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NATO AND EU APPROACHES TO DEFENSE PLANNING

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Abstract:

European Union countries embraced not just one, but three types of defense planning: the domestic planning of each of the Member States, planning within the basis of NATO (NDPP - NATO Defense Planning Process) and, finally, the European Union's planning. How do all these different planning systems coexist? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Answering these questions is essential making the most out of limited national resources while maximizing its outcomes.

Key words: defense, planning, NATO, EU

1. Introduction

The NATO Defense Planning Process was born in 1971. It is a process to which the nations have long been accustomed, and which serves primarily to guarantee that the Alliance has the forces it needs to complete its missions, the main one remaining the collective defense of its members. It is a four years cyclical process, top-down organized and ruled by concerns of the security environment. It finishes with the allocation of capability targets to each of the members of the Alliance

The EU defense planning has gradually developed since the Helsinki summit of 1999 and includes many elements. It's best-known - but by no means not the only one - is the capability development plan established by the European Defense Agency. Its main goal has been to supply autonomous capability of action – both military and civil – in order to manage crises on its own doorstep, when the Americans did not wish to intervene. However, this process has evolved considerably. Its actual aim is to fulfil the EU's level of ambition, which has extended to 'the protection of Europe and its citizens' and is less focused on needs in terms of military capability than on potential industrial cooperation projects.

This paper sets a view on where we are on the way of cooperation between the two planning processes and identifies how could be improved, since neither of them produces the capabilities needed to satisfy the stated levels of ambition. According to a 2015 study [1], NATO level of ambition was 66% achieved, 50% of which through USA contribution and only 12% by EU nations. The gap between the ambitions and capabilities is no doubt wider for the EU than it is for the Alliance. However, NDPP gives its members a security guarantees thanks to the American forces, while the Union finds it extremely difficult to execute the most challenging missions on its own.

The most common sense improvement seems to be to make the European process cyclical and to synchronize it with that of the NDPP. To be able to do that would imply the EU to clarify its relationship with NATO. Should EU conclude that European defense can be redesigned as a collective defense system in complementary to the Atlantic Alliance and within it, in other words, an authentic pillar of the Alliance, once and for all?

Secondly, the industrial cooperation goal of the EU might not be realistic as a strategic military as per se. Perhaps interoperability and integration is a more practical and to the point



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strategic objective. This will definitely be in line with NATO and national efforts, make significant savings and increase operational efficiency.

2. NATO defense planning

NDPP was developed during the Cold War era and its purpose was to ensure that the Alliance had enough forces that latter became capabilities to carry out its missions, mainly to support the article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

NDPP it is a results-oriented process. It starts from the objective to be achieved and follows a ‘top-down’ approach, each nation being assigned with quantitative and quantitative objectives to be achieve within a given period of time. This makes NDPP also a cyclical process. It is based on a ten-year planning time horizon and each cycle of the lasts for four years. Through this process, Alliance members undertake to develop the capabilities required in the short and medium terms.

2.1 NDPP details

NDPP starts with defining the strategic objectives which are developed in the light of the main responsibilities of the Alliance as defined in the North Atlantic Treaty of 1948 and well-defined in the ‘strategic concept’, the most recent of which was adopted at the summit of Lisbon in 2010.

The 2010 concept assigns the Alliance three ‘essential core tasks’, which are: collective defence (article 5), crisis management and cooperative security, which includes such things as partnerships with certain countries, arms control and non-proliferation.

Every NATO summit define the changes in the strategic environment that have occurred over the previous period, as was the situation with the summits of Chicago in 2012, Wales in 2014, Warsaw in 2016 and Brussels in 2018.

Also, NATO staff responsible for planning within the Defence Policy and Planning Division (DPPD) and ACT staff carry out consultations with the Allies to discuss their long-term planning and the main factors which impact this planning. The objectives of the NDPP are defined on the basis of a threat evaluation and capability-based approach. After these preliminary activities have been carried out the NDPP cycle starts. This process is made up of 5 steps.

Step 1 – Political guidance

The political guidance comprises the orientations from the higher-level strategic documents and transform these into specific enough military terms to direct the defense planning activities. It defines, in a classified directive, the scope, nature and the number of the operations which the Alliance intends to carry out in order to fulfil its objectives which constitute the ‘**level of (military) ambition**’. Also, from a qualitative point of view, it defines the capabilities required to carry out the operations forecasted and set the priorities and deadlines to be applied.

It is the responsibility of DPPD Division of the NATO International Secretariat (IS/DPP) under the responsibility of the national representatives meeting within the ‘**Defence Policy and Planning Committee**’ (DPPC) of NATO to elaborate this directive.

The political guidance is then **adopted by the defence ministers within the North Atlantic Council** (NAC) and, if necessary, by the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). It is also complemented by a document entitled **supplementary guidance**, which goes into details on the



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military requirements deemed necessary which is the responsibility of the Military Committee in close collaboration with ACT.

