



# British Military Decline and European Defence Integration during the Cold War (1956-1991)

Théo Knopfer

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**Théo Knopfer**

## **British Military Decline and European Defence Integration during the Cold War (1956 - 1991)**

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# British Military Decline and European Defence Integration During the Cold War (1956- 1991)



*Eurofighter Typhoon (credit: BAE Systems)*

Mémoire présenté en vue de la validation de la deuxième année de Master 'Etudes Anglophones'.

**Théo KNOPFER**

2020-2021  
Sous la direction de Madame Stéphanie Bory

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## Table of Contents

Table of Figures .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Chapter One: British Decline and International Context .....	11
1 British Decline from the End of the 1950s to 1991 .....	11
1.1 Economic Decline .....	11
1.2 Military Decline .....	17
1.3 Political Decline .....	21
2 Europe and the Cold War: .....	24
2.1 The Soviet Menace .....	24
2.2 European Diplomacy .....	26
2.3 Nuclear Deterrence and Mutual Destruction .....	28
3 Britain and Multilateralism .....	32
3.1 The EEC .....	32
3.2 European Military Alliances: the American Problem .....	35
3.3 Reaching out to the EEC: the French Issue of Accession .....	38
Chapter Two: British Defence Co-operation and European Integration .....	45
1 Collaboration Between European Defence Industries .....	46
1.1 Military Industrial Production .....	46
1.2 Military Research .....	51
2 Diplomacy and European Defence .....	56
2.1 Defence Agreements and Rapprochement .....	56
2.2 British Defence Contribution to the EEC .....	66
2.3 Toward Independence from America? .....	67
3 Wartime Co-operation and Foreign Policy Coordination .....	71
3.1 The Vietnam War: A Modest Example of Coordination .....	71
3.2 The Falkland crisis: Britain and European Solidarity .....	74
3.3 The Gulf War: Field Co-operation and Europe as a Single Machine .....	77
Chapter Three: Political Discord and Paradigm Shift .....	85
1 The European Community and its Continued Reliance on the US .....	85
1.1 NATO and European Military Dependence .....	85
1.2 An American Ambiguity: for a Strong Independent Europe Under American Domination .....	89

2 What Vision for the European Community? .....	91
2.1 Toward a Federal Europe.....	91
2.2 Achieving European Unity: Through Defence or Economic Policy? .....	97
3 Defence and the Emergence of Pacifism and Post-Nationalism .....	101
3.1 Defence Policy in an Era of Pacifism.....	101
3.2 Defence Policy in a Post-National Europe .....	106
Conclusion.....	111
Chronology.....	118
Bibliography.....	120
Online Resources.....	122

## Table of Figures

<a href="#"><u>Figure 1: Economic Performance.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>12</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 2: Productivity.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>13</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 3: Industrial Output and Growth .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>14</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 4: Trends in Industrial Employment .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>15</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 5: Industrial Imports in Domestic Sales.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>16</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 6: Defence Spending in Dollars .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>18</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 7: Defence Spending (GDP Share) .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>19</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 8: Military Personnel .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>19</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 9: British Prime Ministers (Macmillan, Wilson, Heath .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>22</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 10: USSR Defence Figures .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 11: Total Number of Nuclear Warheads.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>31</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 12: French President Charles de Gaulle.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 13: Procurement Projects .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>49</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 14: The Puma and Lynx Helicopters.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>51</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 15: French President George Pompidou .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>63</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 16: Valérie Giscard d’Estaing and Margaret Thatcher.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>65</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 17: French President François Mitterand.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>76</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 18: MRCA Tornado.....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>79</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 19: Aeromedical Evacuation in the Gulf War .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>81</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 20: US Airlift Shipment .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>82</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 21: Gulf War Strategic Lift .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>83</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 22: Prime Minister James Callaghan .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>93</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Figure 23: Napalm Girl .....</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>102</u></a>

## Introduction

The Cold War was a crucial period for the rapprochement between Britain and continental Europe, especially in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis. In few words, on 26 July 1956, Egypt unilaterally nationalised the Suez Canal, which had been jointly owned by Britain and France. In retaliation, and despite the US' warning, the two nations and Israel intervened militarily. The operation was a success, and the coalition occupied the Suez Canal. Politically however, Britain and France were met with scathing criticism. The decolonisation era had already begun, and Cold War diplomacy meant that both the US and the USSR were wooing third-world countries. In consequence, it was difficult to support what suspiciously looked like a colonial war.<sup>1</sup> The two new superpowers forced France and Britain to relinquish their position, leaving the two old powers humiliated.<sup>2</sup>

