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by Thierry Meyssan
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Western Europeans Deprived of Defense

The possible withdrawal of the United States from its preeminent position in NATO, even if it does not withdraw from the Atlantic Alliance, sends the political West back to its own devices. How can peace be ensured on the continent? The European Defense project, developed by François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac, does not allow for the defense of the European space, but only provides the EU with the means to intervene in the event of a massacre abroad. The projects of Emmanuel Macron and Keir Starmer correspond to the needs of their countries, but in no way to those of the continent. However, time is running out as conflicts loom in northern Ukraine, Moldova, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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NATO headquarters in the suburbs of Brussels. At its founding, the Alliance employed many former Nazi officers (including Klaus Barbie, who was only dismissed at the express request of France). The architect who designed its new headquarters failed to notice that, seen from an airplane, it reproduced the SS acronym.

The numerous meetings held in Paris, London, and Brussels on the future of Western defense policy all considered a partial or complete US withdrawal from NATO. The Ukrainian issue was merely a pretext that interested only a few participants.

WHAT DOES "US WITHDRAWAL" MEAN?

During his first term, Donald Trump considered a complete US withdrawal from NATO. In the end, he simply pushed member states to increase their defense budgets to 3% of their GDP. He acted as a "Jacksonian" and wanted to substitute trade for war.



At the time, the issue was considered only in terms of each member's financial contributions. Although each member's contributions to the Atlantic Alliance are unclear, the Pentagon provides 16% of the annual budget and many benefits that only its armed forces can offer. To avoid paying its share, French President Emmanuel Macron declared that NATO was "brain dead." [1].

The current situation is radically different. President Donald Trump must cut spending immediately: his country has accumulated a staggering debt and would be bankrupt if its creditors demanded repayment. I explained two weeks ago that "Donald Trump is trying to manage the possible economic collapse of Joe Biden's 'American empire' the way Yuri Andropov, Konstantin Chernenko, and Mikhail Gorbachev tried to manage that of Leonid Brezhnev's 'Soviet empire'." [2].

Also, as Gorbachev did with the Warsaw Pact, Trump will not withdraw from NATO, but will stop paying for it. In practice, not withdrawing from the Atlantic Alliance, while withdrawing from its organization, NATO, implies relinquishing command. Since its

creation, NATO has been led by a "Supreme Allied Commander Europe" (SACEUR), who must be American. Today, General Christopher G. Cavoli combines this role with that of commander of the United States forces in Europe.



On February 13, Donald Trump informed Mark Rutte of the upcoming withdrawal of US troops from Europe and his country's abandonment of SACEUR privileges.

This is the option President Trump seemed to favor on March 13th, during his reception at the White House with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte: the United States would be just another component of the Alliance, on a par with Luxembourg, for example. However, without the United States' considerable intelligence and troop transport resources, NATO would no longer have any projection capability. It would be reduced to a collection of small armies, each unable to move outside its own national territory.

WHAT DOES "EUROPEAN DEFENSE" MEAN?

During the Cold War, the United Kingdom and the United States, which jointly led the Alliance, planned to coordinate Western European allies so that they could be sent to fight in Korea. It was the "European Defense Community" (EDC) that French patriots, that is, the united Gaullists and Communists, thwarted in 1954. Failing that, the Anglo-Saxons created the "Western European Union" (WEU), whose role was primarily to organize Germany's rearmament.



François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl created the Eurocorps and the Common Foreign and Security Policy so that their two countries would never again fight against each other.

During German reunification in 1991, the European Economic Communities were transformed into the European Union by the Treaty of Maastricht. They now have a "Common Foreign and Security Policy" (CFSP). However, while the Eurocorps was created during the Yugoslav Wars, Germany supported Croatia, while France supported Serbia. However, in December 1998, at the Saint-Malo Summit, the United Kingdom accepted the idea of a European defense, independent of NATO. A few days later, the Europeans extended the CFSP with a "Common European Security and Defense Policy" (ESDP), entrusted to former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. From then on, the EU, on its own initiative, was ready to organize peacekeeping operations.



Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac created the Common European Security and Defense Policy so that the EU could organize joint peacekeeping operations.

In 2003, when rival Lendu and Hema militias were killing each other in Ituri at the end of the Second Congo War, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued an appeal, to which the European Union responded. This was Operation Artemis: more than 2,000 troops from 18 nations participated. In reality, four-fifths of the forces were French. Following this operation, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany proposed the creation of the European Defence Agency (EDA), responsible for military capability development, research, and armaments. Building on this momentum, the 2009 Lisbon Treaty created the European External Action Service (EEAS), tasked with managing the EU's civilian and military resources to respond to crises. In 2015, following the Turkish-sponsored attacks on the Bataclan and Saint-Denis [3], France invoked the EU's mutual defense clause (Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty).