Step 2.-Determine requirements

This stage is conducted by the two strategic commands on the basis of the supplementary guidance. It identifies the capabilities needed to satisfy the level of ambition laid down in the political guidance, both quantitatively and qualitatively, which includes the level of capability preparation. The **Capability Requirement Review** process, as it is known, is not subject of approval by the nations but is see-through by them.

The output of this step is drafting of The **Minimum Capability Requirement (MCR)** and the **comparison report**. The second includes capability to be maintained, gaps in capability and surplus capabilities in the pool of forces.

The MCR establishes an order between the capabilities within a global framework of operational functions divided into six capability groups: preparation, projection, support, C3 (communication, control, command), protection and information.

Step 3. Apportionment of requirements and setting of targets

At this point, the NDPP purpose is to directly guide the national planning efforts. The strategic commands develop capability target packages for each Alliance member that include capabilities to be maintained or developed, the related priorities and deadlines. The targets are expressed in qualitative capacities and quantitative tables of forces.

The political principles applied are a ‘fair burden sharing’ and of a ‘reasonable challenge’. Fair burden sharing implies that each ally is required to provide combat capability, with the exception of Iceland, which has no armed forces. The ‘relative wealth’ of each country is also taken into account, through its average GDP over the last five years as a percentage of the total GDP of the Alliance countries. The principle of ‘reasonable challenge’ means that the level of ambition set for each ally, should take into consideration its economic and financial capacities. The political guidance includes additional apportionment principles, for instance, with the so-called 50 % rule: no ally should provide a contribution that represents more than half of a capability, other than in exceptional cases.

After a sequence of bilateral consultations between the International Secretariat, ACT and Alliance members on their individual capability target packages, these packages are re-examined through multilateral consultations and approved. The capability target packages are then submitted to the NAC before being put to the defense ministers for approval.

The capability objectives can be achieved through three main channels:

- national – each nation is given its own objectives. This is the preferred route, which quantitatively consists of around 80 % of the packages of objectives;

- multinational, in the event that ad hoc groups are set up; such examples are the logistical support group of the four Visegrad countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) or the multi-role tanker transport (MRTT) fleet that comprising five countries (Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Germany and Belgium). In these cases, it is up to each group to decide how it will split up the shared capability target, but each nation is responsible for its own contribution;

- by NATO itself through common funding; Such examples are the Air Command and Control System (ACCS), the air reconnaissance aircraft fleet AWACS (Airborne Warning and



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Control System), Alliance Ground Surveillance program (AGS). These programs are not necessarily under the NDPP, although the NDPP takes their existence into account and identifies the requirements for interoperability purposes.

Step 4. Facilitate implementation

This step assists national measures, facilitates multinational initiatives and directs NATO efforts to fulfil agreed targets and priorities in a coherent and timely manner. Implementation facilitation is not sequential but continues for the entire length of the process. It is carried out by the Defence Investment Division of the International Secretariat (IS/DID).

The focus is on addressing the most significant capability shortfalls, known as the ‘**defence planning priorities**’. Twenty-one priorities were identified at the Warsaw summit of 2016. Today, there are just eighteen. In this context, the Deputy Secretary General, Director of IS/DI, chairs the conference of the Representatives of the National Armaments Directors, which meets twice a year and whose job is to promote multinational corporation in the field of defence, identifying and exploiting collaboration options.

Step 5. Review results

The capability review or **Defence Planning Capability Survey (DPCS)** is conducted every two years with the goals of verifying the degree of implementation of the targets and to create an inventory of the existing national capabilities.

Questionnaire are sent to nations on the degree to which targets have been achieved and national planning and defense policies implemented. Using that information, the IS/DPP prepares an evaluation for each NATO member. The Staff Analyses constitute a comprehensive analysis of national plans and capabilities, including force structures, specific circumstances and priorities. It includes a statement by the Strategic Commands regarding the impact each country’s plans have on the ability of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to conduct NATO’s current and expected missions and tasks.

Also, the strategic commands prepare **Suitability and Risk Assessments**, which provides the basis for the Military Committee to develop a Suitability and Risk Assessment. This includes an assessment of the risks posed by any shortfalls in NATO’s forces and capabilities, as well as an assessment of the suitability of Allies’ plans to enable NATO to meet its Level of Ambition, and a list of any Main Shortfall Areas.

On the basis of those assessments, the DPPC(R) drafts every two years a **report summarising the NATO capabilities** (Capability report), which includes the approved outlines of the national assessments. It is submitted to the NAC for approval, and then to the NATO defense ministers for endorsement.