This incident brought about a decisive shift in the attitude of the next British Prime Ministers. Previous governments had entertained ambivalent<sup>3</sup> if not hostile positions on European integration<sup>4</sup>. It signalled not only the end of Britain's supremacy in the Middle East, but also her loss of status on the international stage. It was another injury to Britain's prestige, and her multifaceted decline had become increasingly evident. Her post-war economy was still in a precarious situation and lagged behind, as attested by the continuation of rationing until

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<sup>1</sup> France and Britain were still colonial powers, and Egypt had been a British protectorate from 1882 until 1922. British troops remained in Egypt until Britain and the Nasser regime signed the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement in 1954.

<sup>2</sup> The US refused to support its European allies on several occasions during the Cold War. It attached much importance to securing regional support in the third world, which embittered its relations with France and Britain.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Historian*, FALL 1998, Vol. 61, No. 1 (FALL 1998), 67-84. Winston Churchill in particular had made many promises in favour of a United States of Europe, with little to show at the end of his premiership.

<sup>4</sup> PM Anthony Eden firmly rejected the vision of Britain joining in the European project. In a speech he delivered at Columbia University (New York) in January 1952, he declared that joining a European federation "is something which we know, in our bones, we cannot do". He also reportedly said to the Belgian Prime Minister of the time, "I can feel in my bones that we are not Europeans" (Anthony Eden, quoted in Wolfram Kaiser and Elvert Jürgen, *European Union Enlargement: a Comparative History*, Routledge, 2006, 20).

1954.<sup>5</sup> She also grew politically isolated. Her empire was crumbling, and the European project had begun in her absence, through the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. The establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958 was the final straw. While initially sceptical, Britain saw in her European integration a pragmatic solution to her decline.

The economic nature of her integration has already been extensively researched, perhaps more so than the contribution of other fields. Instead, in this study, I will focus on the role of defence in Britain's European integration. Indeed, I posit that Britain's Europeanisation of her defence permitted her entry in the EEC. French President Charles de Gaulle's vetoes did not just result from economic disagreements. By his rationale, Britain had to show her commitment to Europe, and he was critical of her reliance on NATO and the US. Consequently, by the time she entered the EEC in 1973, she had joined collaborations with EEC members on defence programs. Furthermore, I argue that by the end of the Cold War, defence had been a reliable integrational force. It was a field where Britain had distanced herself from the US to follow a more European approach. During that period, Britain moored to Europe and came to enjoy an unprecedented show of solidarity in defence and foreign policy.

The term 'defence' can refer to several concepts. In this study, I will use the term only in its governmental and military sense. That is to say, "*the military and industrial aggregate that authorizes and supervises arms production*" and "*the means or method of defending or protecting oneself*".<sup>6</sup> Defence therefore intertwines the study of economy, security and politics.

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<sup>5</sup> Another fact which puts Britain's predicament in perspective was her war debt. The consecutive world wars had been a terrible blow to her finance, and she did not make a complete recovery until the 1990s. At the end of the Second World War, her debt was at 200% of her GDP. It dropped to 100% by 1960, and slowly decreased from then. ("UK National Debt Chart," UK Public Spending, [http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk/uk\\_national\\_debt\\_chart.html](http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk/uk_national_debt_chart.html), Accessed 15 April, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> Definitions taken from the *Merriam-Webster dictionary*. In other words, I use 'defence' to refer to defence policy in its broader sense.



Combined with the subject of European integration, this study offers by definition a multidisciplinary challenge. Accordingly, it may be beneficial to clarify some core notions.

For the purpose of this paper, my use of the term ‘Europe’ is synonymous with that of the ‘EEC’ and the ‘European Community’ (EC). As a corollary, I mean by ‘European integration’ the process of incorporation of Britain into the EEC and her rapprochement with its members. This integration was not just institutional. It also implied the coordination, if not unification, of industrial, foreign and defence policies. As such, I intend to analyse the level of collaboration between Britain and other EEC members not just in terms of diplomacy or defence procurement<sup>7</sup>, but also during military<sup>8</sup> interventions.

