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News from the Front: The Big Push is On

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The phony war is over. During the second half of November 2019, three years to the month since the most recent in nearly seventy years of failed attempts to seize defence and security as an EU competence finally succeeded, the hard federalist proponents of the EU Defence Union have gone over the top. They are doubling down in the defence and security area in one last big push to try to save their increasingly rickety EU Project of 'ever closer union'. All of Veterans for Britain's previous analysis 2016-19 stands confirmed. But important parts of the British government and media are still in denial or ignorance about this story. Here is a factual narrative about what is being said and done right now.

Since the EU initiated the take-off for the EU Defence Union in November 2016, I have been closely following exactly what is going on with my principal research partner in this venture, Sir Richard Dearlove, and assisted by researchers at Veterans for Britain; and, jointly and separately, Sir Richard and I have published several articles detailing these developments, starting with our analysis of the specific threats to the UK and our key Five Eyes alliance in the EU's now trouble-plagued GALILEO satellite network which was supposed to challenge and to supplant the US GPS which we all use.

Readers of *Briefings for Brexit* will already know from my earlier articles on the website that during the May Government, officials and ministers, notably Alan Duncan when at the FCO, waved through all the establishing legislation in EU law to create the rapidly emergent defence union. That was not unreasonable when we were not going to participate. But then, with no warning and as inconspicuously as possible, the May Government reversed course in May 2018 and announced that the UK would, after all, seek to participate. It was a very British *coup d'état*. Indeed, astonishingly – and disreputably – the 'May Cell' made an offer of access to our defence and intelligence Crown Jewels part of its futile bid for some sort of sellable trade deal which in the end it did not get. Meanwhile, I came into possession of the notorious 'Kit Kat Tapes' which revealed British civil servants boasting of their intention to hoodwink the leave-voting majority, as well as open source evidence of the deep institutional capture by the EU of important (and still serving) senior civil servants like Angus Lapsley and Bryan Wells. All this is fact and all this has been referenced and published.

It is fair to say that we took a lot of stick for doing this during the May years. The Number Ten Communications Unit attempted three times to rebuke and to refute our analyses. We relished this because, in criticising us, it gave us

Then came the Johnson government and its rewritten deal. Like almost all staunch Brexiteer analysts we were hardly thrilled by the document. It ain't great. But it'll do in the horrible circumstances that Boris inherited. Close analysis showed why and how we could walk through it on a narrow path to freedom in the national security, defence and intelligence areas. The most egregious risks present in the May Deal had been removed although real risks remain. Unfortunately Mr Farage misunderstood the Johnson document and so on 14th November I published a precise explanation of why the deal might be, could be and should be supported. (<https://briefingsforbrexit.com/the-devil-still-dances-in-the-defence-details/>).

Misunderstanding abounds. On 10th November we heard the current Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter, in the following exchange with Andrew Marr on his eponymous TV show :

AM: Now President Macron's politics are pretty clear about this. He believes in a European army and there is a drumbeat of enthusiasm for the EU to have its own army separate from NATO. Do you think that's going to happen? NC: I have seen absolutely no evidence of any military planning that suggests we're going to have a European army and no declaration to that end has been made.

Since then, the General has been – or should have been – entirely disabused as I will explain below. But one has to ask, frankly, where he has been and who he has been talking to since 2016 and most particularly since March of this year?

Regrettably, the narrative has taken root in important parts of Whitehall, among some defence-minded MP's and in some of the specialist media that Sir Richard and I and Veterans for Britain are fundamentally wrong in our analysis – and a nuisance; and that there are minimal or no material or future risks to UK national security in *à la carte* participation in the EUDU. It must be added that the waters have been further muddled by the interventions of some over-enthusiastic eurosceptics of a conspiratorial turn of mind whose extravagant accusations (such as that Her Majesty will be obliged to break the Coronation Oath) we have never remotely entertained, but which have been used by some of those who would wish to do so, to try to discredit us. Therefore I need in close down all such views, which is best done by reviewing the actual facts as stated by the principal actors.

On 18th March, Ursula van der Leyen gave an extensive interview to Mikalis Tsikalis of the Greek Cypriot newspaper *Kathimerini*. It was not publicised in the mainstream British media at the time but is so helpfully revealing that, now that she has finally been able to commence her Commission with sufficient

Ms v.d. Leyen began by confirming the post 2016 take-off: "...in December 2017 we succeeded to create PESCO, the permanent structured cooperation in defence. And we initiated works to create the European Defence Fund. Together with the new Planning Process for Defence (CARD), to me this is the start of a European Defence Union. In this context," she continued, "a European army is a vision that might become a reality in generations to come. What we see today and what we already achieved is the first concrete steps on this way. By giving birth to the European Defence Union, we have started to build what I like to call the 'Army of the Europeans.'" So the intent and the direction of travel are both quite clear. It is self-evidently a direct challenge to NATO despite warm words to the contrary.

Ms v.d. Leyen then confirms what the MoD and Mrs May's No 10 (not forgetting Sir Nick Clegg once of this parish) consistently denied but what, in earlier articles, I and colleagues have documented: "We have come a long way in a short period of time – but we still have a long way to go. The so called 'European Intervention Initiative' fits well with this PESCO framework and the project of building a European Defence Union. It is not about a standing military force. It is a strategic topping helping to build what we call a European 'Strategic Culture'; we just have to put the pieces together as we go along. I envision kind of a 'roofing ceremony' for the European Defence Union during the upcoming Council Presidency of Germany during the second half of 2020...

