Negative Brief: European Union Defense Autonomy - bad

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe***

The AFF plan has the U.S. reverse its policy of opposing the European Union's efforts to build its own autonomous defense capabilities (outside of and separate from NATO), and start supporting these EU initiatives. This is a bad idea because there are at least 10 separate reasons why it won't work and 3 disadvantages that happen if it does (or if it doesn't work but they try to make it work).

Negative: European Defense Autonomy - bad 3

SOLVENCY 3

1. Already tried and failed 3

Biden tried to improve support for EU initiatives, but Europeans don't know what they're doing and aren't serious about whatever it is 3

2. Hype backfires 3

Hyping expectations for EU strategic autonomy exaggerates their capabilities, increases US skepticism, and distracts from more workable efforts to improve EU defense 3

3. Europe is too divided 4

European countries can't agree on what strategic autonomy is - and that will block its development 4

It isn't just the US hindering EU strategic autonomy: Many EU countries don't want it either! 4

EU member states are divided about whether "strategic autonomy" is needed or desirable 4

4. Different strategic objectives 5

Even if Europe increases its capabilities and attains "autonomy," it may not share US security interests 5

5. Critical issues unaddressed 5

Europe's debate on "strategic autonomy" regarding dependency on the US - misses the big picture of its dependency on Russia and China 5

6. Lack of political will to deploy 5

Sure, the EU built a Rapid Deployment Capability. But they lack the political will to actually ever use it 5

7. No strategic goals 6

Even if Europe gets more capabilities, it won't matter because they have no goals about what they want to use them for 6

Lack of capability isn't the problem: It's lack of strategic judgment. More capability won't change anything 6

Lack of military capability/strategic autonomy makes no difference: That’s not what stopped Europe from responding to multiple recent crises 6

8. Wrong defense projects and priorities 7

PESCO and CARD lack direction and won't accomplish much: They're working on the wrong projects and priorities 7

EU Study admits PESCO and CARD aren't working on the right projects and won't produce any results 7

9. Underfunded 7

EU cut funding for joint defense initiatives like PESCO and EDF, to the point that they won't accomplish anything 7

10. More study needed 8

EU strategic autonomy is too muddled and poorly thought out. It probably won't work, but we need to study it more 8

DISADVANTAGES 8

1. Reduced global EU influence 8

Link: EU "autonomy" from others makes others independent of them. EU influence decreases the more autonomy they get! 8

Link: More strategic autonomy = less EU global influence on critical global issues 8

Impact: Reduced influence for democracy and rule of law globally - because that's what the EU can do if it has influence 9

2. Masking Disad. Focus on wrong solution makes problems worse 9

Link: Debating "strategic autonomy" distracts from efforts that actually would improve European security & defense 9

Link: Debating strategic autonomy distracts from what's actually needed to improve European defenses 9

Impact: turn the harms 9

3. Undermines NATO 10

Link: EU defense initiatives undermine NATO 10

Link: EU defense policies divert resources, increase redundancy, hinder coordination, and undermine the relationship with NATO 10

Brink: Brexit further increases isolation of EU defense from NATO 10

A/T "EU complements NATO, not replacing" - That's what EU says, but not how it works in practice 10

Impact: Higher risk of global aggression because strong NATO deters aggression 11

Impact: "More EU + Less NATO" = Reduced European security 11

Negative: European Defense Autonomy - bad

SOLVENCY

1. Already tried and failed

Biden tried to improve support for EU initiatives, but Europeans don't know what they're doing and aren't serious about whatever it is

Sophia Besch 2021 (Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Reform’s (CER) Berlin office and a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council Europe Center. Master’s degrees from the London School of Economics and Sciences Po Paris and is currently pursuing a PhD at King’s College London) 22 Dec 2021 " Rebooting the U.S.-EU Defense Relationship" <https://www.aicgs.org/publication/rebooting-the-u-s-eu-defense-relationship/> (accessed 2 July 2022)

