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Editorial

First published in Jan 2018



At last! The concept of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which dates back to the European Union Constitution proposed in 2002 and the Treaty of Lisbon approved in 2008 and in which express provision was made for the possibility of strengthened relations between the Member States, has finally come to fruition.

On 13 November last, 23 Member States signed a letter notifying the High Representative of their request for implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) by subscribing to some twenty jointly agreed "binding" commitments and governance principles. In early December, they were joined by two further Member States, just in time to be part of the first group when the decision to launch PESCO was formally made at the Foreign Affairs Council on 11 December 2017. The only non-participants are Denmark, Malta and the United Kingdom. This is a huge achievement, despite the very real fear, given the number of participants, that ambition has been sacrificed on the altar of maximum inclusiveness.

The next stage now has to consist of making sure that Member States implement the measures needed to achieve the goals they have set for themselves in accordance with timelines they are each shortly expected to unveil and that the proposed cooperation projects – currently numbering 17 – actually materialise in practice.

On 14 December, the European Council welcomed the breakthrough achieved by Europe with regard to Defence and Security, and encouraged all parties to continue their efforts to implement PESCO projects and complete two other major programmes: firstly,

the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), aimed at financing European capability projects to ensure the continent's strategic autonomy and, secondly, revision of the Athena mechanism for jointly funding military missions and operations.

It is undoubtedly unfortunate that the United Kingdom, with its substantial military capabilities, has decided to leave the European Union. However, it is equally obvious that Britain's decision has largely facilitated the major progress achieved by the European Union, so long blocked by the United Kingdom. It is still too early to have a clear idea of the outcome of the ongoing negotiations on British withdrawal, even though on 14 December, the European Council accepted the European Commission's recommendation for transition to the second stage. Equally unclear are future post-Brexit relations between Great Britain and the European Union. Anything is possible, from a volte-face on Brexit, given its consequences for Great Britain itself, to a hard Brexit with one or other (or both) parties failing to reach agreement on the conclusions of the negotiations.

Without waiting for the upshot of these negotiations, it is vital to exploit the current momentum to enable the European Union to continue to make progress on Defence and Security issues in 2018. This is my fervent hope. I should also like to wish all the members of EuroDéfense an excellent 2018: may it hold as much future promise as the year now coming to an end.

Patrick Bellouard

Major General (Engineer, retired),

President of EuroDéfense-France

European defence on the move

*By Patrice Mompeysson, Brigadier General (retired),
Rapporteur of Working Group 21*

In recent months, a number of innovative documents have been published on the subject of Common Security and Defence Policy (Global Strategy for the EU, Implementation document, EU-NATO Roadmap, Commission Action Plan) resulting in major decisions, in which mention is made of a progress report in March and announcing new strategic lines of thrust for June 2017.

This is evidence of a decidedly positive trend that France would do well to foster and support.

EuroDéfense-France would like to lend its support to this momentum by making suggestions in the following fields:

- **European White Paper geared towards the younger generations,**
- **strategic autonomy for truly strong commitment,**
- **allowance for the security and defence continuum,**
- **strengthening Europe's industrial defence fabric.**

We welcome the recent major decisions, particularly that made last December¹ by the Heads of State and Government regarding proposals to be submitted by the High Representative on:

- development of civilian capabilities,
- parameters for a Member State-driven Coordinated Annual Review on Defence,
- a process for developing military capabilities with allowance for Research and Technology (R&T) and industrial factors,
- establishing a permanent operational planning and conduct capability at strategic level,
- strengthening the relevance, usability and deployability of the EU's rapid response toolbox,
- factors and options conducive to inclusive Permanent Structured Cooperation based on a modular approach and sketching out potential projects,
- making allowance for all Capacity Building in Security and Development (CBSD) requirements.

To support EU official departments and Member States in their work, EuroDéfense-France would like to offer the results of its analyses in five areas it considers vital:

- European cooperation
- Command structures,
- Rapid response toolbox,
- Training for military and civilian forces,
- Industrial and technological defence base.

Our contribution targets Member States rather than the European authorities (Commission, EEAS, EDA) with regard to the practical and effective adoption of the measures recommended. The problem to be resolved is undoubtedly mainly political and the best example that comes to mind would be that of actual deployment of a strong Joint Task Force able to cement peace, support the redevelopment of state structures and guarantee the transition towards a United Nations force, once the requisite conditions have been established in the Middle East (Syria, Iraq) or in Africa (Libya). This would enable the EU to demonstrate its ability to combine foreign policy with immediate, specific and constructive action.

1 - European cooperation

The European Defence Agency is about to produce details of the conditions for establishing a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence for submission to Member States. This initiative will run counter to normal practice with regard to state sovereignty but is also, and above all, vital to ensuring greater cooperation and releasing potential synergies, in particular with some of the work being done by NATO.

This major decision made by the Heads of State and Government is therefore of vital significance and EDA will undoubtedly be proposing a pragmatic and incremental approach that they should have no difficulty in endorsing. It should also have the knock-on effect of radically improving interaction between Member States.

But the pragmatic approach adopted in recent months would stand to gain from being more extensively presented to the public, in particular the younger generation. Surely, in the face of growing nationalistic tendencies, turning the spotlight on our common destiny should be encouraged?

EuroDéfense-France therefore urges that a European White Paper be produced:

A European White Paper, also targeting younger EU citizens, better to flag up the opportunities, risks and threats of the 21st century. In the face of current geostrategic upheaval, the need for such a document is obvious and it would undoubtedly be advisable to embark on this initiative before the end of 2017.

The White Paper should capitalise on successful ventures such as the ERASMUS programme, paving the way for its military equivalent.

In parallel, strengthening European cooperation in the field would also be worthwhile and, here, priority should be given, wherever possible, to *the creation of European entities*, this being perfectly feasible for logistics or for the infrastructure

¹ December 2016

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needed for operations or even exercises. It would also be a way of sharing costs.

2 - Command structures

In the middle of November 2016, the Council decided to create a planning and conduct structure at strategic level for advisory and “non-executive” training assignments. This is excellent news in the short term, as it is likely to foster real synergies between the European Union’s different activities: development aid, civilian rule-of-law interventions, military support missions, humanitarian aid, etc. Moreover, the appointment in Brussels of an authority to take charge of commanding military training and advisory assignments and housed geographically in the same premises as EEAS, the EU Civilian Operations Commander (Cdr CPCC) and the Directorates of the Commission, an authority with close links to NATO, will greatly enhance efficiency and synergies but will also ensure greater homogeneity between the various EU campaigns (currently in Somalia, Central African Republic and Mali).

But the problem still looms large for more robust assignments: constant instability and the many violent conflicts with knock-on effects on security in EU countries are such that we cannot afford not to address the issue. At the same time, the current situation is far from satisfactory: compartmentalisation of security and defence, limited forward planning capacities, often excessively long timelines for producing strategic options, a non-dedicated command structure, an often very slow process for assembling forces.

EuroDéfense-France therefore recommends that processes and organisational arrangements should be subject to complete review, with due allowance for the security-defence continuum.

A review of this type must culminate in far-reaching improvements to the means used to collect and structure intelligence so as to inform political decisions. It must also result in a new strategic planning structure for coercive missions in which due allowance will always be made for the civil and military dimensions, so that efforts to achieve stabilisation and reconstruction can form part of the process from the earliest possible stage, and remain a constant feature throughout.

The result of this review must not be two separate structures, one for advisory and training assignments, the other for coercive missions, but could take the form of a gradual process, starting with one structure and moving on to the next by adding further skills and competencies, in partnership with NATO.

Even if the global approach continues to form the backdrop and, as a last resort, controlled violence is deployed, maintaining the status quo cannot be an option.