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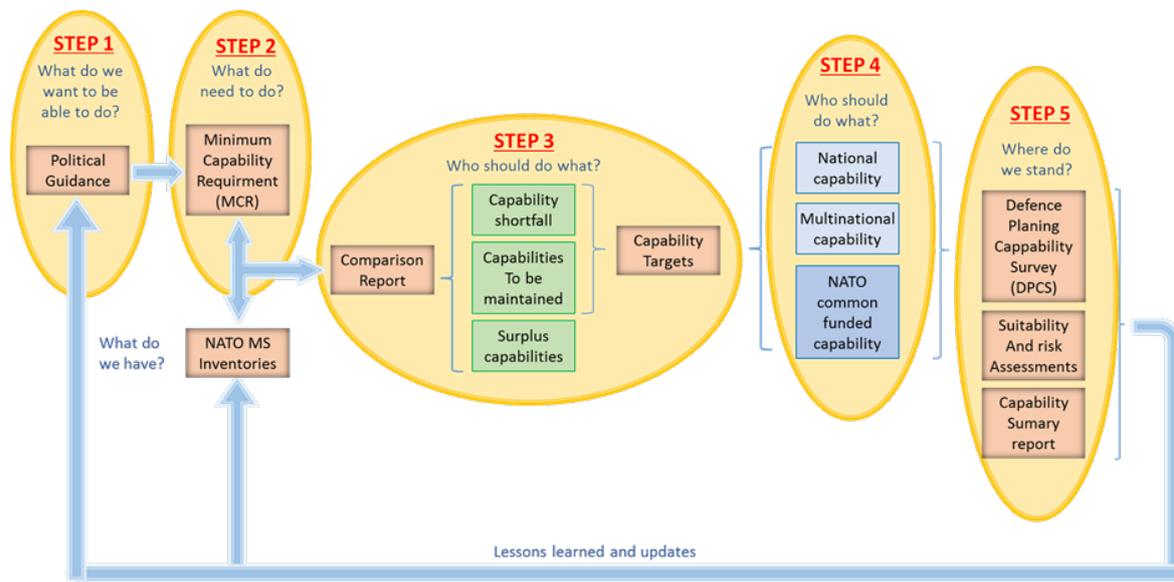


Figure 1 - NATO Defence Planning Process

3. EU defense planning

The European capability process, unlike the NDPP, is not linear nor cyclical. It is only brought to consideration only when the European Council considers that it should. This process is hard to understand, as no official document describes it in its entirety and it has no name. The acronym EUDPP (European Union Defence Planning Process) is unofficially given to imitate the name of the NATO process.

The process is not implemented by a single organization, as with NATO, but is shared between various institutions: the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) with the support of the The European Union Military Staff (EUMS), the Political and Security Committee (PSC); the Council; the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the Member States.

Another notable characteristic of the EUDPP is that unlike the NDPP, capability targets are not assigned to each Member State. Priority action areas are defined to be satisfied collectively and for which each Member State remains free to decide whether or not to invest.

And last but not least The European capability process has also a civilian dimension as is set out in article 42.1. of the Treaty on European Union: *“The common security and defence policy shall be an integral part of the common foreign and security policy. It shall provide the Union with operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets. The Union may use them on missions outside the Union for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The performance of these tasks shall be undertaken using capabilities provided by the Member States.”*[2]

The challenges faced by the EU in relation to its defense planning derive from various sources. *“EU member states need to acknowledge that the current challenges faced by the defense sector are not only the result of austerity measures and financial constraints, but they are also deriving from a lack of coordination and common policies, generated by weak political will and overriding national interests. The EU can no longer afford to avoid the fact that ensuring its defense has become a political-military-economic issue, with political decisions*



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being sometimes taken in a disconnected way from both the strategic / military and economic considerations”[3].

3.1 Defence objectives

Again, as the EUDPP process itself the documents that are defining the defence objectives overlap and do not supersede one another.

The conclusion of the Helsinki summit in December 1999 define for the first time a capability headline goal: *“... the European Council has agreed in particular the following: - cooperating voluntarily in EU-led operations, Member States must be able, by 2003, to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least one year military forces of up to 50 000-60 000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks”[4].* The number of military forces is equivalent to a Army Corps.

The Council on the EU on 4th of May 2004 redefines the headline goal 2010 as *“the ability for the EU to deploy force packages at high readiness as a response to a crisis either as a stand-alone force or as part of a larger operation enabling follow-on phases, is a key element of the 2010 Headline Goal”[5].*

The follow on reference for the definition of EU capability goal is the conclusion of the European Council on 11-12 December 2008: *“Europe should actually be capable, in the years ahead, in the framework of the level of ambition established, inter alia of deploying 60 000 men in 60 days for a major operation, within the range of operations envisaged within the headline goal for 2010 and within the civilian headline goal for 2010, of planning and conducting simultaneously:*

- two major stabilization and reconstruction operations, with a suitable civilian component, supported by a maximum of 10,000 men for at least two years;*
- two rapid response operations of limited duration using inter alia the EU’s battlegroups;*
- an emergency operation for the evacuation of European nationals (in less than 10 days), bearing in mind the primary role of each Member State as regards its nationals and making use of the consulate lead State concept;*
- a maritime or air surveillance/interdiction mission;*
- a civilian-military humanitarian assistance operation lasting up to 90 days;*
- around a dozen ESDP civilian missions... ”[6]*

In June 2016 the first EU Global Strategy (EUGS) was presented and later on, in November, the European Council adopted the EUGS implementation plan that identifies the level of ambition for the defence objectives: responding to external conflicts and crises, the capacity building of partners and protecting the Union and its citizens.