My study also presupposes the opposition in Europe between federalists and confederalists. During the Cold War, the two factions envisioned two different paths, two different Europe, which they respectively called *Europe de la Commission* and *Europe des Patries*.<sup>9</sup> As can be surmised, the root of the debate was supranationalism. The first faction aspires to create a centralised government presiding over the member states, while the second rejects the delegation of national competences to a foreign body. In other words, a confederation is a looser form of union which guarantees the preservation of national interests. This matter has direct implications upon my topic, as defence policy is a closely guarded national competence. Similarly, Britain and France had been the staunchest proponent of a confederation, and it was no coincidence that their military capability was also the highest among EEC members. In that regard, defence remained a particularly sensitive subject in European integration, even at the end of the Cold War.

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<sup>7</sup> That is to say military research and development (R&D), and production. R&D is the “studies and tests that are done in order to design new or improved products” (*Merriam-Webster dictionary*); it is the phase of conception. Once the product has been designed, the production phase begins.

<sup>8</sup> While not immediately relevant, I believe readers should note that I will sometimes use the term ‘military’ as a noun in its sense of ‘armed forces’.

<sup>9</sup> They can be translated as ‘Europe of the Commission’ and ‘Europe of Nations’.

The central theme of this paper remains Britain's integration into the EEC through the prism of defence policy. In other words, I intend to provide an understanding of the role of defence in her rapprochement with Europe. For that purpose, I propound the following question as a guideline: to what extent did Britain's military decline and defence policy facilitate her European integration?

It is difficult to understand the stakes of Britain's integration without a solid grasp on the context. Thus, the first chapter is dedicated to the analysis of her military decline and the relevant international context. This decline was initially economic, but quickly contaminated other areas. Her economy was lagging behind the EEC members', and it showed in her industrial performance. Financial difficulties meant budget cuts, which resulted in decreased military activities. Then, without a strong military presence overseas, Britain lost her place as a peacemaker. Her loss of influence was also due to the decolonisation and the rise of the two new superpowers, whose might dwarfed that of any other country. Furthermore, Britain was also humbled by the tension between the two blocs, and the existential threat incarnated by the USSR. It is in such a context that Britain decided to join the EEC. Economically, militarily, and politically weak on her own, she pinned her hopes on the European project. It was not a natural association. It took over a decade to enter the EEC, with defence playing a central role in the delay. And yet, it may as well be said that this delay kick-started the successful Europeanisation of Britain's defence policy.

The second chapter focuses on the progress achieved in the inter-European defence collaborations, and the role played therein by Britain. Europe was a fertile ground for industrial collaboration which greatly benefitted British firms. Through her industries, Britain was active in the construction of a properly European defence industry and gained prestige. Her successful integration repelled the American economic influence and nurtured her own industries. Additionally, defence was a key area in diplomacy that smoothened the rapprochement between

Britain and the EEC. Her decisive contribution in defence marked her commitment to Europe, especially when her relations with fellow Europeans grew tense in the 1980s. Wars also provide an insight into the level of coordination between partners. As a result, I have chosen to make a case study of the Vietnam War, the Falklands War and the Gulf War (the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait). Their difference in scope, chronology and intensity reveals aspects otherwise difficult to study. For the first two wars, I will focus on foreign policy coordination. The Vietnam War challenged Europe's reliance on the US, whereas the Falklands War demonstrated an unprecedented sense of European solidarity. On the other hand, my analysis of the Gulf War makes most of the direct intervention of European forces. As such, my attention will be turned to the role played by the European military in the war.

While much had been achieved by the end of the Cold War, it is equally true that defence suffered from several limitations as an integrational force. Therefore, my final chapter brings into focus the limits of that approach. In fact, even on the cusp of becoming a Union, ideological debates divided the European Community and limited the scope of European defence policy. Additionally, the community still relied on the cadre provided by NATO, and thus by extension on the US. This reliance hindered the construction of a properly European defence. Finally, I contend that the impact of defence on European integration gradually diminished as a result of a change of mentality the turning point of which occurred in the 1970s. Peacetime brought about a shift in focus, from security to economic prosperity, and from the warding off of exterior threats to pacifism and post-nationalism.



## Chapter One: British Decline and International Context

By the early 1960s, Britain realised she could not thrive alone. She had become marginal in the face of the two superpowers, and experienced a multifaceted decline. In contrast, her continental neighbours had joined hands and lived through an unprecedented economic boom. This part will therefore explore in the first place the main characteristics of her decline and its repercussions on defence. Then, I will analyse the context of the Cold War to explain how it may have forced Britain to join the EEC. Finally, I will shed light on the role of defence in the failure of her first two applications.