3 - Rapid response toolbox

At the European Council on 15 December 2016, the Heads of State and Government insisted on the need to ***strengthen the relevance, usability and deployability of the EU’s rapid response toolbox.***

While merely improving on what already exists, for example further developing the Battle Group concept as regards team warfare and more flexible configurations (varying in size, not just battalions), would be instrumental in achieving real and necessary progress, this would only go a very small part of the way to meeting current challenges.

What is needed is a more innovative intellectual approach directed towards the effects to be obtained and extending beyond military structures alone.

For this, it will first be necessary for Member States to develop their powers of anticipation and thereby arrive at a better understanding of the situation, challenges and risks. The achievements of the EU Satellite Centre in *Torejon* need to be matched in other areas, particularly that of EU and exclusive economic zone land and maritime border controls.

It will also have to involve launching new and mainly civilian Rapid Response Facilities (outside WG1500) able to respond to crisis situations such as earthquakes, major epidemics (Ebola for example), and cope with the consequences of large-scale cyberattacks, etc.

For these facilities, automatic commitment and cost-sharing systems could be developed by Member States. In addition to the “Battle Groups”, the EU would also be able to enjoy the benefits of “Solidarity Task Forces”.

4 - Training

Nothing has really been decided on this subject of late. It is a recurrent issue as it appears, at first sight, to offer less potential for synergy or major budget savings. In reality, however, the situation is different. Nowadays, operations are multinational and require the involvement of a large number of Ministries and sectors to ensure medium-to-long term results. Training must therefore be part of this process.

Without casting doubt on the approach to civil and military exercises currently in force in the European Union and sometimes in partnership with NATO, ***EuroDéfense-France would like to propose a new kind of exercise, truly civil and military in nature and based on initial plans.*** This could, additionally, be of interest to other multinational organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU) and, of course, NATO.

Finally, it would be necessary to create competence centres at EU level. These have already proved their worth. NATO has a large number of them running the full security and defence assignment gamut. There already exists close cooperation with EU Member States that could be developed to avoid duplication. Furthermore, there are some good examples such as EMSOME, the French military school that trains civilians and

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soldiers for missions overseas, not only by teaching them about the history, geography and culture of the countries where they are due to be deployed but also by drawing lessons from previous EU operations abroad. This could improve overall effectiveness and broaden international influence by potentially extending openings to third-party States.

5 - Capability issues

Where capability enhancement is concerned, in addition to prompting an increase in the resources allocated to defence and to reinforcing cooperation within the EU:

- Federica Mogherini has been tasked with making suggestions with regard to military capability development processes, with allowance for research and technology and for industrial factors;
- The Commission, which has opened the door to funding the development of defence capabilities while, on a parallel, funding Research & Technology activities, has been invited to flesh out its proposals regarding the creation of a European Defence Fund, including those on capabilities developed by mutual consent by Member States.
- For its part, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has been invited to consider ways of lending support to defence-related Research and Development activities.

All *these proposals represent steps in the right direction* by sweeping aside some of the taboos over funding defence and security in the EU. But *EuroDéfense-France is still waiting for these proposals to translate rapidly into tangible results and decisions*, especially in respect of the following points:

- *Improving the process of identifying capability requirements within the EU* which represents an essential prerequisite for keeping the capability chain working smoothly,
- *Funding and launching new cooperation programmes to meet already identified needs, be it on bilateral, multilateral or even European scale* (Galileo programme for instance): *the EU needs to release funding capabilities from its own budget to support programmes on which Member States are keen to embark but cannot for want of adequate funds*. This would be extremely helpful in cases where the Member States concerned simply do not have the wherewithal at the particular moment in time. A measure of this type could have been of use for the Airbus A400M programme and could still prove beneficial for the MALE drone programme currently under study in Germany, France, Italy and Spain. The EU should also be able to finance needs common to all Member States (e.g. satellite telecommunications, border control facilities, etc.). A European budget of this nature could also be supplemented by a fund to be operated along lines still to be defined, depending on funding

requirements. At all events, the main purpose of these new funding arrangements has to be that of establishing measures favouring cooperation.

- Last but not least, *supporting cooperation programmes through a degree of industrial consolidation within the EU* in order to sharpen the competitive edge of the European industrial defence base and avoid unnecessary duplication, along similar lines to established practice in the civil aeronautics sector.

6 - Conclusion

With the major changes looming on the geostrategic horizon, there is no alternative but to make determined efforts to boost solidarity between EU Member States. For this, consideration will need to be given to ambitious but realistic projects, and the members of EuroDéfense-France hope to have made their contribution to this process.



EURODÉFENSE - France

How to Europeanise defence? What defence for which Europe?

By Jean-Paul Perruche, Lieutenant General (retired),
Former Director General of the European Union Military Staff
Former President of EuroDéfense-France

It was against the post-WWII backdrop that a European approach to defence gradually began to emerge as an overlay to national approaches. The aim was twofold: preventing further wars within Europe and compensating for the weaknesses of the individual European countries by combining their forces against the threat represented by the Red Army. But as Europe remained divided into independent nations, this new approach posed a dilemma for European States: whether to combine their forces at European and transatlantic level or to maintain full sovereignty over defence. The failed attempt to establish a European Defence Community in 1954 was the first illustration of this dilemma, which still remains prevalent in today's security environment and is exploited by the nationalist parties, which advocate isolationism as a way of regaining full sovereignty.

This is the source of many frustrations for European citizens regarding the credibility of European defence, a concept that they nevertheless support (see Eurobarometer surveys). Therefore, if we want to improve our countries' defence, we should concentrate on resolving this dilemma. This will of necessity mean setting developments with regard to political organisation on a parallel with those affecting European defence: what defence for which Europe? The ideas developed below begin with an analysis of sovereignty issues connected with defence, before briefly reviewing current intergovernmental cooperation and ending with suggestions for a more effective European defence.

1. National sovereignty and defence:

Sovereignty is the quintessential prerogative of States and, as such, cannot be dissociated from power. What would sovereignty be without power, when there are interests to be protected in a world where States are increasingly interdependent, yet in competition (and engaged in power struggles) with each other? In the 21st century, the world is a place of countries such as China, Russia, the United States, India, Brazil, etc. all extending over almost entire continents and all more powerful than any of the individual European States. European States are left with only two options: either to form coalitions on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances and vagaries of the situation, or to join forces as a whole in times of peace to leverage the power needed to protect their interests, preserve their influence and avoid being dominated. Military strength remains a vital power factor. But today, in Europe, only France and the United Kingdom (with some reservations, given the latter's dependency on the United States) have the capacity to defend their individual vital interests on their own on the strength of their nuclear power and are still able (but for how much longer?) to embark on limited-scale coercive operations outside their borders. The other European states can do no more than intervene in multinational operations, playing a supplementary (not to say

secondary) role. For most European states, exercising sovereignty over defence consists essentially of choosing which major power to depend on and the coalitions they wish, are able or have to join. And prospects for changes in global power relations in the next decades are not favourable for Europeans. This is why the question of voluntarily sharing sovereignty over defence decisions to boost their power is so crucial for them, a contention borne out by simply looking at the current situation with regard to European defence.

2. Status and limits of current (intergovernmental) cooperation in NATO and the EU

Within NATO, the European states tend to hand over responsibility for their defence to the United States. While decisions on planning and carrying out operational interventions require the consensus of all allied states (one state, one voice), the sheer power of the American armed forces puts the USA in a position of strength, giving them a dominant role in the choice of places, types of action, modus operandi and resources to be deployed. The European states are fully dependent on American policy and strategy and, therefore, take little or no responsibility for their own defence. The success of NATO-led operations is highly illustrative in this regard, since it has always been the result of American military power and the leadership that goes with it: the United States took political responsibility for NATO intervention in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan and supplied 75 to 80% of the resources deployed during these operations. The 2011 incursion into Libya showed how difficult it is for the Europeans to take action under the NATO banner, when the Americans who hold the highest positions in the military command structure (SACEUR, COMAFSOUTH) play a purely supportive role in operations orchestrated by other States. Underlying this situation is the very real threat of a divergence (even partial) in European and American security interests in Europe, and the statements of the new American President are a source of legitimate concern over the guarantee of US support for European security and its cost.