3.2 The transition of EU defence goals into military requirements – the Capability Development Mechanism (CDM)

The CDM, under the EU Military Committee authority was conducted between 2016 and 2018 in for phases and had as outputs the requirement, force and progress catalogues.

Phase 1 - Military Level of Ambition

On the basis of the defence goals and objectives five illustrative scenarios (peace enforcement, stabilization and support for the capacity building of partners, conflict prevention, rescue and evacuation and support to humanitarian assistance) and associated strategic planning



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assumptions (maximum distance for operations outside the EU, implementation time and duration) the military level of ambition was set up.

Phase 2 – The Requirement Catalogue

From the level of ambitions derives the Requirement Catalogue which identifies the military capabilities needed to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

Phase 3 – The Forces Catalogue

To put up the Force Catalogue a questionnaire similar to the one used in NDPP is sent to the nations. This catalogue list, on opposite to NDPP, only the forces for EU missions. Also, it expressly specifies that these contributions are established on a voluntary basis, and only for the purposes of defence capability planning. This means that the information may not be used automatically to create forces, unlike the practice within NATO.

Phase 4 – The Progress Catalogue

The aim of the Progress Catalogue is to give policymakers a realistic assessment of the possibility of satisfying the level of ambition. From the available catalogues developed in step 3 it identifies the capability gaps and prioritize them on the basis of operational risks.

3.3 Priority cooperation areas – the Capability Development Plan (CDP)

The CDP is under EDA responsibility and identifies the priority domains for cooperation between the member states in order to fill the gaps resulting from the CDM process.

The CDP is a comprehensive and strategic planning tool that provides an overview of future strategic military capability needs of Member States’ armed forces. Its aim is to address security and defence challenges in the short, medium and long term, while providing recommendations to Member States’ militaries on the capabilities they may need to react to potential security developments. This in turn provides important inputs and support to the national defence planning processes of EDA pMS. The CDP is rather a living document that is periodically updated by EDA in cooperation with its pMS and other key stakeholders such as the EU Military Committee (EUMC).

Development of the latest iteration of the CDP has involved four components of activity to examine the impact of relevant strategic, operational and technological developments:

- establish the basic elements of the capability gaps resulting from the CDM and prioritize them (short term);
- assessment of future capability requirements, technology trends; R&T and industry and market assessments; provide an overview of research activities and current state of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) (long term);
- create a database on the defence plans and programs of the Member States (medium term);
- lessons learned from operations, making the process coherent with concrete needs emerging from in-theatre experience (short term).

The CDP establishes a list of eleven capability priorities, split into 38 sub-areas and in which there is a potential for cooperation. These priorities concern requirements for expeditionary corps-type missions for crisis management (land, sea, air, but also logistical and medical support) but also for adapting the military capabilities required to carry out land defence permissions, such as air superiority or military mobility within the EU, internal security and cyber defence.



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3.4 The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)

Similar to the 5th step of the NDPP, the CARD is carried out every 2 years with the main aim of providing a picture of the existing defence capability landscape in Europe and to identify potential cooperation areas. The idea is that over time, this will lead to a gradual synchronization and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices. Which, in turn, will ensure a more optimal use and coherence of national defence spending plans. CARD is a ‘pathfinder’ for collaborative capability development projects while, of course, avoiding duplication of work with NATO.

After a first trial run in 2017/2018, the first full CARD cycle was launched in autumn 2019 and completed in November 2020 with a final report submitted to Defence Ministers meeting in EDA’s Steering Board.

At the same time as the launch of the new planning cycle at the end of 2016 (CDM/CDP/CARD), two major initiatives concerning the capability process have taken place: Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and European Defence Fund (EDF).

PESCO was established in December 2017 by 25 EU Member States whose declared ambition is to make it the “*most important instrument to foster common security and defence*” and a tool intended to provide Europe with “*a coherent full spectrum force package, in complementarity with NATO*”. In March 2018, a first list of 17 PESCO projects were approved. On 19 November 2018, a second list of 17 additional projects was approved by the Council.