### 1 British Decline from the End of the 1950s to 1991

Britain's decline can be divided in three sections. First, she encountered major economic difficulties. Her economic recovery had been indubitably slow in comparison to EEC members, to the point that by the 1970s she was surpassed by several nations in terms of industrial and economic performance.

#### 1.1 Economic Decline

First, a broad overview of the British economy can effectively help understand the extent of Britain's decline. A comparison between the GDP of Britain and that of the founding EEC members reveals a clear gap between their economic development. Figure 1 shows that the British annual economic growth was often half that of other European countries. For instance, between 1955 and 1960, Britain saw her average GDP growth (2.5%) outperformed by over two points to one by Germany (6.4%) and Italy (5.4%), with France not far behind (4.8%). Such

economic lag permitted France and Germany, whose industries had been destroyed by the end of the war, to surpass Britain (figure 1) by the time it entered the EEC in 1973. Indeed, using the British GDP per capita as a reference, we notice that in 1960 France, Germany and Italy's were all still inferior. By 1973, France and Germany solidly beat Britain (by 23% for the former and by 44% for the latter), whereas Italy caught up by 17 points.

This discrepancy in economic performance begs the question: did being part of the EEC play a large role in that great economic boom? That is not necessarily the case. Although France's GDP growth acceleration correlates with the founding of the EEC, that is not the case for Germany, nor for Italy in any clear fashion. Thus, there might not be any causality, especially as the primary goal of the Common Market was political: to maintain peace through economic interdependence.<sup>10</sup> Throughout this paper, I will nuance the economic importance given to the EEC, especially in Britain's decision to join it.

*Table I UK Comparative Economic Performance 1950–73*

	(i) Average % growth in GDP per annum				
	1950–5	1955–60	1960–4	1964–9	1969–73
UK	2.9	2.5	3.1	2.5	3.0
France	4.4	4.8	6.0	5.9	6.1
Germany	9.1	6.4	5.1	4.6	4.5
Italy	6.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	4.1
Japan	7.1	9.0	11.7	10.9	9.3 <sup>a</sup>
USA	4.2	2.4	4.4	4.3	4.4

<sup>a</sup> GNP

Sources: A. Cairncross, 'The Postwar Years 1945–77', in R. Floud and D. McCloskey, *The Economic History of Britain since 1700*. Vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1981), p. 376; [Jones, 1976, 80].

*(ii) National income per head 1960 and 1973*

UK = 100

	UK	France	Germany	Italy	Japan	USA
1960	100	92	91	51	34	206
1973	100	124	144	68	94	164

Source: Prest and Coppock, 1982, 197.

*Figure 1: From Bernard William Ernst Alford, British Economic Performance, 1945–1975. London: Macmillan Education UK, 1988, 14.*

<sup>10</sup> The pacific aim of the EEC was clearly expressed in Schuman's speech of May 9 1950.

Britain's economic decline is perhaps even more salient when studying industrial performance. Bernie W. E. Alford, a professor of economic and social history, remarks that "British industry's rates of growth were markedly below those of its European counterparts and as a result an absolute advantage was transformed into an absolute disadvantage over the period."<sup>11</sup> In other words, Britain's industrial output was surpassed by that of EEC members by the 1970s. As a matter of fact, and as can be seen in figure 3, the EEC 5 average industrial production grew annually by 6% from 1955 to 1973, whereas Britain's own growth was less than half that (2.7%). Productivity may provide a credible explanation for this gap. Indeed, the British GDP value added by person employed consistently grew half as fast as in France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium (figure 2). Consequently, by 1970, British productivity in manufacturing was inferior to theirs (figure 3). For example, in 1970, a French worker produced 77% more than a British one at official rates. Considering Britain's population was about the same as other European nations in 1960<sup>12</sup>, productivity seems a plausible explanation for the widening economic gap between Britain and the others. This gap in productivity was reflected in Britain's inferior industrial output. Only in agriculture did Britain keep up or even surpass her rivals (figure 3).