Despite good intentions, however, almost one year into the Biden administration, both sides are frustrated with the lack of progress. Ironically, the diplomatic spat over the AUKUS deal in the fall of 2021 has helped to focus Washington’s attention on European defense. But U.S. defense officials complain that EU member-state representatives tend to present contradicting viewpoints on where EU defense is going, often going so far as to actively undermine each other. They report that when EU officials have come to Washington, they have not been able to discuss many concrete proposals or initiatives on defense and instead deferred to the ‘Strategic Compass’—a sort of defense white book which is expected to yield answers on the direction of EU defense in 2022. Many in the DC defense community worry that the Strategic Compass will turn out to have been nothing but a bureaucratic exercise. They are disheartened by the fact that the funding for the EU’s flagship defense initiatives, the European Defense Fund and the PESCO military mobility project, came in below what was expected, and they wonder whether Europeans themselves are serious about empowering the EU as a defense actor.

2. Hype backfires

Hyping expectations for EU strategic autonomy exaggerates their capabilities, increases US skepticism, and distracts from more workable efforts to improve EU defense

Lucia Retter, Stephanie Pezard, Stephen Flanagan, Gene Germanovich,, Pauline Paille 2021. (Retter - research leader at RAND Europe and co-directs RAND Europe's Centre for Defence Economics and Acquisition. Pezard - Senior Political Scientist and Associate Research Department Director for Defense and Political Sciences . Flanagan - adjunct senior fellow at the RAND Corporation; former special assistant to the president and senior director for defense policy and strategy at the National Security Council.   Germanovich - Acting International Portfolio Lead, RAND National Security Research Division; International Defense Researcher. Grand-Clement - Senior Analyst at RAND Europe, in the Defence Security and Infrastructure programme. Paille - Analyst, RAND Corp.) 9 Nov 2021 European Strategic Autonomy in Defence <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1319-1.html>

However, several US observers expressed concerns that EU defence integration efforts may be distracted by a focus on European strategic autonomy structures, initiatives and programmes rather than solving actual security challenges. Crucially, the ‘weight’ of strategic autonomy initiatives, in their view, is measured by the amount of resources and ‘action’ allocated to them rather than their eloquent articulation. The perceived mismatch between expectations, ambitions and actions then results in US scepticism vis-àvis European strategic autonomy, which may fail to fully appreciate the benefits of a stronger EU ally – even if European strategic autonomy efforts themselves are far from perfect.

3. Europe is too divided

European countries can't agree on what strategic autonomy is - and that will block its development

Lucia Retter, Stephanie Pezard, Stephen Flanagan, Gene Germanovich,, Pauline Paille 2021. (Retter - research leader at RAND Europe and co-directs RAND Europe's Centre for Defence Economics and Acquisition. Pezard - Senior Political Scientist and Associate Research Department Director for Defense and Political Sciences . Flanagan - adjunct senior fellow at the RAND Corporation; former special assistant to the president and senior director for defense policy and strategy at the National Security Council.   Germanovich - Acting International Portfolio Lead, RAND National Security Research Division; International Defense Researcher. Grand-Clement - Senior Analyst at RAND Europe, in the Defence Security and Infrastructure programme. Paille - Analyst, RAND Corp.) 9 Nov 2021 European Strategic Autonomy in Defence <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1319-1.html>

As discussed in earlier chapters, the concept of European strategic autonomy is fraught with tensions and ambiguities. There are different interpretations of the word ‘autonomy’ (i.e. level of ambition) as well as ‘European’ (i.e. to include only EU member states or a broader conceptualisation of Europe that includes the UK). There are similar disagreements over how European strategic autonomy in defence fits in with the EU’s wider strategic and policy ambitions in an increasingly multipolar world. Constructive efforts have been made by academics, analysts and the EU itself to better articulate what European strategic autonomy is and what it is not. Yet, the fundamental differences between member states’ understanding and hopes for what European strategic autonomy is and should be, are likely to perpetuate the ambiguity underpinning European strategic autonomy discussions and hamper its development.

It isn't just the US hindering EU strategic autonomy: Many EU countries don't want it either!

Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri 2020 (**Sophia Besch, senior research fellow and Luigi Scazzieri, research fellow at the Centre for European Reform**) 11 Dec 2020 "EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN" <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2020/european-strategic-autonomy-and-new-transatlantic-bargain> (accessed 5 July 2022)

Additionally, some EU governments defended Washington’s case: Central and Eastern European states feared undermining NATO, while Nordic countries with defence industry links to the US suspected EU initiatives were about helping Western European (especially French) defence firms win a bigger market share rather than turning the EU into a more capable defence actor. Europeans have so far failed in their efforts to convince Washington that strategic autonomy would mean a more capable Europe, better equipped to shoulder the burden of European security together with the US. This failure, combined with some Europeans' unwillingness to meet NATO's target of spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence, means that strategic autonomy has remained a source of both transatlantic and intra-European disagreement.

EU member states are divided about whether "strategic autonomy" is needed or desirable

Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri 2020 (**Sophia Besch, senior research fellow and Luigi Scazzieri, research fellow at the Centre for European Reform**) 11 Dec 2020 "EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN" <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2020/european-strategic-autonomy-and-new-transatlantic-bargain> (accessed 5 July 2022)

In November 2016, member-states agreed on three high-level priorities: preventing and managing crises in the EU's neighbourhood; building up partners’ capabilities; and protecting the EU and European citizens. However, member-states remain divided about what these priorities entail. Their different strategic outlooks and lack of capabilities make it difficult for the EU to manage crises in its neighbourhood on its own. States also disagree over whether the EU should have a role in territorial defence. Most member-states see that as NATO’s task, but Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union commits member-states to assist each other if they come under attack. Four years after the adoption of the Global Strategy, member-states are even divided on whether strategic autonomy is desirable. Under Macron, France has strongly pushed for greater autonomy, while many eastern member-states remain sceptical, concerned that it would undermine NATO by duplicating its efforts and annoying the US.

4. Different strategic objectives

Even if Europe increases its capabilities and attains "autonomy," it may not share US security interests

Dr. Daniel Fiott 2018 (PhD; Security and Defence Editor at the EU Institute for Security Studies ) (accessed 4 July 2022) " Strategic autonomy: towards ‘European sovereignty’ in defence?" November 2018 https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%2012\_\_Strategic%20Autonomy.pdf

Despite this current state of affairs, it is worth reflecting on trends that may affect European de- bates about strategic autonomy. Ultimately, the obvious driver conditioning European approaches to autonomy is US strategy. Inescapably, if Washington’s strategic trajectory is towards the Indo-Pacific then greater demands on Europe to take up more of the security burden will occur, even though the EU may not wish to be entangled in US interests in this part of the world.

5. Critical issues unaddressed

Europe's debate on "strategic autonomy" regarding dependency on the US - misses the big picture of its dependency on Russia and China

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Lastly, debates about strategic autonomy in Europe are currently focussing on growing differences with the US. It is certainly the case that recent American policy is puzzling Europe, yet it would be a strategic error to define European autonomy solely in relation to Washington’s behaviour and interests. The EU currently sits at the heart of a web of political, economic and security dependencies. Some are welcome, but others less so. If the EU’s principal strategic goal is to maintain the very multilateral order that has allowed the Union to flourish, then more attention needs to be placed on all sorts of potentially harmful dependencies that the EU has with Russia, China and other countries.

6. Lack of political will to deploy

Sure, the EU built a Rapid Deployment Capability. But they lack the political will to actually ever use it

European Institute for Security Studies 2022 (agency of the European Union) "AFTER THE COMPASS - EU action in security and defence in a new age of global powerplay" 13 June 2022 https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Final%20Report%20-%20EUISS-DGRIS%20-%2013%20June.pdf

The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) was seen as a flagship deliverable under the EU Strategic Compass. However, there remain questions about how it will function and what real difference it can make to more robust EU action in security and defence. One major challenge will be to revise profoundly the EU Battlegroups (EUBGs) so they can serve as a basis for the RDC, in a complementary way with modular force packages. It was agreed on that a lack of political will is one of the main reasons why EUBG’s never have been deployed.