On 7 June 2017, the European Commission adopted a Communication proposing a European Defence Fund (EDF) to co-finance collaborative European projects in the domains of defence research and capability development. The final decision on the setting up of the EDF was taken by the Council and the European Parliament in 2019/2020. The Fund started functioning on 1 January 2021 with a total agreed budget of €7.953 billion (in current prices) for the 2021-2027 period.

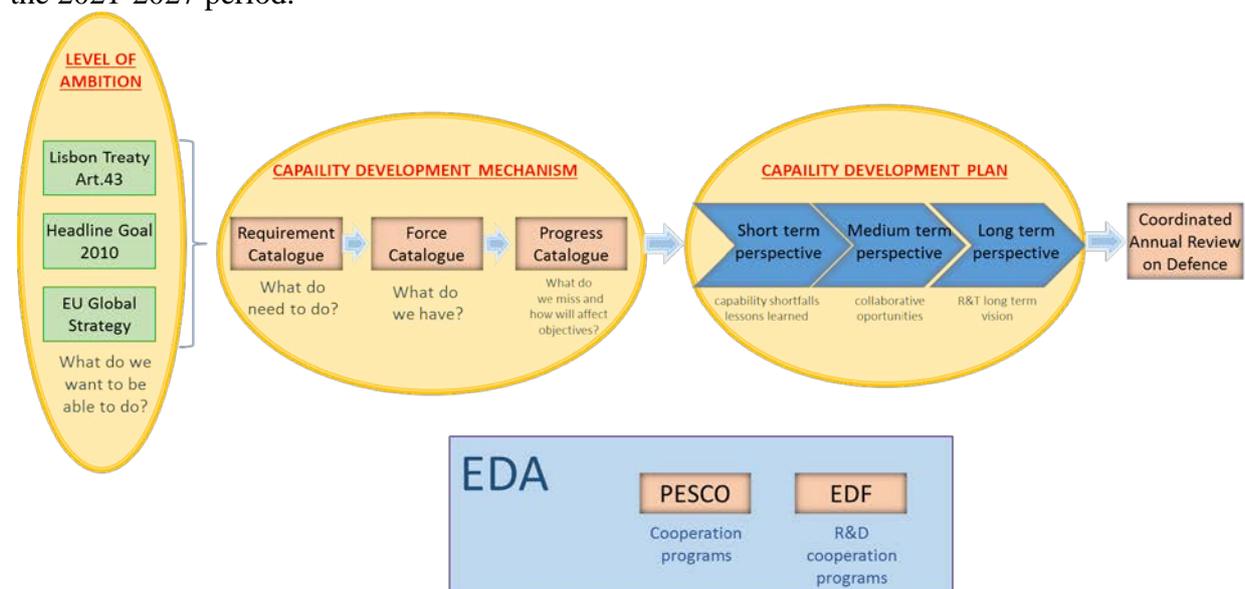


Figure 2 European Union Defence Planning Process

4. NDPP and EUDPP strengths and weaknesses



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From the beginning it must be noted that neither of the two processes produces the capabilities needed to satisfy the stated levels of ambition. According to a 2015 study, NATO level of ambition was 66% achieved, 50% of which through USA contribution and only 12% by EU nations. The gap between the ambitions and capabilities is no doubt wider for the EU than it is for the Alliance. However, the latter gives its members a security guarantee thanks to the American forces.

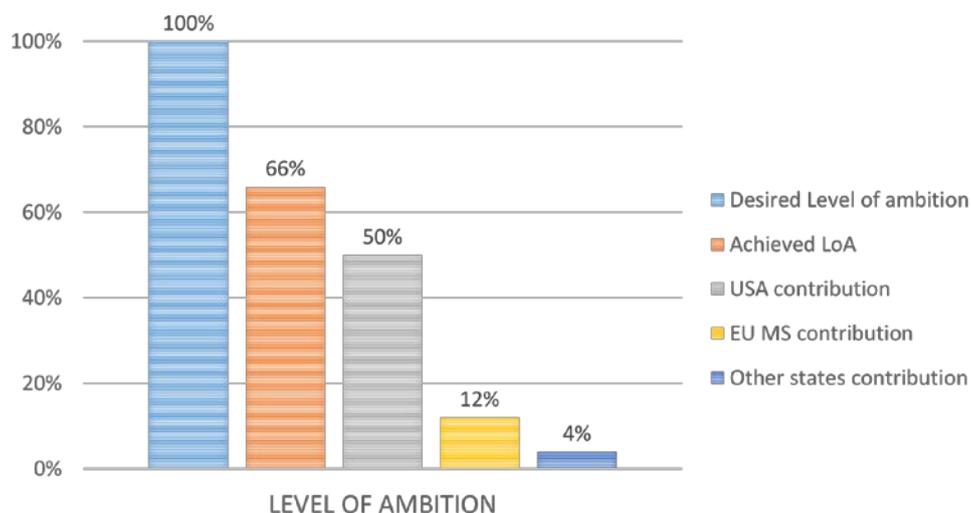


Figure 3 NDPP level of ambition fulfillment

The NATO process has three major advantages.