*Table III Comparative Productivity Measures 1955–73  
(Average % rates of growth per annum)*

	<i>(i) GDP per person employed</i>						
	<i>UK</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Belgium</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>
1955–60	1.8	4.2	2.1	4.9	5.0	4.6	3.5
1960–4	2.2	4.6	4.1	5.0	4.7	6.3	3.4
1964–9	2.5	5.2	3.6	5.2	5.0	6.3	4.8
1969–73	2.8	6.4	4.2	5.0	4.2	4.5	4.4

(Source: Jones, 1976, p. 82)

Figure 2: from Alford, *British Economic Performance*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>12</sup> Britain, France, West Germany, and Italy respectively had a population, in millions, of about 52, 45, 56 and 50

Table VII UK Comparative Growth of Industrial Output 1955–73  
(Average percentage growth per annum)

	(i) Overall output growth UK				EEC FIVE <sup>a</sup>			
	1955–60	1960–4	1964–9	1969–73	1955–60	1960–4	1964–9	1969–73
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3.1	3.1	1.3	4.0	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.4
Mining and quarrying	–2.9	0.4	–3.7	–2.8	0.8	0.9	–0.7	1.8
Manufacturing	2.9	3.3	3.2	2.8	6.9	6.6	6.5	5.4
Electricity, gas and water	4.6	5.6	5.2	5.2	8.8	7.3	8.1	10.0
Construction	3.1	4.5	2.3	1.3	5.6	7.1	4.3	2.4
Industrial production	2.6	3.4	2.8	2.6	6.4	6.5	6.0	5.1
(ii) Output per person								
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5.0	6.0	5.7	7.1	6.1	7.4	6.1	6.3
Mining and quarrying	0.1	4.4	4.2	1.8	2.6	4.6	5.9	5.2
Manufacturing	2.2	3.2	3.4	4.4	4.1	5.5	6.3	4.7
Electricity, gas and water	4.9	3.5	5.5	8.7	6.8	6.6	9.1	9.6
Construction	2.2	1.6	2.7	0.4	2.3	3.2	4.3	2.9
Industrial production	2.2	3.1	3.5	3.9	3.7	5.0	6.1	4.7
<sup>a</sup> Belgium, France, Germany Italy, Netherlands.								
(iii) Gross value added per person employed in manufacturing in 1970								
	UK	Belgium	France	Germany	Italy	Netherlands	(UK = 100)	
At purchasing power parity exchange rates	100	155	164	155	105	183		
At official exchange rates	100	160	177	176	111	182		

Source: [Jones, 1976, 73, 80, 82]

Figure 3: from Alford, *British Economic Performance*, 35.

Another explanation for her industrial decline can be found in a structural evolution of the British economy. Figure 4 shows that there was a general decrease in employment in industrial sectors. The sharpest drop in employment was in manufacturing, which went from employing 36.5% of the total workforce to 28.9%. This is a testimony of the British economy transitioning from a focus on industry to services. Such transitions produce structural unemployment due to the need of the workforce to adapt to those structural changes in the economy. Britain was not the only one to suffer from industrial decline, but it came a decade early in comparison to France, for example.<sup>13</sup>

With industrial decline came an increasingly disastrous imbalance of payments, which exploded with the EEC entry. As indicated by figure 5, the share of imports in domestic sales

<sup>13</sup> Guy Di Méo, “La crise du système industriel, en France, au début des années 1980,” *Annales de Géographie* 93, no. 517 (1984): 326–49.



skyrocketed from 11% in 1961 to 31% in 1974. The British balance of trade was upset from the beginning of the 1970s. Indeed, from 1971 to 1974, the British balance of trade went from a positive £1 billion to a negative £4 billion.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, unemployment was expected to rise to 1.5 million by the end of 1976. In substantial areas of the manufacturing industry, Britain was not competitive at a time of greater European trade integration.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore also fair to say that European economic integration came at a heavy price for Britain, especially in the aftermath of the oil crisis which erupted in 1973.

Table VIII *Employment Trends in Industry 1950–75*  
(Index of total number employed, 1965 =  
100 % share of total working population)

	1950		1965		1975	
	Index	%	Index	%	Index	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	254	5.6	100	1.9	81	1.6
Mining and quarrying	135	3.7	100	2.4	56	1.4
Manufacturing	90	36.5	100	34.5	82	28.9
Food, drink and tobacco	98	3.6	100	3.2	87	2.8
Chemicals and allied industries	91	2.1	100	2.0	83	1.7
Metal manufacture	86	2.4	100	2.4	79	2.0
Mechanical engineering	67	4.0	100	5.3	73	4.0
Electrical engineering	64	2.5	100	3.4	87	3.1
Shipbuilding and marine engineering	140	1.3	100	0.8	84	0.7
Vehicles	117	4.4	100	3.3	87	3.0
Metal goods other	85	2.2	100	2.3	92	2.1
Textiles	124	4.4	100	3.1	65	2.1
Leather, leather goods, fur	131	0.3	100	0.2	69	0.1
Clothing and footwear	126	3.1	100	2.1	72	1.6
Bricks, pottery, glass, cement	92	1.4	100	1.4	77	1.1
Timber, furniture	106	1.4	100	1.2	88	1.1
Paper, printing, publishing	81	2.3	100	2.5	88	2.2
Other	76	1.1	100	1.3	99	1.3
Construction	90	6.6	100	6.5	77	5.2
Gas, electricity, water	92	1.7	100	1.6	84	1.4
Transport and communication	174	12.5	100	6.4	92	6.0
Total employment for the whole economy	88		100		95	