7. No strategic goals

Even if Europe gets more capabilities, it won't matter because they have no goals about what they want to use them for

Richard Youngs 2021 (senior fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, based at Carnegie Endowment for Peace / Europe) 8 Mar 2021 "The EU’s Strategic Autonomy Trap" (accessed 5 July 2022) https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/03/08/eu-s-strategic-autonomy-trap-pub-83955

In this sense, the plea for strategic autonomy rests on a faulty core diagnosis. Most frequently, the geostrategic concern arises not from the EU lacking the capacity to act but from the way that the union chooses to use the capacities it does possess. Listing a standard menu of policy areas and saying the EU needs more capacity in each of them does not provide a geopolitical vision that corrects this shortcoming. Such an approach understands power in a narrow, mechanical fashion, in terms of hardware-type quantitative indicators. This overlooks the kinds of interwoven global relationships and substantive identities that are needed to give these capabilities effective leverage. In this focus, it often appears as if the EU seeks to give itself state-like capacities to affirm its own evolving status, rather than assessing what kinds of influence really work. This echoes a long-noted distortion that EU policies are more about the union’s institutional status than about the de facto means to attain external results.

Lack of capability isn't the problem: It's lack of strategic judgment. More capability won't change anything

Richard Youngs 2021 (senior fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, based at Carnegie Endowment for Peace / Europe) 8 Mar 2021 "The EU’s Strategic Autonomy Trap" (accessed 5 July 2022) https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/03/08/eu-s-strategic-autonomy-trap-pub-83955

If one axis of autonomy amounts to a search for more EU defense and technological capabilities, it is not a new or controversial aim. But neither does this amount to a comprehensive vision for strategic leverage. Effective influence concerns the ways in which capacities to act are deployed—through what means, within what kinds of global relations, and to what ends. In most instances, it is not an absence of capabilities that has held the EU back from acting autonomously in recent years. Rather, it is political choice—strategic judgments, whether good or bad, more than insuperable capacity constraints. Simply adding a modest layer of capabilities through more joint European projects will not, in itself, change that underlying reality.

Lack of military capability/strategic autonomy makes no difference: That’s not what stopped Europe from responding to multiple recent crises

Richard Youngs 2021 (senior fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, based at Carnegie Endowment for Peace / Europe) 8 Mar 2021 "The EU’s Strategic Autonomy Trap" (accessed 5 July 2022) https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/03/08/eu-s-strategic-autonomy-trap-pub-83955

It is unlikely that such additions would have led the EU to prevent Russia from annexing part of Ukraine in 2014 or engage successfully to defeat the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. It was not for want of a capacity to act that in the last decade the EU declined to fully support the Arab Spring uprisings, equivocated on Palestinian self-determination, twisted border control into its leading security doctrine, stepped back from further EU enlargement, narrowed the scope of its climate-security policies, and hitched its fortunes to discredited elites across the developing world. In this sense, the plea for strategic autonomy rests on a faulty core diagnosis. Most frequently, the geostrategic concern arises not from the EU lacking the capacity to act but from the way that the union chooses to use the capacities it does possess.

8. Wrong defense projects and priorities

[Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) are EU cooperative defense initiatives that are part of the "strategic autonomy" goal.]

PESCO and CARD lack direction and won't accomplish much: They're working on the wrong projects and priorities

Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri 2020 (**Sophia Besch, senior research fellow and Luigi Scazzieri, research fellow at the Centre for European Reform**) 11 Dec 2020 "EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN" <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2020/european-strategic-autonomy-and-new-transatlantic-bargain> (accessed 5 July 2022)

To ensure the success of EU defence initiatives, member-states will have to give them a greater sense of direction. Take PESCO: some governments joined largely in order to ensure that it did not undermine NATO, or fearing exclusion from a close-knit core group of EU member-states. The CARD review identified six areas as priorities for the joint development of new capabilities: main battle tanks; individual protection and awareness systems for soldiers; patrol ships; countering aerial threats; military mobility; and space-based assets. These projects do not address Europe’s main capability shortfalls and even if implemented, they would not be a game-changer. But at least if member-states agree to prioritise them, the EU can add some value.