The situation is no better in the European Union. As the EU Member States have long been developing common interests, the EU could *a priori* be considered the natural place for them to combine their forces, as long as it does not act as a retarder, as it is the case today. At the heart of the current CSDP there is a major contradiction between the desire of the European Heads of State to join forces to achieve the necessary critical power and their wish to retain full authority over their national decisions and action. This contradiction is the true reason for the discrepancy between the proactive rhetoric of the European Council and the situation in reality. It is a key political issue that cannot be resolved by technical measures alone. Back in December 2000 when the ESDP, which became the CSDP after the Lisbon Treaty, was adopted, the principle of non-

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duplication with NATO became the pretext for heavily curbing European defence policy ambitions, which have little progressed since then. The EU limits its action to civilian or military crisis management operations outside its territory, has no permanent operational command structures (except for the EUMS at political and military level) and is therefore only prepared to contemplate low-intensity, small-scale operations.

Yet, in support of the new European global security strategy adopted in 2016 by the European Council, the High Representative made it abundantly clear that: "[...] our Union needs a strategy. We need a shared vision, and common action [...]". In the end, the current model of intergovernmental cooperation is not very satisfactory. Within NATO, it results in complete dependency on the United States and in uncertainty. In the EU, it spawns paralysis and inefficiency (the Libyan, Mali and CAR crises provide ample illustration) as regards both operations and capabilities, with shortcomings vying with duplications. While it is more necessary and urgent than ever for Europeans to combine their forces to improve their defence in the new security environment, efficient ways of "Europeanising" defence still have to be found.

3. Europeanising defence

The aim of truly pooling European resources is to enable the States involved together to achieve capabilities greater than those to which they could aspire on their own. Combining their forces will leverage greater power. But for this to happen, these States will have to subscribe willingly to the principle: to increase their power, they will need to partner each other in managing its use. Of course, the extent and feasibility of this goal will depend on the type of resources pooled at political and operational level, the political targets being common or complementary interests, risks shared, accepted and assumed by all and effective political leadership of military affairs, including effective European command structures, suitably adapted operational capabilities and methods of action, together with interoperable units trained to work together.

To improve the current system, it will be necessary to resort to more than the form of intergovernmental cooperation currently existing in the EU, in which each decision-making body (Councils, COREPER, PSC, etc.) has to strike a compromise between often conflicting national interests and priorities varying according to the geographical location, size and history of the different States, all of which culminates in adoption of the lowest common denominator (especially in an organisation made up of 27 or 28 countries).

To define truly European interests and take meaningful action at European level, it is vital to consider Europe (the EU) as a political entity to be defended as such, a framework that includes protection and defence of Member States. The defence priorities and requirements of this entity with 500 million inhabitants living within its borders and producing over 20% of world GDP must therefore be submitted to top-down analysis via a European White Paper on Defence, which would supplement national analyses and ensure overall consistency. This has to be the point of departure for effective European defence. It is the only way of resolving current paralysis, divergence and shortcomings, by fostering progress in three

decisive directions: bringing the security interests of Member States closer together, harmonising operational cultures and promoting the credibility of a "European leadership".

– **Harmonising security interests:** this European White Paper should analyse the potential risks and challenges threatening the security of the EU within its own borders, ideal responses at European level, details of the necessary capabilities and the corresponding political decision-making and operational execution mechanisms. This would serve in defining European interests to reflect the physical and political realities of the EU and should include yet transcend the national interest. The White Paper could also present an overview of potential solutions to the threats and challenges at European, regional and national levels and the measures to ensure consistency between these 3 different levels. European and national security interests could thereby mesh and a measure of complementarity among national defence forces emerge, thus promoting solidarity between EU Member States and cementing European unity around a common destiny. Another advantage would be that it would be easier to anticipate on possible political and operational EU reactions to current or potential threats, better spread the defence effort, share the cost of resolving crises more fairly and achieve a better understanding of the areas where mutual assistance should apply. An overall approach of this type to European defence would give added purpose to strengthened cooperation between States on a regional or blanket basis and to the operations undertaken against threats by some of their number in the name of the EU under Article 44 of the Lisbon Treaty. A limited number of countries could initially be involved, this now being possible via the Permanent Structured Cooperation.

– Secondly, developing solutions at European level would be conducive to **bringing operational cultures closer together**. While members of the armed forces are used to working together, especially within NATO's integrated military command structures, national cultures are still poles apart between countries whose ambitions and methods of action differ from one to another. Carrying out a joint analysis of European requirements and proposed responses could contribute to finding a common denominator among operational cultures and, by extension, operational rationales, as the first step towards a European spirit of defence. This would encourage the different countries to pool their resources by increasing their cooperation and gradually establishing integration, starting with preparation and support functions (training, logistics, support, etc.).

– The White Paper would be instrumental in achieving credible, **clearly visible, European political and operational leadership**.

By confirming their common defence requirements and agreeing on the ways of fulfilling them, the Europeans would set the scene for strategic autonomy and establish a degree of unity in their action.

To speed up the political decision-making process (ridiculously long for the latest crises), it is necessary to

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prepare in advance for potential situations and have suitable decision-making mechanisms in place. Anticipatory measures should draw on examination of potential crisis scenarios established on the basis of the "European White Paper". They should also make provision for responses at European level in relation to parameters accepted by all Member States, and specify the type of contribution envisaged by each country. These anticipatory measures should not be decisions made in advance by the States, but indications of the probability of their involvement in the event of certain pre-established situations. This would also help upgrade the ambitions of the ESDP and encourage development of the requisite capabilities. Such an approach would also require the EU to address defence issues overall, in other words with no distinction between threats inside and outside Europe, and would be contingent on a complete and permanent chain of command.

A development of this type would be in the interests of Member States in that it would boost their autonomous defence capabilities in exchange for a common shared framework. It would reinforce European capabilities under the transatlantic partnership (NATO) by giving the EU the status of a credible security player able to act independently or in association with its allies. This European approach to defence would pave the way for greater integration while not impinging on the prerogatives of the individual States. It would have the added advantage of breaking the deadlock created by attempts simply to mesh national interests.

The citizens of all EU Member States should, in addition, be duly informed about these measures so that they can recognise their legitimacy. It is important to explain to them how EU-scale defence strategies would offer them better protection in exchange for solidarity rather than simply elaborating on what States can expect from European defence without being prepared to stump up the necessary resources. An effective system of European defence will remain a pipe-dream unless there is a true belief in Europe.

Jean-Paul Perruche

Lieutenant General (retired)

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Board member and former President of EuroDéfense-France

| Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union | |
|---|---|
|  | |
| Arms of the Military Committee (l.) and its chairman (m.), as well as the Military Staff (r.) | |
| Organisations | External Action Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> └ Military Staff └ Intelligence and Situation Centre └ Security & Defence College Agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> └ Defence Agency └ Border and Coast Guard Agency └ Institute for Security Studies └ Satellite Centre Council preparatory bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> └ Committee of Permanent Representatives └ Political and Security Committee └ Politico-Military Group └ Military Committee └ Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management |
| Equipment | 546 ships, 2,448 aircraft & 7,490 battle tanks |
| Founded | 1996 (as the <i>European Security and Defence Identity</i>) |
| Current form | 2009 (upon the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon) |
| Headquarters | Kortenbergh building, Brussels, Belgium (Military Planning and Conduct Capability) |

Source Wikipedia 2018

Observatory for the Mediterranean

Report on the situation in North Africa

By EuroDefense-España



SITUATION IN NORTH AFRICA

10 November 2017

The countries that form North Africa — Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya — are typified as much by the broad expanses of the Sahara Desert and the Atlas Mountains as they are by the waters of the Mediterranean. Sandwiched between the coastline of the southern Mediterranean and an ocean of sand, the populations of North Africa have a long history of interaction with Southern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa and the broader Middle East. Current trends within North Africa — challenges to political stability, regional militancy, changes in energy production and in the economy — given their proximity to Europe and to former European colonial territories in Africa, and the continued economic and security relationships between these regions, make events in North Africa resonate in regional and Western capitals.

