

The spectre of further EU military integration cannot be ignored

We are grateful to our friends at Brexit-Watch.org for permission to re-publish the article below, which was written by Jayne Adye, the Director of the grassroots cross-Party Eurosceptic campaign Get Britain Out

EVER SINCE its creation, the European Union has had a vision of a unified 'Federal European Foreign Policy' This has included plans for EU-controlled armed forces, capable of responding to crises and defending the so-called 'values' of the EU. Prior to the 2016 EU Referendum such a vision was continuously denied, and those of us who exposed the reality were frequently called liars.

After the UK voted to Leave the EU, attempts to hide any formation of an EU army have stopped entirely. Since 2016, we have seen the rapid escalation of EU funding for organisations such as PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), the CDSP (Common Security and Defence Policy) and the EEAS (European External Action Service). All these bodies are interconnected, with the same goal of pulling Member States into an ever-tightening web of military cooperation – *separate and distinct from NATO*.

In the negotiations over the UK's withdrawal from the Bloc, the EU initially pushed heavily for the UK to remain tied to these organisations, no doubt wanting us to continue to commit money and expertise – as well as troops – to their causes. As usual, there was no real oversight or power looking into how our contributions would be put to use. Thankfully, at that time Boris Johnson refused this proposal and the bond between

the UK and an EU Army was severed.

This has not meant the threat is over, however.

Recent events in Ukraine – and the so-called Versailles Declaration by EU leaders this month – has made it perfectly clear the EU's intention is to increase EU independence and security in matters of foreign policy and defence. In addition, this reaffirms the EU's own commitment to a mutual defence pact set out in Article 42(7) of the Treaty on the European Union, which formally states: "If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power."

Of huge concern, this is a commitment which, if enacted as written, could also drag NATO into any conflict – even if the EU country attacked is not a member of NATO!

Surely countries which are both Members of NATO and the EU would be forced to become involved in such conflict, and as a result this could trigger NATO's own mutual defence pact. A domino effect like this would not be out of the range of possibility, especially if the EU continues along the same trajectory of expansion, increased centralised power and independent action, which could lead to inevitable confrontation.

As a result, the UK and other non-EU Member States – as well as NATO participants, such as the USA – could not simply ignore this trend towards increased militarisation of the EU. Not only would this undermine the role of NATO as the leading security organisation in the world, it would create new divisions within NATO itself. It is important to note however, EU countries are encouraged not to share information and technologies with non-Member States which the EU see as not sharing their point of view. This is something the EU has already accused both the USA and the UK of doing in recent

years.

One thing is abundantly clear – this mentality being shown by the EU should not mean the United Kingdom needs to ‘jump into bed’ with the EU on defence – as has been suggested this month. This would mean tying ourselves into EU military bodies even after we have managed to Get Britain Out of the EU.

Instead, we and our other allies within the ‘Five Eyes Intelligence Oversight and Review Council’ (FIORC) – (Australia, the UK, Canada, the USA and New Zealand) – must ensure we keep an ever-closer eye on this development of EU military capabilities. The best way to do this would be to continue promoting the benefits and strengths of NATO, ensuring individual countries can engage within the alliance without the control of those unelected bureaucrats in Brussels.

We must remember, it is vital we must never again be in a situation where serious decisions are made in defence of our own democratic values, by those who have at no time been elected to the positions they hold.