EU Study admits PESCO and CARD aren't working on the right projects and won't produce any results

Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri 2020 (**Sophia Besch, senior research fellow and Luigi Scazzieri, research fellow at the Centre for European Reform**) 11 Dec 2020 "EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN" <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2020/european-strategic-autonomy-and-new-transatlantic-bargain> (accessed 5 July 2022)

In November 2020, the EU published its first CARD report and PESCO review. They assess the performance of the EU’s defence initiatives and how they fit in with member-states’ defence efforts. They paint a grim picture: the CARD report points out that the EU’s initiatives “have yet to produce a significant and positive impact on the European defence landscape”. Looking specifically at capabilities, it shows that national approaches to capability development continue to prevail and the outlook for defence research and technology spending continues to be bleak. Meanwhile, the PESCO review shows that member-states have often used the framework to get financial support for pre-existing multinational projects rather than launching new projects to fill identified capability gaps.

9. Underfunded

EU cut funding for joint defense initiatives like PESCO and EDF, to the point that they won't accomplish anything

Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri 2020 (**Sophia Besch, senior research fellow and Luigi Scazzieri, research fellow at the Centre for European Reform**) 11 Dec 2020 "EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN" <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2020/european-strategic-autonomy-and-new-transatlantic-bargain> (accessed 5 July 2022)

The economic shock of the pandemic means that national defence spending may fall in many member-states. After the financial crisis of 2007-2008, European governments cut defence budgets, reducing spending especially on research and capability development. And, instead of co-ordinating cuts, governments prioritised national over European security of supply. These cuts had lasting effects across the EU. While budgets have slowly recovered in recent years, capability gaps remain. If they had sufficient resources, PESCO, the EDF and CARD could contribute to preventing a similar dynamic today, safeguarding European capabilities, technologies and skills. But the funding for these initiatives has been reduced substantially in the EU’s 2021-2027 budget, compared to the European Commission’s original proposals, calling into question their potential to change European defence. By not allocating enough money, member-states are setting PESCO and the EDF up to underperform.

10. More study needed

EU strategic autonomy is too muddled and poorly thought out. It probably won't work, but we need to study it more

Richard Youngs 2021 (senior fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, based at Carnegie Endowment for Peace / Europe) 8 Mar 2021 "The EU’s Strategic Autonomy Trap" (accessed 5 July 2022) https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/03/08/eu-s-strategic-autonomy-trap-pub-83955

The EU has developed a habit of generating ostensibly guiding concepts without defining what these mean or offering indicators to measure their effectiveness. While the consensus behind the need for strategic autonomy is strong and undoubtedly set to influence policy developments, there needs to be more critical input on the concept’s internal inconsistencies and possible drawbacks.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Reduced global EU influence

Link: EU "autonomy" from others makes others independent of them. EU influence decreases the more autonomy they get!

Richard Youngs 2021 (senior fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, based at Carnegie Endowment for Peace / Europe) 8 Mar 2021 "The EU’s Strategic Autonomy Trap" (accessed 5 July 2022) https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/03/08/eu-s-strategic-autonomy-trap-pub-83955

This element of autonomy entails a particular kind of power. It is power understood as insulation from exogenous impacts—that is, decreasing Europe’s vulnerability to the power and decisions of others. The catch here is that the EU’s autonomy from others will, almost by definition, give others more autonomy from the EU. The flip side of the EU’s multiple moves toward autonomy is that other powers will have less need to cooperate with the union in their own political-strategic actions. In this way, the EU’s quest for strategic autonomy could risk undercutting, not driving, the projection of geopolitical power as well as its support for liberal-democratic values.

Link: More strategic autonomy = less EU global influence on critical global issues

Richard Youngs 2021 (senior fellow in the Democracy, Conflict, and Governance Program, based at Carnegie Endowment for Peace / Europe) 8 Mar 2021 "The EU’s Strategic Autonomy Trap" (accessed 5 July 2022) https://carnegieeurope.eu/2021/03/08/eu-s-strategic-autonomy-trap-pub-83955

Autonomy might be what governments and populations legitimately decide they prefer. But EU leaders need to acknowledge the trade-offs it involves. Pursued as the dominant organizing principle for EU external action, strategic autonomy will likely attenuate the union’s leverage over political instability, democratic transitions, climate policies, violence, and terrorism in other states. Such an approach will give other powers more scope to resist EU pressure and engagement.