To understand the situation in North Africa (NA), it is worth looking into what has been happening in these four countries since the beginning of 2011, when the uprisings that shook the area and the whole Middle East first started in Tunisia.

LIBYA

In the six years since long-time strongman ruler Muammar Gaddafi was ousted from power, Libya has shattered into little pieces. Libya's divisions, based on the tribal rivalries that were unleashed after Gaddafi's downfall, were only recently far less contentious than they are today. In 2014, Libya had just a

single government in Tripoli, the General National Congress (GNC), which was voted into power by popular election at the end of the civil war. The GNC failed to hold elections before the end of its term in office. Whereupon, its rival in the east of the country, the group lead by General Khalifa Haftar, demanded that it be dissolved. The GNC refused to comply, and three months later, Haftar — backed by Egypt — launched what he called "Operation Dignity" to try to eject it from power. The GNC then held elections, but turnout was low, and Islamists backed by groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood were defeated. The low turnout led to claims that the elections were not legitimate. A coalition backed by Islamist militias and fighters from the powerful western city of Misrata formed the "Dawn Movement", which then dislodged the newly elected government — the House of Representatives, the latter fleeing to eastern Libya to ally with Haftar. The Misratan-Islamist coalition then restored the GNC's power in Tripoli, effectively giving the country two governments.

Outside powers have intervened in an attempt to piece Libya back together. Even the United Nations has struggled to resolve the Libyan conflict. In 2015, the UN brokered the Libyan Political Agreement between the country's two rival governments, the General National Congress in Tripoli and the House of Representatives in the eastern city of Tobruk. Instead of unifying the country's governments and bridging its largely east-west divide, the UN peace process created a third government, the Government of National Accord in Tripoli, of which the House of Representatives refused steadfastly to be part.

Observatory for the Mediterranean - Situation in North Africa

(Cont. from P. 8)

Despite ongoing and past negotiations, many of the underlying disputes among the country's various factions remain unresolved. The UN is making a new effort to reunite what has become a fractious and failed country. On 20 September 2017, the United Nations General Assembly appointed a new UN Special Envoy to try to start a fresh round of negotiations under a three-phase plan:

- To convene a drafting committee to modify the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015 that as a by-product created the Government of National Accord.
- To bring the different Libyan protagonists together through a National Conference in Tunis to discuss ideas for peace.
- After the Conference, the House of Representatives and the Drafting Constitutional Assembly (elected in 2014 and which voted on a draft constitution on 20 July this year), is to work on organising a constitutional referendum, and presidential and parliamentary elections.

The Libyan Political Agreement was never implemented because the strongman and Commander of the Libyan National Army, Khalifa Haftar, whose forces control more than half of Libya and the country's vital gas and oil fields, ports and infrastructure, is not accepted in western Libya. General Haftar's troops, supported by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have been instrumental in actions against jihadists.

At present, the conflict between the President of the UN-backed Government of National Accord in Tripoli, al-Sarraj, and General Haftar has reached an all-time high, despite efforts by France to encourage them to cooperate. Haftar has received the support of a group of notables and many militia commanders through the "Popular Authorisation Movement to save the Country" which has collected 700,000 signatures (almost one-third of the Libyan population) who want him to play a leading role in the new Libya and to march on Tripoli to rout the al-Sarraj Government.

But it seems that Khalifa Haftar is in no hurry to reach Tripoli since he knows that, in December 2017, the al-Sarraj mandate will expire. Perhaps then he may move towards Tripoli, if al-Sarraj is not replaced. Despite the fact that some Islamists are against the idea of Haftar having a role in a unified government, they are now in favour of him playing a critical role in reshaping Libya, since his Libyan National Army has the support of moderate Islamists, Salafists and some Misrata militias.

The question is that any amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015 have to consider cancelling the Presidency of the Council of the Government of National Accord's powers to appoint and dismiss military commanders and transfer these powers to the House of Representatives, which will be vital to achieving peace in the new process. If such an amendment is accepted, this will allow the appointment of Haftar as supreme military commander and would make it impossible for al-Sarraj or his successor to remove him. Nevertheless, many worry that Haftar is just another strongman along the lines of Gaddafi, a dictator out to centralise power and enforce authoritarian rule.

In such a power vacuum, the resulting chaos enables the existence of people traffickers, even among some militia

groups like the al-Dabashi Brigade, the Abu Brigade and the 48 Battalion, which channel refugees and others in the direction of the EU. It also fosters arms smuggling (mainly in the South of the country) to jihadists in other North African countries and the Sahel. The reason is that smuggling and human trafficking constitute the backbone of rural economies in Libya. In addition, the Islamic State militias are making a comeback less than a year after having suffered heavy defeats.

In Libya's current conflict, the splits remain too strong, with too many divisive figures for solutions to emerge in the near future. Nevertheless, the country's proximity to Europe and its chaotic environment — a breeding ground for jihadist groups — has attracted almost all the region's strongest protagonists. As a result, Libya will grow as a point of tension between such outside forces, and their support for competing groups will only exacerbate the severity of the country's divisions. Competing governments and associated rival militias are wrestling for power, allowing jihadist militants to take a hold.

Remarks on the Libyan situation:

- The military support that Haftar's Libyan National Army is receiving from Egypt is weakening the chances of negotiations between the House of Representatives and the Government of National Accord because it gives Haftar an edge on military victory. Nevertheless, it is likely that Egypt's aims may be limited to obtaining a segment of land along its frontier with Libya free of Islamic Jihadists with the help of the Libyan National Army.
- Russia is taking advantage of the United States' lack of interest in Libya and of the minor role played there by the United Nations to create itself a foothold in another Mediterranean country. Its policy is to help Haftar militarily in exchange for future reconstruction contracts but in a way sufficiently uncompromising to enable Moscow to play a role in the UN's peace efforts.
- The European Union is absent from the Libyan political arena, in that its only real concern is illegal immigration from the Libyan coast. Nevertheless, it is keen to see the internal conflict among all warring factions come to an end.

TUNISIA

Six years after the "Liberty and Dignity Revolution" in Tunisia, the problems still threatening the country are:

- firstly, the need to improve the economy to meet the expectations of the population in terms of development, jobs, healthcare, transport, education, etc., since the government has still not improved the welfare and standard of living of a large number of its citizens;

- secondly, the corruption that is corroding Tunisia's democratic achievements. Of all the things sought by the population during the revolution, one – freedom – was achieved through political transition and the constitution. The other – dignity – is still the biggest challenge because, in many ways, the Government is acting as if nothing has happened since 2011. This situation puts the fraught economic and political

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environment in danger. At the root of all this is the issue of corruption that is pervading the whole Tunisian system of government.

It is true to say that corruption is a destabilising force in Tunisia, infecting all levels of its economy, security, and political system. Once tightly controlled under former President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, corruption has now become endemic, with citizens engaging in and benefitting from corrupt practices every day.

The impact of corruption on the economy, according to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, is that it has become a major obstacle to achieving sustainable economic growth and equitable development and is hindering social development inland and in the south and is discouraging foreign and domestic investors.