Federica Mogherini and the 23 EU Defense Ministers (in this photo, Ursula von der Leyen represents Germany) activated the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PSC), allowing a few EU states to cooperate in joint military actions within the framework of the Union.

In 2016, following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, proposed a "European Union Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy" (EUGS). In 2017, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which had been provided for by the Lisbon

Treaty, was activated. It plans to bring together a "hard core" of states around inclusive and ambitious projects, carried out in addition to joint actions. Simultaneously, a European Defense Fund is being created to facilitate the financing of this enhanced cooperation.

With the war in Ukraine, where the EU is siding with Ukrainian "integral nationalists" against Russia, things are accelerating: Brussels is mobilizing tens of billions of euros to produce weapons and donate them to Ukraine. Simultaneously, NATO is coordinating European armies around the battlefield to gather military intelligence and assist the Ukrainian army. This symbiosis is suddenly being called into question by the re-election of President Donald Trump.

WHAT OPTIONS ARE OPEN TO WESTERN EUROPEANS?

When it became clear to some Europeans (primarily France, Germany, and Denmark, but not to the Baltic States, Poland, or Romania) that the United States, abandoning the Ukrainian "integral nationalists," was going to conclude a separate peace agreement with Russia, Western Europeans (i.e., with the United Kingdom, which is not a member of the EU and without Russia) found themselves facing themselves.

The various meetings, impromptu in Paris, London, and Brussels, made it possible to develop a plan aimed at preventing the chaos that a sudden withdrawal of US troops from Europe would inevitably provoke. All the participants agreed on the idea (1) that they must acquire weapons that they do not currently have and (2) that they must train new soldiers. Such a plan would take 5 to 10 years to bear fruit. [4]. For the moment, Western Europeans all, more or less, consider Russia as a dangerous potential enemy. In reality, as things stand, there is no risk of Russia invading its neighbors. Moscow has never invaded Ukraine; it has simply carried out a "special military operation" against "integral nationalists," in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2202. However, following the war in Ukraine, there are real risks of a Polish invasion of Eastern Galicia, a Romanian invasion of Moldova, and, above all, a secession of the Republika Spreska from Bosnia-Herzegovina [5].

The question of who will lead a "coalition of the willing" to defend Ukraine against Russia is therefore particularly difficult to resolve. Paris and London are in competition, given that France and the United Kingdom are the only two nuclear powers in the group. However, an atomic bomb is useless for someone without a credible conventional defense. The advantage Paris and London are promoting therefore does not exist, either for them or for their allies.

Romania has already made it clear that it does not need the French nuclear umbrella (meaning that we continue to count on that of the United States) [6]. As for London, a large

part of the Foreign Office maintains that there is no point in making plans for the future and that it would be better to focus on an alliance with China against Russia.

Let us recall that the European Commission is, historically, the distant heir to the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In this respect, its President, Ursula von der Leyen, is continuing the policy of her predecessor, Walter Hallstein.



However, this senior European official was, in the 1930s, the lawyer who conceived the Neuordnung Europas (New European Order) project on behalf of Chancellor Adolf Hitler. Mrs. von der Leyen is therefore seeking to create a European army for the defense of the EU. However, this vision has even less chance of being realized than those of President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Keir Starmer, since a NATO cannot be formed... without NATO resources.

Thierry Meyssan

Translation

Roger Lagassé

[1] [«Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead»](#), *The Economist*, November 7th, 2019.

- [2] [“Is Donald Trump managing the possible collapse of the “American empire”?”](#), by Thierry Meyssan, Translation Roger Lagassé, *Voltaire Network*, 11 March 2025.
- [3] [“The unavowable project for a pseudo-Kurdistan”](#), by Thierry Meyssan, Translation Pete Kimberley, *Voltaire Network*, 7 December 2015. [“Erdoğan threatens the European Union”](#), by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan , Translation Pete Kimberley, *Voltaire Network*, 18 March 2016. [« La Turquie revendique le bain de sang de Bruxelles »](#), par Savvas Kaléndéridès , Traduction Christian Haccuria, *Réseau Voltaire*, 24 mars 2016. [“Mohammed Abrini is a British Informant”](#), Translation Anoosha Boralessa, *Voltaire Network*, 28 June 2016.
- [4] [«European military powers work on 5-10 year plan to replace US in Nato»](#), Henry Foy & Ben Hall, *Financial Times*, March 20, 2025.
- [5] [“The position of Republika Srpska on the current constitutional crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina”](#), by Željka Cvijanović, *Voltaire Network*, 6 March 2025.
- [6] [«Romania does not need France’s nuclear umbrella — adviser to acting president»](#), *Tass*, March 17, 2025.