Impact: Reduced influence for democracy and rule of law globally - because that's what the EU can do if it has influence

Andres Ortega 2018 (Senior Researh Fellow at the Elcano Royal Institute; M.Sc. (Econ) in International Relations at the London School of Economics) 9 Jan 2018 " The EU’s global normative influence" (accessed 5 July 2022) https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/the-eus-global-normative-influence/

In the context of globalisation, its judicial and institutional framework and the size of its internal market, the EU has a normative capability with effects that go far beyond its borders.[**END QUOTE**] As far back as 2002, drawing inspiration from Johan Galtung’s idea of ‘ideological power’ (1973), Ian Manners introduced the concept of **‘Normative Power Europe’**, which he defined as the ‘ability to shape the conceptions of normal in international relations’. [**HE CONTINUES LATER SAYING QUOTE**:] This means that the EU has emerged as an ‘ideational’ actor, with common principles, which acts to extend norms in international relations. It was originally a political concept –involving democracy, the rule of law and international law– both inward and outward-facing, which with globalisation is proving to have a markedly economic dimension. And this fundamentally emanates from the Court of Justice, from the services provided by the European Commissioner for Competition –with her ability to coerce using monetary sanctions– and from the European Parliament as the legislative power.

2. Masking Disad. Focus on wrong solution makes problems worse

Link: Debating "strategic autonomy" distracts from efforts that actually would improve European security & defense

Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri 2020 (**Sophia Besch, senior research fellow and Luigi Scazzieri, research fellow at the Centre for European Reform**) 11 Dec 2020 "EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN" <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2020/european-strategic-autonomy-and-new-transatlantic-bargain> (accessed 5 July 2022)

Europeans do not need to choose between pursuing their security through the EU, or through NATO and the alliance with the US, nor should they. Instead of debating strategic autonomy, Europeans should focus their efforts on concrete steps that would improve their security and defence capabilities, and help them to develop a common strategic outlook. This will ensure they are better able to protect their interests, whether acting together with the US, through the EU or through other frameworks.

Link: Debating strategic autonomy distracts from what's actually needed to improve European defenses

Sophia Besch and Luigi Scazzieri 2020 (**Sophia Besch, senior research fellow and Luigi Scazzieri, research fellow at the Centre for European Reform**) 11 Dec 2020 "EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN" <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2020/european-strategic-autonomy-and-new-transatlantic-bargain> (accessed 5 July 2022)

The whole debate surrounding European strategic autonomy in security and defence has also been divisive and risks distracting Europeans from the more concrete task of how to improve their ability to act. For some member-states, this may not be a problem: as long as Europeans are discussing abstract concepts, they can avoid investing political and financial capital in defence. Proponents of strategic autonomy should shift their emphasis to advancing a more concrete debate about threats and capabilities. This would help persuade both European sceptics of strategic autonomy and the US of the merits of a stronger EU in security and defence.

Impact: turn the harms

Whatever the AFF's harms are for weak European defense capabilities, they get worse after the AFF plan.

3. Undermines NATO

Link: EU defense initiatives undermine NATO

Robert Kobza 2019 (Master's degree candidate in Security Studies, Georgetown Univ.) 24 Oct 2019 Georgetown Security Studies Review "The European Union’s Defense Ambitions Threaten to Undermine European Security" <https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2019/10/24/the-european-unions-defense-ambitions-threaten-to-undermine-european-security/> (accessed 6 July 2022)

In recent years, the European Union has put forth a host of initiatives aimed at improving the region’s defense and security. These proposals are wide-ranging, covering areas from defense spending to a “European Army.” While efforts to create improvements in defense capabilities among European states are commendable, these plans have the potential to undermine the existing NATO-led force structure.