It also has political implications since there is an erosion of citizens' trust in their government, and a decline in public services. Among young Tunisians, this lack of confidence in the authorities is the reason for the disappointment of university graduates aged under 35, who are discovering that their efforts to qualify are useless when they see jobs going to less qualified rivals as a result of bribery. Their demonstrations and protests, if they continue, are the perfect scenario for extremist recruitment and could destabilise Tunisia's democratic transition. Extremist groups are growing with the country's youth disenchanted with the political system and the dismal economic situation.

Another damaging effect of corruption is its security implications. Bribery enables weapons, drugs, and individuals to flow through the Tunisian borders due to lax controls and the lack of authority of the central government. This is most important along Tunisia's border with Libya, where smugglers are expanding their business taking advantage of underdevelopment in the region. The porous frontier with Libya allows Tunisians to cross over for training with ISIS or to travel to Syria and Iraq. The result is a spread of terrorism, not only in Tunisia itself but also in neighbouring countries.

Despite the fact that Prime Minister Chahed came to power in August 2016 with the goal of fighting corruption and that the President of the Republic, Essebsi, has also declared it to be one of his priorities, nothing is happening, since the government mechanisms put in place are so far failing to produce results. This has led to mistrust and lack of confidence in the will of the executive to enforce the existing anti-corruption legislation.

The growing feeling that the political parties and the authorities are not living up to the expectations of the Tunisian people with regard to improving the present situation has received a new blow with the postponement of local elections, a move interpreted as a synonymous with a lack of democracy at high levels of the Republic. The authorities were supposed to divert power away from central government and hand it over to regional authorities and local councils with the aim of prompting greater local development and thereby addressing the dire economic conditions of those living in the restive Tunisia hinterland. The outcome is that Tunisians, once again, are disappointed and angry at the lack of response of all political parties to the need to find solutions to their daily problems.

The main concern of President Essebsi is that of reinforcing his and his party's position in government and in the administration. He considers that the presidency has a too "limited" role in the Tunisian semi-parliamentarian system and he has indicated that it is time to amend the constitution to give more power to the executive. But Essebsi is being accused by civil society of nepotism and of trying to re-establish the old regime by appointing ministers, who served under the dictatorship of his deposed predecessor, Ben Ali, in the last cabinet reshuffle on 11 September. This type of decision tends to suggest that the President of the Republic is trying to increase the powers of his party, Nidaa Tunis, to maintain its influence after the loss of its parliamentary majority: as a consequence of its internal divisions, the party only has now 58 seats against the 85 it had in 2014. These figures make the Islamist Ennahda party the leading parliamentary force, with 68 seats. Ennahda is allowing the secular government that emerged from the 2014 compromise between the two parties to function. But if this party were to form a government, given its majority in Parliament, this could signal the return of Islamism to the economic and political scene. It is true to say that the Tunisians have become sceptical – not to say fed up – with democracy and the inability of the political establishment to rescue the country since the fall of dictatorship.

ALGERIA

Since the upheavals that swept across North Africa in 2011, Algeria has been an immovable anchor in a region trying to find stability in the face of subsequent waves of change in neighbouring countries: Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and, to an extent, in Morocco.

Algeria has held a steady course in the two decades since the end of its civil war. After six parliamentary elections since the country adopted a multiparty political system in 1989, there is no effective challenge to the long-time leader and his entourage, other than that of the President's poor health.

However, change is on the horizon because of insufficient economic diversification and sluggish growth. The economy needs an overhaul, mainly the energy sector, since the country depends on oil and gas for 94% of its total exports (most of which go to Europe) and for 60% of its budgeted revenues. Algeria's imports are financed by income from its energy exports. But falling oil and gas prices have forced the government to use the financial reserves of the *Fond de Régulation des Recettes* (Revenue Regulation Fund) to pay for imports, these reserves now standing at 112 billion dollars. Reserves stood at 143 billion in 2015 and 172 billion in 2014. The estimates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are that this amount will decrease to 91 billion in 2017 and to 76 billion in 2018.

Despite this relative wealth, high levels of income inequality exist in the country and, if the government has to revamp the energy sector, which is becoming obsolete, Algiers fears that economic change may aggravate social unrest. Over the past two years, Algerian leaders have shown their willingness to implement unpopular reforms, especially those targeting fuel and taxes and reducing subsidies amounting to 45 billion

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dollars a year. But the country cannot protect the status quo much longer no matter who replaces Bouteflika.

Up to now, efforts to reshape the Algerian economy and sort out the difficult political and social situation have involved two approaches. The first was the plan of former Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who tried to address the crisis in two ways: by tightening import restrictions and quotas to reduce the current account deficit and by targeting the Algerian “nomenklatura” and their interference in the government’s austerity policies. The Tebboune experiment lasted only three months. He was dismissed by the President because his policies caused a strong wave of social and political unrest. But the real reason was that President Bouteflika and his entourage could not accept Tebboune’s policies, which were bound to end with a fight with some entrenched groups with a vested interest in a status quo based on a system of patronage and smuggling that has prevailed since 1980 and the country’s economic liberalisation. The second approach was the appointment last August of a Prime Minister, Ahmed Ouyahia, who knows that reforms are needed but is relying on what the country knows best: isolation. On 17 September, he outlined his five-year plan to avoid dependency on international financial markets and the IMF: the Central Bank is to finance the fiscal and the current account deficits. This policy means debt monetisation and officially ended the internal debate on how to finance the country’s economic adjustments. In this the Prime Minister had the support of the President who, in a recent speech, given on his behalf owing to his poor health, stressed the need for “economic sovereignty”.

Continued isolation and the strong presence of the State in all sectors of the economy as a way of addressing Algeria’s problems can be explained by: (1) intra-elite struggles and violent conflicts between State elites and armed groups over the distribution of incomes, making decision-making and consistent reform strategies impossible; (2) military and bureaucratic clans that are profiting from import monopolies and oligopoly revenues and display little interest in increased domestic production; (3) the role of industrial enterprises in creating their own social networks; (4) the strong remnants of a nationalist, state-oriented, socialist and collectivist ideology.

Nevertheless, the big question mark over Algeria’s future is the succession of Bouteflika because it has the potential to affect all layers of the country and its power structures. The issue dominates public debate and the stakes are increasing. One feeling is that Bouteflika’s brother, Saïd, could replace him. Other names have been floated. But the ruling factions, the presidential entourage, the Army and the pro-regime businessmen, are working on a smooth transition that will minimise any risk to their vested interests now that the powerful military intelligence has been tamed.

The regime is also working to prepare the population for the transition. It knows that caution should be taken to deal with some of the issues that have historically restricted Algeria’s political and economic development.

More importantly, though, this new approach has been designed to prevent overlap between the country’s twin political and economic transitions. In this race against the clock, the authorities are trying secure the support of key pro-regime voters - public sector employees, employees involved in the

economy, oligarchs, and importers — in time for the replacement of the President, which continues to be shrouded in a thick layer of secrecy and unease. Whether President Abdelaziz Bouteflika will run for a fifth term in the 2019 presidential elections or will be replaced by a hand-picked successor, the authorities cannot afford to deal, in the meantime, with the political and social consequences of austerity measures.

All this could be further complicated by a deterioration in the relations with Morocco, its rival to the West, in the near future. Distrust is the main feeling prevailing between Algiers and Rabat because the modern states of Morocco and Algeria were defined in an atmosphere of mutual mistrust. Shortly after gaining independence from France, the absence of demarcated lines along certain sections of the Algeria-Morocco border created territorial disputes, which eventually led to the Sand War in October 1963. The border was finally demarcated in 1972, but hostilities between the two countries persisted.

Tensions between Rabat and Algiers were further inflamed during the 1975-1991 Western Sahara War. Algeria actively backed the Polisario Front — a Sahrawi rebel national liberation movement that sought to gain its independence from Morocco in the Western Sahara — to check Morocco’s expansion and regional influence. Algeria provided critical support for the Polisario Front, supplying the rebels with heavy weapons and equipment as well as sanctuary in Algerian territory. Algerian forces even clashed directly with Moroccan forces during the 1976 Battle of Amgala, almost leading to a full-scale war.

