

UK must remain a defence player

Written by Clare Moody on 27 November 2018 in Opinion
Opinion

Despite the impact of Brexit, the EU and UK's defence and security relationship should remain intrinsically linked, argues Clare Moody



Guaranteeing security is one of the most basic functions of the State and there is no doubt that Brexit will reduce the security of Britain's citizens.

The future relationship between the UK and EU on security and defence will inevitably be looser than it is currently; however we must do everything we can to minimise the damage. Despite Brexit, the UK's national security and that of the EU27 will remain intrinsically linked.

This is why the British Prime Minister has made it clear that the UK is unconditionally committed to Europe's security. No discussion of the European continent's security is complete without Nato.

The UK will remain a leading Nato member as well as one of the alliance's biggest defence spenders.

"The UK cannot leave the EU and still expect to have a voice at the table, such as a vote on the Political and Security Committee"

The EU-Nato relationship is of increasing importance, particularly when looking at relatively new threats such as cyber warfare.

At the same time, the EU is taking a step forward on Europe's defence with initiatives such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) Treaty and the European Defence Fund.

There is a recognition that overlap, and duplication is something that can best be dealt with by working in close cooperation, as outlined in the EU-Nato Joint Declaration.

This risk of duplication between Nato allies is also why developments such as the EDA's Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) are so important and have been welcomed by Nato.

Aside from the vital EU-Nato link, the UK will still play a role in Europe's defence through the European Intervention Initiative (EI2).

There is also scope for PESCO projects to play a role in this and therefore, where possible, the UK could play a role in PESCO projects.

This could potentially be achieved by working closely with the EDA, the EI2 or both. This should not be seen as cherry picking, but rather as a way of dealing with the reality of common threats and the relative importance of the UK as a full spectrum defence player in Europe.

RELATED CONTENT

- [AI: The security disruptor](#) [1]
- [EU Parliament approves new €13bn European Defence Fund](#) [2]
- [EDA and Nato look at ways to work together on air to air refueling](#) [3]
- [Defending The Front Line - Interview with SEDE committee chair Anna Elżbieta Fotyga](#) [4]
- [Calls for Nato HQ to be named after John McCain](#) [5]
- [UK outlines post-Brexit defence cooperation plans](#) [6]
- [Nato annual report: Most member states have increased defence spending](#) [7]

Labour is realistic about cooperation between the UK and the EU on defence; we understand that a non-member state cannot have greater control or access to information than a member state.

The UK cannot leave the EU and still expect to have a voice at the table, such as a vote on the Political and Security Committee for example.

This is why - as well as many other reasons - I campaigned, and continue to campaign, against Brexit in any of its forms. All of them leave the UK worse off.

So, although there are frameworks in place already for a degree of UK-EU defence collaboration, we should be ambitious about what more could be achieved, given the fact that the UK will be a third country.

“Any future defence collaboration between the UK and EU should not just be limited to defence itself but be in keeping with the European values we seek to defend”

Any future defence collaboration between the UK and EU should not just be limited to defence itself but also be in keeping with the European values we seek to defend.

That means keeping the UK aligned with the common position on arms exports both now and into the future.

Labour does not want to see a race to the bottom for the benefit of autocratic regimes that happen to use European weapons.

Labour wants to stop the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, but we should be doing so in concert with France and Germany as well as other leading arms exporters, to ensure any action is meaningful.

One area where I believe more can be done includes defence industrial collaboration, a sector employing hundreds of thousands of Europeans.

Europe’s focus on the defence industry is long overdue and so the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) and its successor, the European Defence Fund, are going to be incredibly important for Europe’s future.

That is why we need to ensure that these funds provide the appropriate balance between value for money and strategic autonomy.

It is right that EU taxpayers’ money for defence technology development is spent developing EU capabilities, employing Europeans; it is also right to start from a position of boosting the EU’s ability to develop a relatively autonomous defence industry.

However, given that 80 percent of Nato’s defence spending will be outside of the EU, a route should be found whereby some degree of Nato-allied participation can take place.

To argue that any inclusion of a Nato ally in an EU defence industrial project compromises the strategic autonomy of the EU simply undermines the sense of unity between Nato members that we so desperately need.

About the author

Clare Moody (S&D, UK) is vicechair of parliament’s security and defence sub-committee

Tags

[Brexit](#) [8]

[Foreign Affairs](#) [9]

Categories

[Defence and Security](#) [10]



Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [Climate Crisis](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)
[HouseThe](#)
[Parliament](#)
[MagazineHolyrood](#)
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)
[Service](#)
[World](#)
[PublicTechnology](#)
[Training](#)
[JournalDods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)
[CompanionVacher's](#)
[Quarterly The](#)
[European Union and](#)
[Public Affairs](#)
[Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster Briefing](#)
[Digital Health & Care](#)
[Scotland MEP Awards](#)
[The Skills Summit](#)
[Scottish Public Service Awards](#)
[Public Sector Procurement Summit](#)
[Public Sector ICT Summit](#)
[Cyber Security Summit](#)
[Cyber Security 2017](#)
[Training Journal Awards](#)

Partnership events

[The Health and Care Innovation Expo](#)
[Civil Service Live](#)
[Civil Service Awards](#)
[Chief Nursing Officer for England's Summit](#)
[Women into Leadership](#)
[The Youth Justice Convention](#)
[Socitm Spring Conference](#)
[NHSCC Annual Members' Event](#)
[Dods at Party Conference](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/uk-must-remain-defence-player>

Links

[1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/ai-security-disruptor>

[2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-parliament-approves-new-%E2%82%AC13bn-european-defence-fund>

[3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/eda-and-nato-look-ways-work-together-air-air-refueling>

[4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/interviews/defending-front-line>

[5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/calls-nato-hq-be-named-after-john-mccain>

[6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/uk-outlines-post-brex-it-defence-cooperation-plans>

[7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/nato-annual-report-most-member-states-have-increased-defence-spending>

[8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/brexit>

[9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/foreign-affairs>

[10] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/defence-and-security>