Firstly, it structures the Alliance. NDPP can be considered the backbone of the Alliance, around which the muscles and other organs are coherently arranged. It forces the nations to work together on the same assumptions, to share the same operational concepts, to use the same standards and, finally, to increase the interoperability of their forces.

Secondly, the NDPP reassures the Allies and deters potential enemies. For most of its members the Alliance is the backbone of their political-military strategy and gives quality and coherence to their defence planning systems. It responds to the question ‘who does what?’ and by that divides the burden of the military mission between everybody’s shoulders that is the heart of the Alliance’s identity. Additionally, one of the benefits of the NDPP is to show potential enemies that the Alliance is prepared for any eventuality and never drops its guard.

Finally, it merges the sovereignty of the nations with an effective mode of governance. Legally, each nation is free to decide whether or not to fulfil the capability targets assigned to it. On the other hand, it is clear that the American have a heavy weight on these decisions. This hegemony, has at least the virtue of giving the Alliance the capacity to make decisions.

On the other hand, NATO process has some major weaknesses.

Firstly, it makes it difficult to exercise critical strategic thinking. The Europeans have invented no critical technology since the radar and missiles, in other words since 1945. All the technology being developed by the Europeans and all new armaments concepts are mostly directly inspired by Americans. The art of war is written in American English. This inability of the Europeans to carry out a critical analysis of the strategic thinking of their ally can lead them down the same blind alleys as the Americans, or lead them to develop expensive arms systems



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that they do not really need. This is the case with ballistic anti-missile defence, which is ineffective against nearby Russia, and useless against Iran, which is not a threat to Europe

Secondly, for a long time the NATO process had a very short programming cycle: six years. This limitation prevented it from going beyond the time horizon of acquisitions, which is around a decade or even two. This changed with the creation in 2013 of long-term strategic analyses, which have extended the field of vision of the NDPP.

Finally, the NDPP is accused of favoring the American defence industry. Most of the military standards are written in Washington and consequently these standards favor the industry on the other side of the Atlantic. United States export more arms to Europe than the other way around. Also, many American firms buy up their European competitors and become leaders on the European market.

The principal virtue of the European process is that it exists, despite the NATO process. The Europeans have an appropriate level of strategic autonomy to allow them not so much to conduct high-intensity warfare on their own, but at least to limit the effects of crises that take place in their neighborhood.

Secondly, the European process has the advantage of answering the question: ‘how?’. It gives states that are members of both the European Union and of NATO a range of options to enter into industrial cooperation projects, allowing them to build or acquire the capabilities they are supposed to have to fulfil the objectives assigned by NATO.

Finally, the European process is both military and civilian, and therefore theoretically gives the EU the means to build a global capacity to respond to external crises.

To set against these advantages, the European process has several major weaknesses.

First, it is not cyclical and is not laid down in any document. Its complexity harms its ability to be understood by the very people who are supposed to be implementing it, not only in Brussels, but also, and in particular, in the national capitals.

Secondly, it is incomplete. It lacks any clear merging between the defence objectives set out political level and their translation into military terms, in other words, a political guidance.

Thirdly, it opposes operational logic to industrial logic. The fact that 2 main institutions, EUMC and EDA conduct in sequence the EUDPP leads to different cooperation priorities, one focusing on operational reasoning and the other rather on industrial projects.

5. What can be done to improve the NATO and EU defence planning processes?

5.1 Ending one of the two processes?

The NDPP is working very well and it forms one of NATO pillars. To question a possible end for the sake of EUDDP seems a utopia. Nevertheless, it is not long ago, at the Brussels summit of July 2018, that the US president made an allusion that the United States could withdraw from the Alliance. However, despite the political declarations of the American President, there are strong reasons to believe that Atlantic Alliance, which could be seen as a marriage of interests, would survive this, mainly because it is in the reciprocity of these interests that it finds its permanence.

If, therefore, there are no reasons to anticipate the fading of the Atlantic planning process, should we, on the other hand, consider losing the European process? This is also an entirely theoretical hypothesis, as the CSDP is part of the TEU and it would require treaty change to restraint it. Also, EU freedom of action or strategic autonomy remains one of the very



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basic goals of EU creation and referred in the EU Global Strategy of 2016. And autonomy cannot be achieved without credible military and civilian resources, to manage crises in the immediate neighborhood of the EU.

5.2 Harmonizing the two processes?

So, since none of the two processes can be shut down what's left is to continue to close the gaps between them. There is no doubt that since the initiative to have a EU defence planning process, back in 2003, the member states leaders acknowledge the need for coherence with the already mature NATO process.