The Western Sahara War eventually ended in September 1991 with a ceasefire that left Morocco with 80 % of the territory of the Western Sahara and the Polisario Front with the rest. However, subsequent negotiations fully to resolve the conflict have failed to make much headway, and the simmering conflict continues to poison relations between the two countries.

To avoid any setbacks, Algeria is pursuing defence spending despite its fragile financial situation. Algeria spends approximately 10.5 billion dollars on defence, more than three times as much as Morocco. In 2016, it made large purchases of arms to reinforce its military superiority over Morocco.

To counter this move, Rabat sought new alliances by returning to the Organisation of African States and by building new military infrastructure and by selected military procurements. Algiers cannot forget that Morocco enjoys close ties with the United States and France, both major arms suppliers to the kingdom that has been a major non-NATO ally since 2004 thanks to the United States. But even Morocco’s alliances are no assurance against potential clashes with Algeria, especially while disputes remain over Western Sahara.

MOROCCO

Although locked in a long-standing competition for regional superiority with its traditional rival, Algeria, Morocco has benefited from Algeria’s large and well secured territory which buffers the country from jihadists in the region and in the Sahel.

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But economic and social unrest and the growing conservative forces of Islam together with rising political militancy are threats to Morocco's long-term stability. Nowadays, contemporary religious political movements are espousing a postmodern Islamist model to attract the younger generations who, out of frustration with unemployment of over 36%, are searching for an alternative to the current system

On 20 February 2011 huge protests, in a way related to the Arab Spring, but mainly prompted by the population's disappointment with its poor standards of living and welfare led to political adjustments in the constitution by the monarchy, which ushered in an Islamic coalition cabinet. However, Morocco's economic problems have increased in spite of the measures taken to deregulate the economy. Economic deregulation in Morocco has undoubtedly been on the political agenda ever since the first wave of structural changes in the 1980s privatised publicly-owned enterprises, putting them in the hands of business elites with close ties to the government and reinforcing the State-business networks that continue to exist to this day.

Over the past few years, in an effort to narrow the budget deficit, the government has managed to pass some minor economic reforms, including reforming pension funds and ending fuel subsidies. It has also planned to privatise the education sector by reducing grants and public employment and to reform the pricing structures for utility services. But the government's efforts to introduce economic liberalisation measures have fuelled the biggest demonstrations of popular opposition across the country over the past three years. These massive protests have prompted the government to halt economic and social reforms in order to deal with a situation familiar in recent history. The fear of the authorities that there could be fresh demonstrations against them was the reason behind Morocco's decision on 26 September 2017 to delay plans to introduce the flexible currency reforms agreed just months before. The Prime Minister and other senior officials have different views over the measures proposed. There is a general feeling that any further changes to the economy could generate new waves of protests or exacerbate public dissatisfaction with the regime and the monarchy.

The big issue for the government is that there is major potential for social unrest throughout the country and the authorities are afraid that the uprisings of 2011 in the rest of the Arab world, from which Morocco has so far been shielded for the reasons mentioned above, could now occur in the country. Since the bread riots that shook the kingdom in the 1980s there has been no real improvement in living standards in the country's marginalised rural areas, where many people live without basic infrastructure or access to certain basic services.

Under these conditions, the government has to practice a balancing act by making further changes to social structures and the economy with the potential to offset the risk of unrest, thus halting a spiral of violence the King wants to elude at all costs, as he said in his speech to the nation on 29 July. In his words, he linked the ongoing protests to political corruption, blaming politicians and elected officials for a lack of transparency. Today these apprehensions are compounded by the tensions growing in the country's northern Rif region since last year.

In the most recent parliamentary elections on 17 October 2016, held in order to deal with the unrest in the Rif that is also spreading to other regions, the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) again took first place and the Party for Authenticity and Modernity (PAM) (supported by the monarchy and the regime) came second. The King could not avoid designating the General Secretary, Abdelillah Benkirane, as Premier Minister despite the fact that the PJD has been attracting Salafists among its followers, and even accepted a Salafist, Hamad Kabbaj, to head its electoral list in Marrakesh. This decision was unacceptable to the monarchy and the Minister of the Interior invalidated this candidacy. The failure of Benkirane's government to deal with the wide protests in the Rif and elsewhere and the struggle for superiority between the PJD and the PAM has obstructed the formation by Benkirane of a third government comprising a coalition of leftists, liberal and Islamists. Benkirane having lost the confidence of the King, last July the latter appointed the former General Secretary of the PJD, El-Othmani, to form a government. To deal with the protests, the new cabinet is increasingly turning to religion to discredit them, as it has done in the Rif, where the Minister for Endowments and Islamic Affairs prepared a sermon delivered in ministry-controlled mosques accusing the protesters and their mentors of "fitnah". This is a concept whereby protesters are acting against the rightful authorities and may therefore be considered terrorists.

Morocco is a country with a bloated public sector and an economy heavily reliant on imports, which requires urgent structural reforms and austerity measures, largely encouraged by the IMF, to overcome its budget deficit and improve the living standards of the population. However, the government's current apprehensions about implementing major economic changes stem from a lack of support on the part of the King and his advisors, who fear a spread of ongoing unrest and social protest that could shake the foundations of the regime and bring political Islamism to power.

The real problem is the dichotomy inherent in Moroccan politics whereby only political players and elected officials are traditionally held accountable in public rhetoric, whereas these are the people who exert the least authority when it comes to government and decision-making. The powers that are definitely in control - the monarchy and its broad circle of advisers, administrators and officials - remain unchallenged and unchallengeable, beyond all accountability.

The last issue, that of Western Sahara, was analysed above, in the section on Algeria.



France - Europe - Russia

with Jean-Maurice Ripert,

Ambassador of France in Beijing, former Ambassador in Moscow

Introduction

Mr. Ripert began by making it clear that he was no longer ambassador to Russia with the result that the opinions he would be expressing would be strictly his own.

He stressed the importance of honesty in diplomacy, explaining that “diplomacy should never consist of lying”. He referred to the discussions he had had, during his four-year tenure, with his Russian counterparts. For him, to understand Russian foreign policy, it was necessary first to be aware of the country’s domestic situation. Since 2013, the Russian economy had been slowing down and the political regime had become harsher since Vladimir Putin’s re-election in 2012. In summer 2017, when the Ambassador’s tour of duty in Russia came to an end, the situation in the country had deteriorated, despite some signs of recovery.

Russia was actively pursuing a foreign policy which was deliberately and radically discordant with that of Europe and the Western world. This did not, however, preclude extensive bilateral relations between France and Russia.

the media had little margins for manoeuvre. Political violence was very real. Mr. Ripert recalled the assassination two years earlier of Boris Nemtsov, an opponent of the regime, and the homophobic campaigns conducted in Chechnya. “Trolls” used internet to spread Russian ideology and there existed propaganda or even disinformation channels such as Sputnik. All these factors added up to a situation where the people were being kept in ignorance of some of the things happening in the world.

However, several demonstrations had recently been staged in Russia by younger members of the middle classes, which could be indicative of the emergence of a new generation determined to make its voice heard. Strangely enough, the punishment meted out on these occasions had been inconsistent, ranging from harsh to non-existent.