Luckily," she comments, "there is a broad consensus among member states about this. That is why almost all member states joined the PESCO-process right at the beginning. We currently work on pragmatic third-country rules to be able to include case-by-case partners to specific projects, for example Britain."

Now these rules are under EU law but are presented by Whitehall in just these same innocuous terms. However, as we have previously explained, everything is attached to everything else, and association by the UK would be subordination, not a benign partnership, as General Carter suggested to Mr Marr in their conversation, presumably from his MoD briefing notes. It is a cardinal error. Post Brexit Britain should have nothing to do with these EU ambitions except exceptionally and entirely on our terms, which is what the proposed 'oven-ready' Defence & Security Treaty between the UK and EU that Sir Richard and I, with Field Marshal the Lord Guthrie have prepared, will assure.

Finally, Ms v.d. Leyen confirmed what history shows to have been always the case, namely that this recent flowering has been from seeds planted long ago: "The good thing is that we have had the tools in our treaties already for a long time. We just had to activate them and outline the formal framework. This is exactly what we did with creating the permanent structured cooperation

Back to now. On 7th November, President Macron ramped up his anti-American statements of November 2018 by declaring NATO to be 'brain dead'. The timing is interesting. It featured heavily in the news-cycle, overshadowing the adoption by the European Council on 12th November of a large new raft of EU Defence Union "PESCO projects": thirteen in all. These have received far less notice hitherto. So let us correct that here. The Council Press release, verbatim, recites that:

The new projects **include** a modular and flexible multi-mission European Patrol Corvette; airborne electronic attack for manned and unmanned aircraft; an advanced command, control and communications service architecture for unmanned anti-submarine systems; space-based early warning systems and endo-atmospheric interceptors to detect, track and counter aerial threats including missiles; and a system to insert drones into the Single European Sky system.

Five of the new PESCO projects focus on training, including an Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre, a Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre, a CBRN Defence Training Range, a Cyber Academia and Innovation Hub, and an E.U. network of diving centers.

Other new PESCO projects prioritize E.U. collaborative action, including collaborative warfare capabilities, a Cyber and Information Domain Coordination Centre, and on materials and components.

These thirteen bring to 47 the total number of PESCO projects since initiation only a short time ago. After a meeting of the "Foreign Affairs Council in Defense Formation" the outgoing "High Representative" for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, announced a pause for implementation. The US-based *Defense Post* reported her words. "In two years' time, member states will come back to – possibly – new decisions on projects, but these next two years will be dedicated to work full speed on implementation, exactly because we know the test will be on delivery and implementation," Mogherini said, adding that some of them "are already in the implementation phase." Time for the python to digest its meal.

But others have pressed on. Between 12-18th November the EU Parliament Defence Committee discussed the 'evolution of EU military initiatives' as well as (with the European Defence Agency) military applications of Artificial Intelligence. Separately it discussed the militarisation of space, which can be seen as augmentation of the Galileo and Copernicus programmes – the EU makes free with great names, currently in inverse proportion to the success of

Then, to round off a busy fortnight, on 21st November in her swansong appearance, Ms Mogherini addressed the “EU Military Committee” meeting at the level of EU Chiefs of Defence (CHODs). All this nomenclature, by the way, is a deliberate echo of NATO terms and structures. The CHODs discussed the EU’s military operations and missions, EU battlegroups, EU Military Capabilities, digitalisation, AI, and EU-NATO co-operation.

Who attended for the UK, if anyone, we wanted to know? The EU Council staff refused to disclose and referred us to the UK Representative’s Office in Brussels. It also refused. So we returned to the EU Council staff and threatened to disclose the refusal to disclose. So now we know that if General Sir Nick Carter was, as he said that he was, entirely unaware of any of the origins, initiation, instantiation, funding, acceleration and ambitions for the EU Defence Union on 10th November, he certainly must have had a rapid education since he was in the room on 21st.

As I mentioned in my “Dancing Devils” article of 14th November, I am a fundamentalist in this matter. The EU has no business whatsoever seeking to insert itself into military or security or intelligence affairs. They are matters for sovereign states and for alliances such as NATO. They are far too important to become levers in the one last push for an irreversible full federal union which, under v.d. Leyen is now the nakedly unveiled objective of the EU. And is it not extraordinary that having spent 45 years successfully blocking the EU from moving into a dangerous rivalry and even hostility with the anglosphere and NATO, upon leaving the EU the British government and its agents seems to be willing to allow just this very thing to develop on our doorstep?

All true liberals and democrats in our country must hope and vote for a strong majority Johnson government next month given what, on 23rd November, Sir Richard has now revealed in devastating detail of Corbyn’s utter disqualification for office on national security grounds.

(<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-7718611/Dont-think-handing-Corbyn-keys-Number-10-says-ex-MI6-chief-SIR-RICHARD-DEARLOVE.html>.)

Immediately upon leaving the EU, that majority Johnson government must, as a matter of urgent priority, pop into the microwave the ‘oven ready’ Defence & Security Treaty that Sir Richard, Lord Guthrie and I have prepared. It is a protective treaty drafted in our interest

It is a matter of national security that it does so. It is also an essential signal to the EU that unlike under Mrs May, the EU can expect no concessions in these most fundamental of sovereign competences in exchange for something as incommensurate as a trade deal which the EU needs much more than we do. If they try that one on, then they can simply go whistle.