Source: Derived from *Employment Gazette*.

Figure 4: from Alford, *British Economic Performance*, 36.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II: From Rejection to Referendum, 1963-1975*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2012), 589.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III: The Tiger Unleashed, 1975–1985*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2019), 20.

*Table X Industrial Import Penetration of UK Domestic Market 1961–75  
(imports as % domestic sales)*

	<i>Total imports</i>	<i>Remaining imports</i>		<i>Total imports</i>	<i>Remaining imports</i>
1961	11	10	1968	17	15
1962	11	9	1969	18	14
1963	11	10	1970	18	15
1964	14	12	1971	18	15
1965	13	11	1972	21	18
1966	14	12	1973	25	22
1967	15	12	1974	31	28
			1975	28	25

Remaining imports = less import content of exports.

Source: [Bacon and Eltis, 1976, 217–31].

*Figure 5: from Alford, British Economic Performance, 42.*

This grim situation, however, must be nuanced with Britain's efforts in defence research. According to B. W. E. Alford, despite economic difficulties, the British government financed 50% of research (absorbing around 12% of all scientific employment), over half of which went to defence. In proportion, the amount of investment in defence research was similar to the US', and twice that of the EEC on average. That much investment is all the more edifying to the importance given by Britain to defence, as military research was far from being nearly as profitable as industrial research.<sup>16</sup> Britain was thus determined to keep her military strong despite her economic decline.

This resolve is visible in other sectors. As Alan Draper notes, the defence industry fared remarkably well in comparison with other domestic industries. It benefitted from increased

<sup>16</sup> Bernard William Ernst. Alford, *British Economic Performance, 1945–1975* (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1988), 47.

military procurement collaboration with European countries, given that Britain produced and sold foreign equipment.<sup>17</sup> In that regard, her general state of decline pushed Britain closer to Europe in order to compete with the US, the Western industrial and military giant. Indeed, while in office, Labour Prime Minister (PM) Harold Wilson declared that “one of our main purposes is to become less dependent on American industry as a by-product of developing European industry”<sup>18</sup>. Wilson sought European integration for the advantages it offered, and it was a partial solution to Britain’s industrial decline. As can be surmised, Wilson was not a fervent Europeanist, and he pursued European integration for practical reasons rather than ideological ones. Additionally, a strictly European industrial collaboration was a chance to compete against the US defence industry, which was vital to the survival of industries developing missiles, land vehicles and warships.<sup>19</sup> It seems then that, despite her economic decline, Britain endeavoured to keep her defence research up-to-date. How far did this translate into military commitment?

## 1.2 Military Decline

The figures pertaining to the evolution of British defence policy can seem ambiguous, yet a careful analysis reveals its strategic transformation undergone during the Cold War. Indeed, although Britain’s military expenditure increased in absolute terms by around 50% from 1960 to 1990, it in fact decreased when weighed in the GDP by nearly as much. As such, in 1960, Britain spent 6.3% of her GDP in defence. By 1990, it dropped to 3.5%.

Where do these numbers lead us? Firstly, it must be stated that a rise in absolute military expenditure does not mean a rise in military commitments. In fact, the opposite happened<sup>20</sup>: the number of active military personnel shrunk during that period from 519,000 to 308,000 (see

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<sup>17</sup> Alan G. Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1990), 11.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 236.

<sup>19</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 109.