On external relations, Russia was keen to re-open dialogue with the United States and recover its status as a major power, but was struggling to adapt to a multi-centric world. The Russians did not find it easy to accept the uncertainty factor. It was important to realise in this regard that Russia’s market economy was not fully developed, unlike that of the other “BRICS” countries. Russia was still very dependent on its hydrocarbon resources. In recent years, Russian diplomacy had focused on the difficulties that could arise from the “colour revolutions”. Here again, Russia saw instability as a threat and wanted to promote a kind of alternative world order, believing that liberal values were no longer sufficient for the purpose. Nationalism in Russia was alive and well, with a hard core far right often associated with the promotion of strong Christian values. Although its population tended to be learned and well educated and the country had robust technological capabilities, Russia had a propensity to be inward-looking and did not find it easy to proceed with reforms. The system no longer allowed any “outside” opposition. Standing for office was complicated, for instance, Alexei Navalny still did not know if he would be able to be a candidate in the presidential elections of March 2018. There was every likelihood that Vladimir Putin would be re-elected without difficulty. Nevertheless, it was important to specify that actual voter turnout in Russia was probably between 35 and 40%.



Russian domestic situation: Vladimir Putin was constantly referring to Russian history. While some episodes were conveniently forgotten, others were the subject of much insistence, such as the country’s vital role in the fight against Nazism. The aim of the exercise was to lend credibility to the concept of a Russian nation and justify the Kremlin’s actions. Putin was determined to consolidate his “vertical” power structure and establish a direct link between the Russians and the person at the head of the Kremlin. This vision also had an influence on the roles incumbent on civil society, the intermediate bodies and Parliament. At the same time, the country was promoting values allegedly specific to Russian history and contradictory to those of a West deemed depraved and decadent.

Challenging the regime was nigh on impossible: severe limitations were placed on civil liberties, while the NGOs and

Despite the **severe economic crisis** (enfeebled rouble, falling oil prices, slow growth), Russia had chalked up some successes. The Russian central bank had managed to control inflation. External debt had fallen, reaching a very low level in relation to GDP, but private debt remained very high. The agricultural sector was on the upturn. However, these positive developments had little impact on the daily lives of Russian citizens. Moreover, the country was still very dependent on hydrocarbons: 50% of the State budget, 30% of GDP, 75% of revenues. For J.M. Ripert, it was important to realise that Vladimir Putin still remained extremely popular nevertheless. He also referred to the exceptional solidarity with France displayed by the Russians at the time of the terrorist attacks in November 2015 and in 2016.

France - Europe - Russia

(Cont. from P. 13)

On **Russian foreign policy**, J.M. Ripert underlined Vladimir Putin's desire to break with the status quo. He recalled the events of 2008 in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as the current situation in the Crimea, Donbass and Transnistria. He emphasised the fact that Russia's neighbours had expectations of Europe. The Ambassador also noted the failure of the "Russian reset" targeted by former US President, Barack Obama. Paradoxically, it was the withdrawal of the United States, rather than its excessively strong presence, that was problematic for the Russians. They had established new strategic principles and effectively strengthened their defence tools (equipment, training, territorial reorganisation, etc.). Today, Russia was engaged, or even entrenched in major conflicts of its own making. Regarding **annexation of the Crimea**, J.M. Ripert was of the opinion that it was not problem of whether Crimea belonged historically to Russia or the Ukraine: it was military annexation of the country that was at issue. Russia's decisions were aimed at giving substance to the "New Russia" concept.

Russia's second objective was that of convincing CIS member States that they should resist the call of the EU's sirens and to refrain from seeking NATO status. In addition, the Russian military was undoubtedly anxious to demonstrate the effectiveness of its reforms. If Russia was really out to stop NATO from extending its scope to the east (albeit not on the agenda), it had failed to achieve this objective, witness the Alliance's "reassurance" operations in Eastern Europe. The conflict with the Ukraine had given the United States and Europe a scab to worry. J.M. Ripert reminded his audience that France operated within the framework of the diplomatic configuration called the "Normandy format", a Franco-German initiative. Today, the "lukewarm" situation in Donbass (people were still being killed) unfortunately appeared to be acceptable to both Kiev and Moscow.

As for large-scale Russian military intervention in **Syria** in 2015, this had saved the Syrian President's skin: from this angle, the intervention had been an undeniable success for Russia and another demonstration of the effectiveness of its military machine. However, Moscow had failed to prevent the fragmentation of Syria along ethnic and religious lines. Russia was now forced to fight against ISIS, something it had avoided since the outset. **Relations between Russia and Turkey** were difficult and complex, especially with regard to the **jihadi networks** (in this respect, Russia was faced with much the same problem as France). Ankara's sole aim was to stop the Kurds forming a community in Syria. According to Ambassador Ripert, the Russians were now really determined that the Syrian conflict should cease. Fighting against terrorism had been an obsession in Russia since the Chechen conflict, in which an estimated 250,000 people had died and there had been numerous bomb attacks. There were believed to be between 8,000 and 10,000 Russian-speaking jihadists in Syria. Russia was also highly concerned about the situation in **Afghanistan**, where ISIS was firmly established, and which offered a wide-open door to Central Asia, in other words, to countries whose security forces were ill-prepared to ward off terrorism, whence the very real risk of a "terrorist highway" to Russia.

Mr. Ripert commented on **changes in the relations between Russia and the United States** since the election of

Donald Trump. He held the view that the Russians had been more anxious to see Hillary Clinton defeated than to witness Trump's victory. Any hopes they might still have had on the heels of his victory had since been dashed.

Regarding **Europe**, Ambassador Ripert reported the Russian authorities were convinced that the EU would collapse, and that populism and BREXIT would be its downfall. The Russians had a hard time understanding how the EU worked, were ill or wrongly informed about European history and Franco-German reconciliation, overestimated the impact of terrorism and the migrant crisis on the EU and underestimated European economic recovery (in particular, the joint efforts of Mr. Macron and Mrs. Merkel). For the Ambassador, Russia lay between Europe and Asia, and could therefore not adopt a strictly Asian approach. Unlike Russia, **China** was fully conscious of the stability of the EU.

As for tensions with **North Korea**, Mr. Ripert highlighted the rare similarities between the Russian and Chinese positions. Neither China nor Russia had any interest in destabilising the Korean peninsula but neither of them was prepared to tolerate a system of sanctions imposed via Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The situation was difficult and strained.

Unlike Russia, China was firmly committed to the fight against global warming. In Russia, the subject was barely mentioned.

In **conclusion**, J.M. Ripert pointed out that none the difficulties mentioned prevented France and Russia from engaging in frequent contacts and from working together. For instance, in 2016, there had been several meetings and twenty-five telephone conversations between Presidents Putin and Hollande. Since 2014, France had been the biggest foreign investor in Russia and had increased its market share 2½ times over. Despite their differences, there remained a special relationship with the Russians and the possibility of working with them on issues such as Syria, Ukraine, North Korea, etc.

* * *

At the end of his talk, Mr. Ripert answered a number of **questions from the audience**, in particular on the situation in the **Arctic**, the **sanctions** imposed against Russia and **Russian policy with regard to replacement of imports**, the **Russian-Ukrainian conflict**, the situation in **Kaliningrad** and the **reorganisation of the Russian economy**.



What's new in Europe ?