Link: EU defense policies divert resources, increase redundancy, hinder coordination, and undermine the relationship with NATO

Robert Kobza 2019 (Master's degree candidate in Security Studies, Georgetown Univ.) 24 Oct 2019 Georgetown Security Studies Review "The European Union’s Defense Ambitions Threaten to Undermine European Security" <https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2019/10/24/the-european-unions-defense-ambitions-threaten-to-undermine-european-security/> (accessed 6 July 2022)

EU defense policies may hinder coordination through the issue of resource prioritization. Earlier this year, the EU approved a European Defence Fund budget of €13 billion for years 2021-2027. The move was met with U.S. criticism due to fear that specific provisions of the EDF would unfairly favor European defense suppliers and block out American firms.  But the more concerning security issue is that this spending will be focused on EU priorities, separate from those of NATO. This could create an acquisitions environment that is more accommodating of increasingly divergent priorities. Ellen Lord, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, and former Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, Andrea Thompson, have argued that this raises the possibility of redundancy in procurement, while decreasing the interoperability of EU and non-EU members of NATO.  The issue here is not the desire of EU member states to increase defense spending, but doing so in a way that is separate from NATO priorities, which could further undermine the relationship.

Brink: Brexit further increases isolation of EU defense from NATO

Robert Kobza 2019 (Master's degree candidate in Security Studies, Georgetown Univ.) 24 Oct 2019 Georgetown Security Studies Review "The European Union’s Defense Ambitions Threaten to Undermine European Security" <https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2019/10/24/the-european-unions-defense-ambitions-threaten-to-undermine-european-security/> (accessed 6 July 2022)

The British government has utilized its bilateral relationship with the United States and its status as Europe’s chief military power to bridge the interests of the EU and NATO. At the same time, the UK has demonstrated its preference for a NATO-centric European security policy, vetoing the creation of a proposed EU military headquarters in 2011 and rejecting budget increases to the European Defense Agency.  A European security apparatus without the United Kingdom will be more isolated from NATO and more incentivized to construct independent security policy.

A/T "EU complements NATO, not replacing" - That's what EU says, but not how it works in practice

Robert Kobza 2019 (Master's degree candidate in Security Studies, Georgetown Univ.) 24 Oct 2019 Georgetown Security Studies Review "The European Union’s Defense Ambitions Threaten to Undermine European Security" <https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2019/10/24/the-european-unions-defense-ambitions-threaten-to-undermine-european-security/> (accessed 6 July 2022)

An increasingly parallel relationship between the EU and NATO brings with it the practical concerns of redundancy and a lack of coordination. This is especially true in the area of military deployment. EU leaders have stressed that the new defense policies will exist to complement NATO, not supersede it. In reality, EU policies have already expanded operational autonomy outside of NATO.

Impact: Higher risk of global aggression because strong NATO deters aggression

Admiral James Stavridis 2019. (former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO) 4 Apr 2019 Why NATO Is Essential For World Peace, According to Its Former Commander <https://time.com/5564171/why-nato-is-essential-world-peace/> (accessed 4 July 2022)

 The greatest single advantage the U.S. has on the global stage is our network of allies, partners and friends. That network is under deliberate pressure: from China, with its “One Belt, One Road” competitive strategy, and from Russia, with its relentless attacks on coalition unity. A strong NATO means not only having allies in a fight, should it come to that, but also a powerful deterrent to the aggression of ambitious adversaries.

Impact: "More EU + Less NATO" = Reduced European security

Robert Kobza 2019 (Master's degree candidate in Security Studies, Georgetown Univ.) 24 Oct 2019 Georgetown Security Studies Review "The European Union’s Defense Ambitions Threaten to Undermine European Security" <https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2019/10/24/the-european-unions-defense-ambitions-threaten-to-undermine-european-security/> (accessed 6 July 2022)

Given the current state of US attitude toward NATO and the state of US-EU relations, it is understandable why the EU has pursued a more independent defense policy in recent years. Considering the limited state of European military capabilities, the efforts are frankly admirable. However, EU member states must exercise caution in this endeavor, as the development of an increasingly independent European security apparatus outside of NATO will weaken the security alliance, and subsequently European security as a whole.