Nevertheless, it was not until 2016, at the Warsaw summit that concrete actions to line the two planning processes were taken. Main reason for doing that so late was the difference in aim. For the NDPP the aim is to ensure the collective defence of European territory, with the support of the American armed forces, up to and including nuclear deterrence, while the EUDPP's is to manage crises, in the European neighborhood, without the assistance of the American forces.

The definitive shift to close the two defence planning processes was once more caused by the crisis in Georgia and especially the one in Ukraine, which reassured, after the post-cold era, the existence of a real threat on the eastern flank of NATO. Also the Brexit took its share influencing the reconsideration of EU strategies.

As a consequence, the EU redefined its defence objectives from being able to carry out its external crisis response operations alone to ensure the protection of Europe and its citizens, which is more close to collective defence.

Also the EU states started to seriously reconsider the defence spending, if not increasing them, at least stop cutting and commitments to common defence investments taken during 2014 summit.

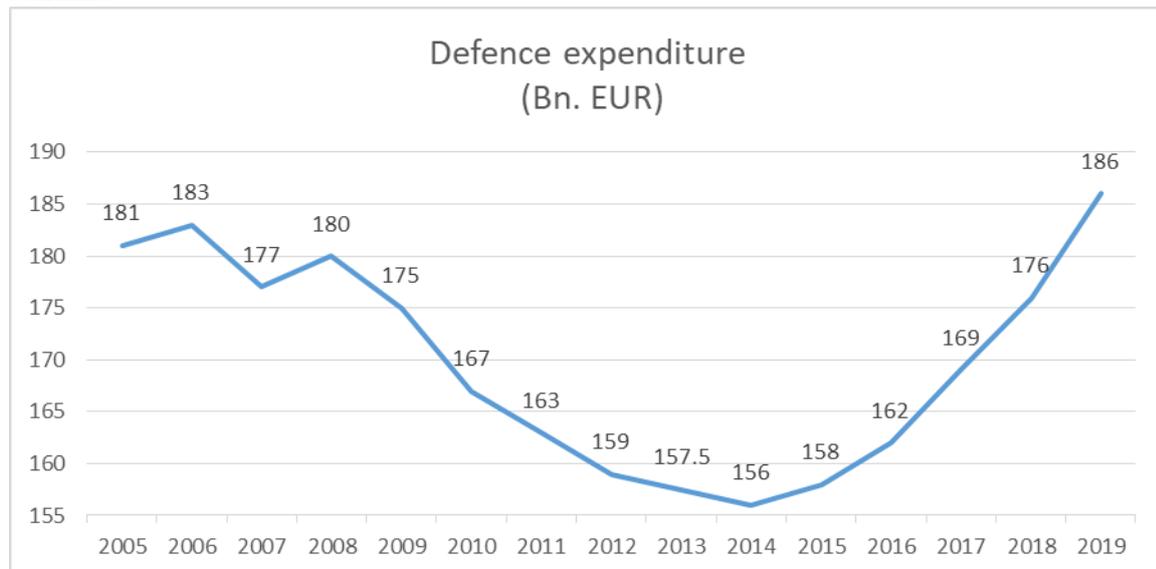


Figura 4 - Total EU Member States defence expenditure [7]



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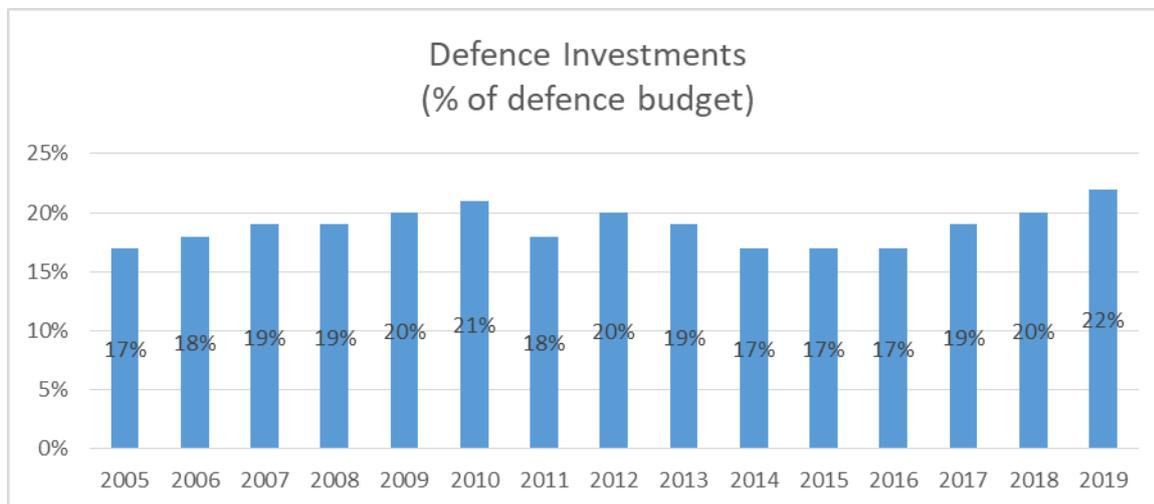


Figura 5 - Defence investments as % total defence expenditure [8]

Follow on, at the Warsaw summit in 2016, a strong assurance to a transatlantic partnership between NATO and EU took shape in the form of plan with 42 actions aimed at increasing the cooperation between the two organizations, out of which 6 refer directly to defence capabilities. In 2017 other 32 new measures were added, 3 concerning capability development.