Summary report on recent key developments in EU activities with regard to PESCO and CSDP - Q4 2017

PESCO

Finally, on 11 December, a total of 25 Member States subscribed to the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) for which provision was made in the Treaty of Lisbon. An official ceremony attended by a mixture of EU representatives and military representatives from each of these countries was held in Brussels on 14 December in the presence of PESCO Heads of State and Government. Member States have subscribed to **20 jointly-agreed binding commitments** with regard to:

- defence spending levels, in order gradually to meet mutually agreed operating and investment objectives, while building up the number of “common” and “collaborative” strategic capability ventures and increasing the proportion of expenditure earmarked for research and defence technologies;
- harmonising requirements and pooling resources, especially with regard to capability development and availability within the EU as part of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), and undertaking to produce harmonised requirements for all approved capability development projects, while envisaging joint use of existing capabilities and boosting cyber-defence cooperation;
- deployment of forces, while undertaking to ensure their deployability, availability and interoperability;
- filling the capability gaps highlighted in the Capability Development Plan (CPD) and the CARD, while giving priority to a collaborative European approach and to participating in at least one of the PESCO strategic capability projects;
- using the European Defence Agency (EDA) as the European forum for joint capability development and the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR) as

the preferred collaborative programme management structure,

and to jointly agreed **governance arrangements** based on pre-existing European structures, namely:

- the pivotal role of the High Representative whose duties include an annual evaluation of commitments;
- the PESCO Secretariat, which is run by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and, in particular, by the EU Military Staff for operational aspects and by the EDA for capability aspects;
- the general (political) decision-making framework provided by the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs;
- projects submitted by one or several Member States, which meet the PESCO criteria and are assessed by the PESCO Secretariat with regard to their capability or operational nature, and give rise to a recommendation from the High Representative and from the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) prior to a final decision by the Council subject to the unanimous approval of all PESCO members;
- verification of compliance with the commitments, with each Member State providing a National Implementation Plan (NIP), and an annual review and annual evaluation by the PESCO Secretariat and an annual report from the High Representative to the Council of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers.

It was agreed to proceed on a step-by-step basis, with a first phase during the period 2018-2021 to set the foundations and achieve initial developments before continuing to a second phase (2021-2025) targeting the objectives set for the PESCO.

On 11 December, a list of 17 selected projects was also approved by PESCO participating Member States.

BREXIT

End of the first phase of negotiations

At the last European Council meeting on 14 December, acting on a recommendation from the European Commission, Member States gave permission to proceed to the second phase of Brexit negotiations. The joint report from the negotiators showed that sufficient progress had been achieved on the various points, including citizens' rights, the Northern Ireland issue and the UK's contribution to the EU budget.

Future EU/UK partnership over European defence

At the Berlin European Security and Defence Conference on Wednesday, 29 November, Michel Barnier sketched out the main lines of a potential partnership with the United Kingdom over European defence. This partnership is to be based on the three “B”:

- “**Broad**”: covering both conventional and asymmetric threats, such as cyberattacks;
- “**Beneficial**”: contributing to strengthening the Union's security and strategic autonomy;

- “**Balanced**”: ensuring that there is no discrimination against third countries.

Reference was made to four levels of cooperation:

- voluntary participation of the United Kingdom in European missions and operations carried out by the European Union;
- participation of the UK in joint arms programmes and in capability projects within the framework of the European Defence Agency, together with industrial cooperation enabling these programmes to be implemented smoothly;
- exchanges between intelligence services;
- exchanges on cyberattacks and managing, preventing and responding collectively to such attacks.

Michel Barnier also recalled the consequences of Brexit. *“When the United Kingdom leaves the European Union on 30 March 2019, it will no longer be involved in any of the political, strategic or operational bodies of the Union. It will no longer be a member of any of the European agencies, such as the European Defence Agency and Europol. In addition, it will no longer take part in the defence programme and will not be able to benefit from the European Defence Fund”.*

NATO

Revision of Alliance structures

The creation of two additional “thematic” Commands has been proposed to take account of the new strategic context. The first of these Commands will be dedicated to the North Atlantic and, in the words of Jens Stoltenberg, will serve to *“protect sea lines of communication between North America*

and Europe”. The second Command will have a logistical function and the task of *“improving the movement of military troops and equipment across Europe”* with the ability to deploy larger numbers of troops *“if the need arise”*. The final decision on these Commands will be made at the February 2018 meeting of NATO Defence Ministers

What's new in Europe ?

Summary report on recent key developments in EU activities with regard to PESCO and CSDP - Q4 2017

EU foreign policy

Myanmar/Burma

On 16 October, the Foreign Affairs Council repeated its concern over the situation regarding the Rohingya Muslims in the State of Rakhine. For the Europeans, the main priority is that of bringing the violence to a halt, facilitating access to humanitarian aid, moving towards a "safe" return for the refugees, and ensuring that those who have violated human rights do not go unpunished. The Burmese government has been summoned to respond to these demands. The arms embargo is to be extended.

Iran – nuclear non-proliferation agreement

On 13 October, the European Union's High Representative, Federica Mogherini took the floor to insist on the impossibility for the United States of launching a one-sided challenge against this agreement, since it was working perfectly well. On 16 October, the Europeans confirmed their "attachment" to the agreement of July 2015, and their conviction that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed in July 2015, was "a key pillar of international nuclear non-proliferation architecture and a crucial factor for security in the region". They also underlined the EU's resolution to pursue the "full and effective implementation" of the plan. The European Union "urged" the United States "to maintain its commitment vis-à-vis the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and, before adopting any new measures, consider their eventual repercussions on security at home, in partner countries and in the region". The High Representative was entrusted with the task of meeting the members of Congress and the American administration and of delivering the European message.

North Korea

The 28 Member States are intending to adopt further independent EU measures to supplement and increase the sanctions enforced by the United Nations Security Council, in

particular by adding other individuals and authorities to the EU's blacklist and applying new economic and financial sanctions (forbidding all investment in North Korea, transfer of foreign currency by workers, non-energy products (such as luxury items), and work visas in North Korea).

Turkey

The Heads of State and Government have decided not to suspend negotiations over Turkey's membership beyond the current freeze. However, the 28 Member States decided on Thursday, 19 October to "reduce" pre-membership funds earmarked to enable the Turkish government in Ankara to make the necessary preparations. The European Commission has been instructed to "rethink the situation along these lines".

Afghanistan

On 16 October, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted a new EU strategy with the four objectives of promoting peace, stability and security in the area; strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights; supporting economic growth; and rising to the migration challenge.

Jerusalem

In a press release issued in her own name, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, spoke of the European Union's "grave concern" with regard to Donald Trump's position and "its eventual consequences on prospects for peace". No common declaration on Jerusalem in the name of the 28 Member States was possible in the face of opposition from Hungary (albeit without explanation).

Saudi Arabia

On Thursday, 30 November, the European Parliament approved a resolution requesting the High Representative to take the initiative in imposing an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia given its interference in Yemen.

Member States

Joint procurement

At the time of the meeting of NATO Ministers on Thursday, 9 November, the Defence Ministers of Finland, Hungary and the United Kingdom signed a MOU signalling their desire to become party to Danish-led plans – which now extend to eleven countries – to proceed with joint procurement of Precision Guided Munitions (bombs or missiles).

France – Strategic review

On **European aspects**, mention should be made of **four recommended lines of thrust**: 1. development of European strategic autonomy, with the emergence of European security interests 2. pragmatic reinforcement of the CSDP 3. the Atlantic Alliance, which remains a "key feature of European security" 4. a new approach to defence cooperation

France – speech by the President, Emmanuel Macron

At the Sorbonne, on 26 September, the French President revealed his ambitious intentions for Europe, to give the European project a future and enable it to offer protection, guarantee sovereignty, and thereby help recreate a "sovereign, united and democratic Europe". The main lines of his speech revolved around: 1- a keyword: European Sovereignty, 2- a priority: Defence, 3- a multi-speed Europe, 4- a Commission reduced to 15 members

EU Operations

EUBAM Rafah

The European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah is preparing for possible redeployment to the border crossing point. The historical agreement reached between Fatah and Hamas in Cairo on 12 October has made permanently reopening the Rafah border a real possibility, with the result that the EUBAM Rafah mission could well revert to an operational role.

EUAM Iraq

The EU has deployed a civilian mission to support the Baghdad Government in the reform of its internal security structures. The mission is scheduled to last until 17 October 2018.

Internal Security

On 18 October, the European Commissioner, Julian King, announced a new counterterrorism plan, focusing mainly on the protection of public spaces but also on the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threat.

EES

On 25 October, the European Parliament approved the new Entry-Exit System (EES), the aim of which is to reinforce security controls at the European Union's external borders.

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