooperation of European countries within the European Communities and later the EU. Communities have been created to prevent further military encounters between old rivals on the old continent. However, European security is currently under threat.

There has been a war in our immediate neighborhood in Ukraine for several years now. We still acutely remember the consequences of the war in Yugoslavia that originated only 20 years ago. Russia's actions in the Crimea, as well as the recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights by Donald Trump, are contradictory. The most powerful member of the EU – the United Kingdom – intends to leave. The key ally from over the Atlantic Ocean, the USA, challenges its commitment to European NATO members. The Brexit referendum and the departure of the United Kingdom from the EU is a strong blow to EU security, as the

UK is a strong military and economic power in the European Union. But the election of Donald Trump as the president of the USA was not the catalyst for such events in fact – this was preceded by Afghanistan, the bombing of Yugoslavia, Libya, the war in Iran and Syria, etc.

President Trump praised Brexit and questioned the duty of a NATO member to come to the aid of a fellow member under attack. Europe's ability to cope with security threats has become problematic and ambiguous. In addition, relations between Russia and the US have worsened considerably, and a spiral into an arms race has begun again. The greatest danger for the EU is from the east and the south. From the east, it is Russia's military activity, and from the south it is illegal migration from the Middle East and North Africa. These threats and challenges from both the East and the South have caught us off guard. The chaotic solution to the influx of refugees, the slow and ineffective response to Donbass, Luhansk and Crimea, and the absence of predictive and effective solutions to re-establish the balance of safety have put an end to the era of security in Europe. The illusion viewed through rose-tinted lenses that security and defense are free was the impetus for President Trump to implement the tough but equitable requirement to meet our commitment to earmarking at least 2% of GDP for defense. The long-term underestimation of the development of capable and compatible armed forces and the failure to participate in security and defense spending has led to them being ravaged. There has been a reversal in Europe. For several years now, EU countries have been innovating in terms of their defense strategies. Armed Forces personnel capacities are being added, military technology is being modernized, and the structure and capabilities of elements are changing NATO

armies. In view of the growing threat of terrorism, security and defense strategies have undergone fundamental changes in response to both external and internal threats. Needless to say, the security and defense challenges for Europe can come from outside, as well as from within, but also from being related. Russia is not a major challenge for European security, it is only a direct military force. Perhaps more dangerous are the other hidden, forms of aggression by the Kremlin. The information war is a reality. The US presidential elections showed its strength. The French elections have only confirmed the high risk of covert interference in the internal affairs of such sovereign states as the US and France. We also feel the strength of the disinformation campaigns at present, as has been confirmed by the current presidential elections in Slovakia and Ukraine, the election of EU representatives to the European Parliament, and so on. The flow of information and thus misinformation cannot easily be stopped, and the key issue of today is **cyber security**. Globalization, digitization and free access to information also bring new challenges and threats. Nowadays it is very difficult to discern what is relevant information and what is propaganda. For US activities in the Middle East, NATO is often referred to as a criminal organization that has not only broken some government departments but has also caused a refugee crisis and tremendous problems for the EU itself. So who guarantees European security? What kind of future is waiting for us? Fortunately, the era of transatlantic cooperation is not over yet. Only the time of the countries that have relied on NATO and failed to meet their commitments is ending.

2. The EU or NATO army

European leaders have spoken loud about creating their own military pact that is

not dependent on the USA. But it is a grandiose dream, rather than a real possibility. Europe has been militarily comfortable. There was no war on the old continent (with the exception of the USSR and Yugoslavia) for over 70 years. We stopped believing it could break out. And if so, we knew that the US would protect us. We stopped upgrading our armies and let the US invest and play the role of global policeman. In doing so, we fell into total military dependence on America. But threats are increasing, and a safe Europe may not be so obvious. Strong voices for the creation of a common EU army - modern, strong and fully independent of American armed forces help.

This idea of EC President Jean-Claude Juncker's has met with sharp criticism from the UK. Yet the theme of security on the old continent is becoming increasingly topical, US aid is perhaps becoming increasingly questionable and, moreover, the British are leaving the EU. The leaders of Germany and France therefore support the union of EU member states and the creation of a single military grouping - the European Army. Merkel said on the 100th anniversary of World War I that "if we want to survive as a European community, we should take our destiny into our own hands and work on a vision to establish a real European army one day." At the Paris Summit, this came up against fierce opposition from the US President, who said, "Maybe Europe should, first and foremost, pay its fair share of NATO, which is massively subsidized by the US."

In terms of GDP, the share of military funding is 3.5% in the US, 2.4% in Greece, 2.2% in Estonia, 2.1% in the UK and approximately 2% in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Romania. Slovakia is still lagging behind with a share of only 1.6% but has a vision of 2% by 2020.