<sup>20</sup> See also Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 142, 144, 188-189.

figure 6). Secondly, a decrease in proportional defence investment alone could signal at best a loss of interest in the field. We have previously seen that this was not necessarily the case<sup>21</sup>: Britain did intend to keep her military strong through innovation. To better understand this situation, we need to compare Britain with other countries possessing a sizeable military strength. In fact, the ratio of power between France, the US and Britain did not change during those 30 years. The US remained vastly superior to both Britain and France in military personnel and spending, while Britain spent more than France despite French forces outnumbering Britain's. All in all, the proportion of defence spending in GDP and the number of active troops decreased for all three, except in the case of American troops, which had barely decreased by 1990 (figure 6, 7, and 8).<sup>22</sup>

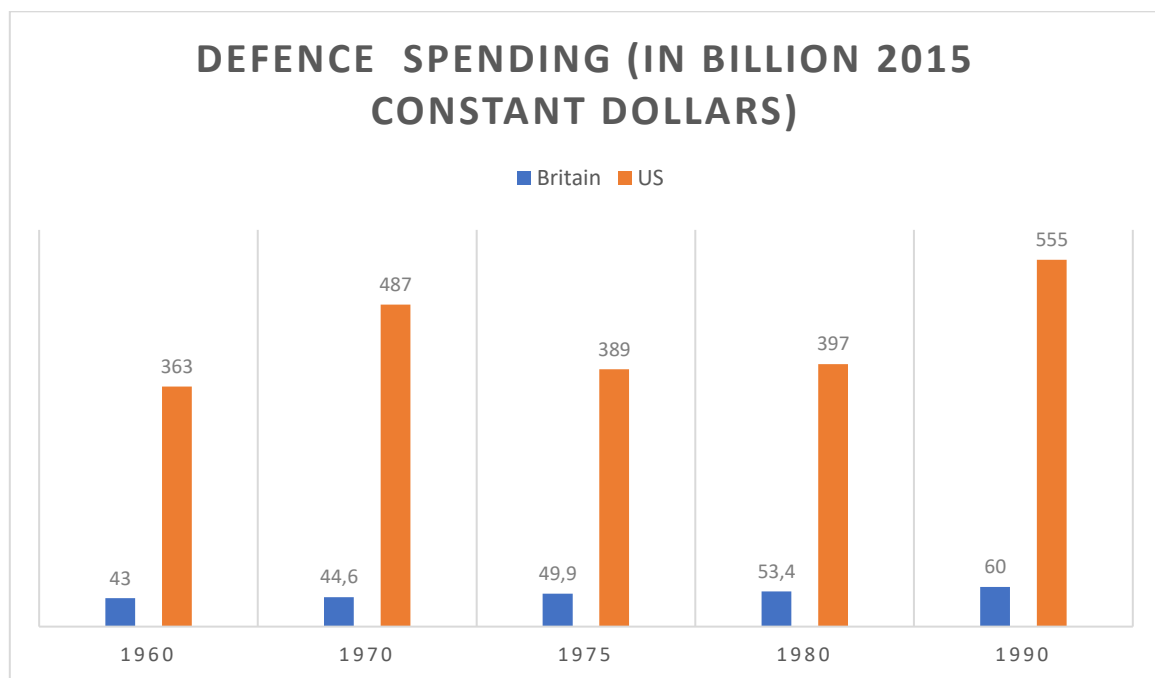


Figure 6: "Military Expenditure by Country," *Our World in Data*, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/military-expenditure-by-country-in-thousands-of-2000-us-dollars>.

<sup>21</sup> However, it will be shown in Chapter 3 that the European Community's interest in defence integration waned by the end of the Cold War.

<sup>22</sup> Draper also notes that financial difficulties encouraged other European countries to reduce defence expenditure, and thus review their role on the international stage like Britain. (Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 16)

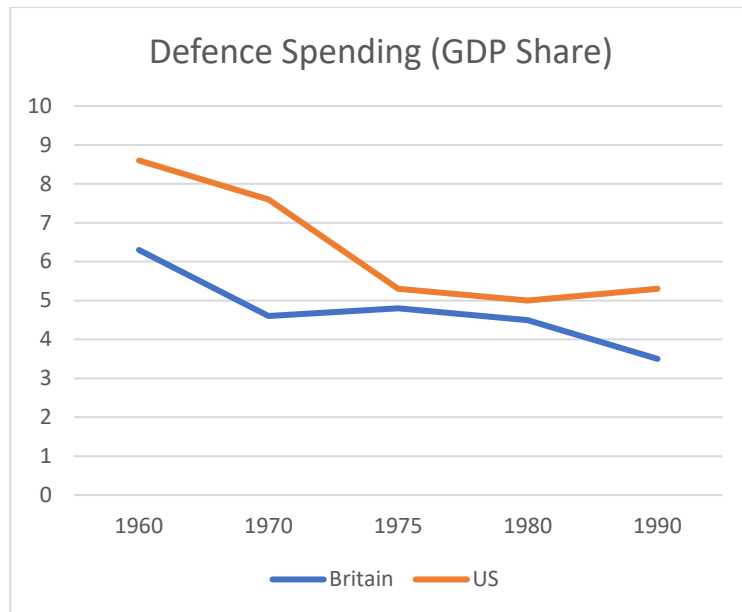


Figure 7: "Military Expenditure (% of GDP)," Our World in Data, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/military-expenditure-share-gdp-sipri>

