

Transatlantic industrial cooperation helps allies keep their edge, writes Chris Lombardi

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The last 12 months have seen swift progress in the development of European defence and security capabilities.



Nato emblem | *Photo credit: Press Association*

The last 12 months have seen swift progress in the development of European defence and security capabilities. On both sides of the Atlantic there is clear support for a stronger European pillar in a strengthened NATO, and now is the time to forge deeper military, industrial and technological ties.

Rooted in the proven model of open and inclusive cooperation, these ties will provide opportunities to scale up capabilities by breaking down national industry silos, as envisaged by the EU, and will help to ensure that transatlantic security remains effective, innovative and technologically unparalleled.

The 2016 Warsaw Summit's [EU-NATO Joint Declaration](#) [1] was a significant milestone, setting out a new strategic partnership between the two pillars of European security. Last year, we saw the first ever cyber-defence joint exercise between the EU and NATO, and more similar opportunities are expected to follow.

In the words of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, a "stronger EU means stronger NATO, stronger NATO means stronger EU." This sentiment has been echoed by many EU leaders.

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Despite these positive developments, many questions remain. At the centre of new debates on defence in Europe are issues of smart spending, complementarity of systems vs potential duplication, interoperability, readiness and availability of new capabilities, cross-border collaboration, and cooperation with non-EU NATO allies such as Norway.

Allied countries are concerned about how to best move forward while preserving the strong transatlantic defence architecture that has helped keep Europe safe for decades. European allies are also faced with navigating the complex reality of balancing national sovereignty with collaborative security initiatives in areas where significant integration was previously regarded as strictly off-limits.

Efforts to strengthen the European defence industry are a clear example of this balancing act, with initiatives such as the [European Defence Industrial Development Programme](#) [7] (EDIDP) reflecting some of the strategic challenges facing allies.

The defence industry is often seen as a source of national prestige, which creates a tendency to build domestic silos and insulate all but the largest manufacturers. At the same time, however, it is recognised that the strength of transatlantic defence and deterrence has for decades been built on technological advantage and innovation fostered by open international cooperation. This has ensured that allied capabilities remain at the cutting edge and has improved the safety and effectiveness of allied forces.

"On both sides of the Atlantic there is clear support for a stronger European pillar in a strengthened NATO, and now is the time to forge deeper military, industrial and technological ties"

This leadership has been reinforced by transatlantic industrial cooperation, which facilitates exchange of information and expertise, building industrial scale with significant cross-border supply chains. With a presence in Europe for more than 100 years and long-standing partnerships with both multinationals and European small and medium businesses, Raytheon is a clear illustration of how transatlantic collaboration ensures that European nations acquire the most advanced capabilities while building industrial capacity.

Two-thirds of Raytheon's industrial partnerships are in Europe, helping to drive local innovation and create jobs, and allowing smaller companies to benefit from international programmes, technology transfer and export opportunities. In fact, the [National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Defence system](#) [8] currently deployed to safeguard the US capital region were the product of European-Raytheon cooperation.

However, this model is not only about production and strengthening the industrial base. An integrated and transnational network of partnerships has strategic implications, such as promoting and strengthening a collective approach to capability planning, research and development, testing, training and maintenance.

The [Patriot® air and missile defence system](#) [9], which protects a growing community of European and NATO countries, is a clear example of how proven, interoperable systems yield dividends in investment, training, modernization and effective security.

"The fact that we are stronger together is one of the most fundamental principles in European defence integration"

The fact that we are stronger together is one of the most fundamental principles in European defence integration. Both Europe and the US have benefited from close cooperation in terms of jobs and security, and new programmes such as the EDIDP should be developed with a view to strengthening and not constraining this special strategic bond.

If the EU-NATO community is to remain the global leader in defence innovation and capabilities, it is imperative that channels of cooperation remain open in practice and not just in theory, and that partners on both sides continue to invest, not only in a material sense, but politically too.

A new appreciation of transatlantic defence built on the tried and inclusive industrial partnerships will strengthen not only the security of our societies against evolving threats, but also the strategic values which have underpinned decades of commitment to collective defence.

About the author

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