When it comes to military spending per capita, the US is again the highest on the

list, spending USD 1898 per capita, Norway USD 1483, the UK USD 899, France USD 787, the Netherlands USD 746, the Slovak Republic USD 249. At the other end of the scale, Albania spends USD 60 and Montenegro USD 129.

NATO armies have 3 million soldiers, of which no more than 2 million are in the US. Among the most numerous are: 710,000 in Turkey, 388,000 in France, 279,000 in the United Kingdom, and 208,000 in Germany.

According to the Global Firepower portal, which lists countries by the strength of their armies (55 different factors), the USA has the world's strongest army, followed by Russia and China. Among EU countries, France is 5th, the United Kingdom is 6th, Turkey is 9th, Germany is 10th, **Poland is 22nd**, Greece is 28th, Czech Republic 30th, Hungary 57th, and the Slovak Republic 62nd.

Poland's army has nearly 100,000 troops, and 10 000 reserves. It has all the elements of a modern army - ground and air forces, navy and special purpose forces. The budget is about 41.1 billion PLN, or 2% of GDP. The Polish army has rich international experience from international missions in 13 countries and is well armed and permanently modernized. Moreover, it has weapon systems of their own production. In terms of operational readiness, the best military in the EU is west of the Dnieper! It has a presumption of European dominance in the future.

US military, economic, and political dominance both in NATO and also worldwide is clear, but it is questionable whether all that the US is doing is to be agreed. It is a questionable tactic - irritating Russia. The rearmament of European armies exclusively by the American technology, as well as seeking further enlargement of NATO (Georgia and Ukraine), termination of the INF contract and other US activities bringing about a response from Russia by placing 9M729

mobile rockets capable of carrying nuclear carriers with a range of more than 500 km closer to NATO countries and deploying TU 22 M3 strategic bombers in the Crimea. But the reality is that Europeans are aware of the security risks (whether it is a military solution in the Crimea, a conflict in eastern Ukraine, a terrorist attack inspired by an Islamic state or a refugee crisis) and that **Europe must stand on its own feet, instead of relying on the USA**. But this will require time (perhaps decades), huge investments and a thorough restructuring and transformation of the EU armies.

Europe lacks the essential military sectors currently provided by the US. We would have to secure our own strategic bombers, nuclear arsenals, missile defense, and so on; as well as building a joint headquarters to coordinate the activities of the European Army and create its own planning and security processes.

However, defense policy is complex and complicated. Building a European army would be challenging both financially and organizationally, not to mention overcoming national interests and different technical equipment and the capabilities of independent armies. Without cooperation and assistance from the US, it would probably not even be possible. **But the need to be independent is also a predominant consideration for the EU and its army.**

3. Background for the future

For the nearly half a billion EU citizens, security and cooperation on the old continent, as well as on a global scale, is a priority. What caused the recent migration crisis? For Europe, it was not a primary threat, but rather a secondary threat in terms of **destabilizing the political systems** of EU member states. The impact of the refugee crisis is undermining the stability of the EU and

affects unity and solidarity, the rise of populism and political instability in EU member states. This has a secondary impact on Europe's security and its political ability to act.

These modern dangers and threats have a major impact, they are as follow:

- corruption,
- environmental and climate threats,
- the emergence of antisystem parties,
- the intensified intra-political struggle in the EU,
- Russian and Chinese geopolitical interests, but also the interests of the USA,
- dictation and dependence,
- imbalance and low mutual trust,
- technological lagging,
- the division into big and small, main and secondary, obedient and rebel.

The starting point for the future of the EU is difficult, but the priority must be peace-keeping and political patience, security and cooperation, healthy competition, but also mutual assistance and solidarity. The EU urgently needs new structures.

The so-called Juncker defense fund, from which we should have EUR 5.5 billion in 2020 in the EU – EUR 500 million a year for joint research and a further EUR 1 billion for the EU budget to develop capabilities. The remaining EUR 4 billion should come from EU member states. The European Defense Agency (EDA) has been set up to ensure the interoperability of the EU armed forces and the European Defense Action Plan (EDAP) has been adopted by the EC, but this project needs visionary decisions and ambitious measures.

The main attributes must be:

- security and Cooperation (significant roleplayed by OSCE);
- common values and adequate participation (PESCO);
- handy diplomacy and compromise capability;

- equality in specification;
- world restoration;
- mutual respect and problem-solving.

Conclusion

The dominance of the US Army in NATO is obvious and continues to be justified. As a growing geopolitical player, the EU should strive for greater military autonomy by increasing the capabilities of its armies within NATO as a critical organization (at least for the time being) to secure peace in the world. It has to be proactively taken into account that the world is changing, and dependence has always been paid for dearly throughout the course of history.

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