

NDA/CSIS CONFERENCE:

'EUROPEAN DEFENSE INTEGRATION'

Introductory remarks

- I thank the 'New Defence Agenda' for their kind invitation;
- You have asked me to be 'brief and provocative'; I will try my best to be both;
- I am a firm believer in the need for a Europe of Defence as a means to an end, namely to globally uphold European values in the field of human rights, international law and sustainable development and to effectively fight current threats to global security, namely proliferation and terrorism;
- I am also a believer in the synergy of European allies within NATO and the need for Europe to work within NATO
- I agree with Jamie Shea: NATO needs the EU; the EU needs NATO - whatever the order;
- My intervention will try to outline what I believe are important political factors affecting European defence integration, whether in NATO or the EU;

1. First, some words on the CSIS report:

- Contains some ambitious proposals; they reflect the urgency of action in the field of European defence integration; we have wasted enough time;
- From suggestions in the report, I would like to point out: those concerning the strengthening of the European Defence Agency, with the aim of introducing a more **'top-down' approach to integration**:
 1. giving EDA full responsibility of capability development, by moving European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) to the Agency;
 2. allowing for a solid R&D budget;
 3. giving it a significant common procurement budget.

In short, having identified the EDA as a significant potential driver of European integration in the field of defence, we need to endow it with the proper resources: I agree completely. The same goes for your emphasis on pooling and the development of niche capabilities, especially by small countries like my own.

2. However, I would like to look at the issue at hand - the relationship between NATO and the EU - from a more political perspective:

- It seems to me any future progress in the NATO-EU relationship will have to be based on pragmatic and flexible solutions; in a way, the ambiguities entertained on both sides of the Atlantic regarding the roles and the identities of both organisations have been to some extent beneficial;

HOWEVER: I BELIEVE THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL STRATEGIC QUESTION IS THE US'S WILLINGNESS TO DEAL, IN THE FUTURE, WITH A EUROPE WITH INCREASED CLOUT IN DEFENCE - WHETHER IN A NATO OR IN AN EU CONTEXT

In other words:

- WILL THE US WANT TO DEAL WITH A EUROPE INCREASINGLY ABLE AND MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, INCREASINGLY WILLING TO DISAGREE WITH ITS AMERICAN ALLY? (And some administrations invite disagreement more than others...)
- There is a certain ambiguity on the part of the US on whether a Europe of Defence is in **ITS** interest (this was the case even *before* the Bush administration)
- I BELIEVE THIS AMBIGUITY IS NOT COMPLETELY MISPLACED (and now I have to disagree with some of the speakers today) TO BE HONEST I AM NOT SURE - ESPECIALLY AFTER THESE LAST FOUR YEARS - THAT THREAT PERCEPTIONS AND DOCTRINES ON THE USE

OF FORCE ARE NECESSARILY CONVERGING ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC;

- The report is mute on this political-ideological dynamic and on how to overcome it: **I believe it is the greatest challenge facing the trans-Atlantic community today, because it exists above and beyond technical solutions to capability shortfalls;**

3. One concrete example - the survival, health and competitive edge of the European Defence Industrial Base:

- There is an imbalance in the trans-Atlantic defence trade and - crucially - in technology transfers (the case of the JSF/F-35 is a case in point);
- European companies - with some notable exceptions - have great difficulties in penetrating the US market;
- The US - more specifically US Congress - has been at least ambiguous, if not downright unhelpful in this context. Partly this is our own fault: European Parliamentarians should engage more with their US colleagues in this field;

THIS REPORT MAKES IT SOUND AS IF THERE IS A CLEAR-CUT CASE FOR AN OPEN TRANSATLANTIC MARKET IN DEFENCE GOODS AND THAT EUROPE SHOULD CONFORM TO THE STATUS QUO

WELL, I DON'T AGREE

- Let me remind you of Mr Pierre Chao's remarks on this topic in this very room in January this year; Mr Chao - a thoroughly well-informed CSIS scholar - **underlined that Europe had to take a stand on US protectionism and that - I quote - "the technology transfer situation will only change the day the US wants some technology and Europe says - go take a walk";**

- This could mean introducing the principle of 'European preference' in certain sectors of the defence equipment market, at the same time as we Europeans work on creating an open and transparent European Defence Equipment Market
- For the sake of the future of the European Technological and Industrial Base, **we need to deal with the US, with US industries, on a more equal footing;**

To conclude:

- The future of NATO-EU relations will increasingly depend on the US's willingness to accept that 'a new game is in town';
- The EU, in the last six years, has shown that it is willing to do more and better;
- This willingness carries the risk that the US and the EU will not always agree on HOW, WHEN and WHY to use the new capabilities we all want, and that Europe needs;
- Despite all the beautiful rhetoric, there are still profound disagreements on how to deal with Darfur (I just learned of Mr Bolton's efforts to avoid discussing the referral of some elements of the Sudanese government to the International Criminal Court in the UN Security Council); Iraq is an open wound; there are differences on Iran below the surface; collaboration in Afghanistan is severely hampered by the US's reluctance to share intelligence with their ISAF allies;

(Sometimes, even agreements are far from being positive: the agreement to do nothing on Western Sahara and the Non Proliferation Treaty is shameful)

I finish with a question.

- **ARE OUR TRANS-ATLANTIC FRIENDS WILLING TO DEAL WITH A MORE RESPONSIBLE, BUT ALSO MORE AUTONOMOUS EUROPE IN THE FUTURE?**

IF THE ANSWER IS 'YES', I BELIEVE THE TRANS-ATLANTIC COMMUNITY WILL DEEPEN AND WE WILL BE ABLE TO DO MUCH TO FIGHT THREATS NEW AND OLD.