If the NDPP and the EUDPP are to move closer together, the first item on the to-do list would be to make the European process cyclical, conveying its length in line with and matching its cycle with four-year cycle of the NDPP.

To synchronize the two processes, it would seem logical to start them at the same time. However, the new NATO political guidance was adopted in February 2019. The drafting of a new political directive on the European side does not appear to be in the pipeline, which means that the next opportunity to synchronize the military objectives would be the first half of 2023. Meanwhile, The EU could continue to use the NATO questionnaire for the 22 Member States that belong to both organizations and send out the questionnaire to the others. Further, the drafting of the ‘minimum capability requirements’ could be carried out in the same timeframe and using the same tools.

On the EDA side, PESCO projects should be more in line with the capability priorities set out either by the Progress Catalogue, or by the CDP and not with national priorities of the Member States promoting them.

Also under EDA control, it is crucial that resources available through the EDF be used to contribute to the funding of a European capability roadmap rather than the industrial interests of Member States.

EDA should continue to focus on research and development as a basis for growing capabilities with European industry and not shift to procurement of on the shelf products. NATO moved towards that empowering NATO Supply and Procurement Agency (NSPA) to do just that since 2015, without any significant results. No major common acquisition have been succeeded by NSPA yet remaining a great life cycle logistic support provider.

Another step to be taken, if it is to really have EU capabilities, would be to start to work hardly on interoperability and integration. Only integrating defence resources can produce substantial budgetary savings and significant operational benefits. These attributes were solely



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NATO's through common exercises and bilateral partnership. It is well known the fact that for the interoperability of the same weapon system, Germany and the Netherlands created more than 15 years ago the Extended Air Defence Task Force (EADTF) later transformed to The Competence Centre Surface Based Air and Missile Defence (CC SBAMD), just for the purpose of making two “plug and play” system understand each other.

To have EU leadership institutions on defence matters seems to be another path. NATO has the NAC as political leadership and then the two operational commands to make decision on military actions, while EU Member States have the capabilities, money and experience, but, not an military strategic command, like a European Security Council or something else. One of the characteristics the European military experts frequently put forward among the weaknesses of the European capability processes is the absence of a clear chain of command. Who is the military leader in charge of the reaching the EU defence objectives? Where the decisions on capabilities are taken? All of these questions have an answer if asked within a NATO framework, but not in an EU framework.

6. Conclusions

In an increasingly volatile and unstable geopolitical context, cooperation between the EU and NATO is essential. The security of EU and NATO are inter-connected. Together, they can mobilise a broad range of tools and make the most efficient use of resources to address challenges and enhance the security of their citizens.

The great move in my opinion, made by the EU was the creation of the EDA and later on the PESCO and mostly EDF. By doing that EU intention was to change the focus from the not so interesting defence planning to EU funded industrial cooperation programs that would finally lead to capabilities. If implemented, the PESCO and EDF projects are to technologically increase Europe capabilities during the next 10 years, which since 1945 did not invent almost anything in terms of military technology. It is to be reminded that the radar and missiles, including cruise and ballistic ones, were the creation of UK and German scientists during the Second World War. The side effect of that would be to see these industrial cooperation programs as an attempt to reduce US armaments sales in Europe, one of the direct interests of USA in sustaining NATO. United States export more arms to Europe than the other way around. Also, many American firms buy up their European competitors and become leaders on the European market. This is clearly an advantage that USA would not like to lose.

Nevertheless, it is important not to confuse industrial cooperation with operational military capabilities. Cooperation intends to focus on building new capabilities rather than use the existing ones. It is much more convenient for the industry to build something new and expensive than to just integrate/up-grade existing systems. Also, cooperation is limited to a not much of participating countries, even though it should include the largest numbers. This is mainly true of PESCO, which has an average of only seven participants per project, even though it is made up of 25 Member States, which should, in an ideal world, all get involved in all projects. To these limitations must be added the fact that cooperation is not likely for industrial competitors, which fight over export markets. The natural tendency in the defence industry is to avoid cooperating, to remain in a monopoly situation and, if possible, to get rid of competitors from the market.

To end with an optimistic sense I would say that the EU is a unique and essential partner for NATO. The two organizations share a majority of members, have common values and face similar threats and challenges. The defence planning processes of the two organizations can and



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will only become an enabler in joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer and contributes to transatlantic burden-sharing.

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