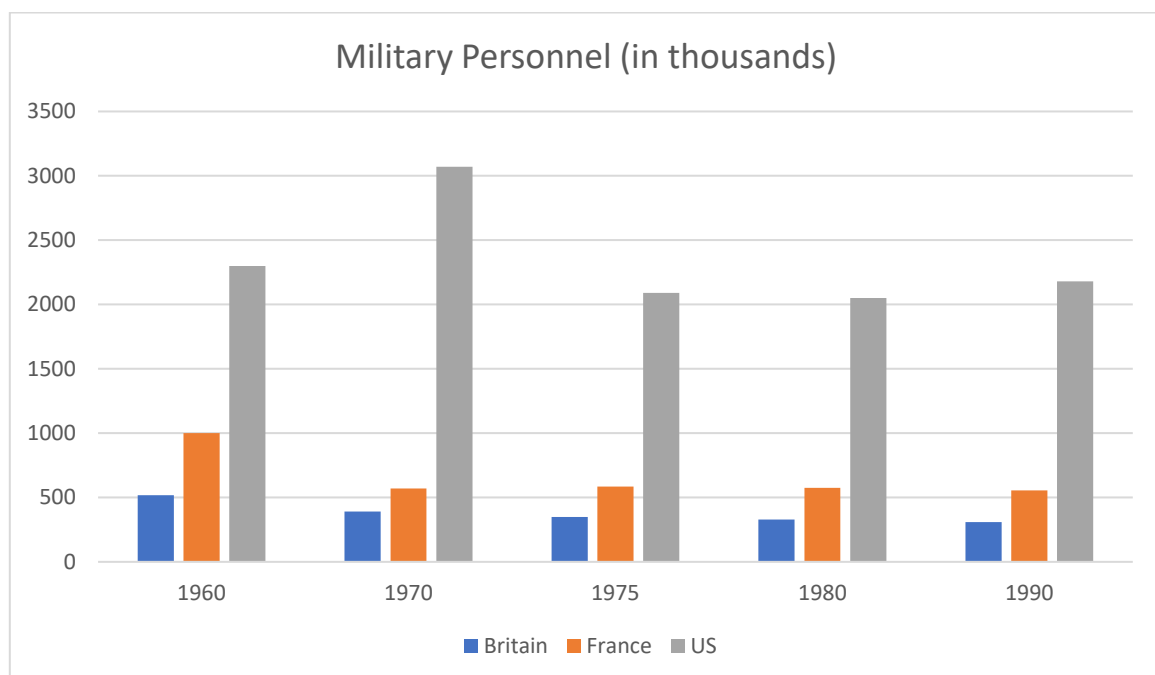


Figure 8: "Military Personnel," Our World in Data, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/military-personnel>

We can draw three principal conclusions from the observations above. One, the figures alone do not indicate a British decline in her military so much as a general trend to demilitarise the economy. Two, the discrepancy between heightened absolute expenditure and low military

personnel also points out a shift in military strategy, introduced by the deployment of nuclear weapons. In peacetime, a large army used to be a force of deterrence. This was rendered obsolete with the advent of nuclear deterrence.<sup>23</sup> The army is an efficient machine that does not bear redundancy well: if there is no need to have a large army in time of peace, then it is to be reduced.

There is one last crucial point to be addressed. While stable throughout those 30 years, the power ratio gap between the US and Britain was immense in absolute and proportion. In 1970, the US invested ten times more in their military than Britain (figure 6), for a GDP that was less than sixfold higher.<sup>24</sup> That same year, the US were employing nearly eight times as much military personnel (figure 8), despite having only four times as much population<sup>25</sup>. This simple observation is paramount in understanding Europe's military situation. The strength of the US (which was not limited to their army) dwarfed so much that of European countries that, taken individually, they could not hope to ever match it.<sup>26</sup> As such, if a European country wished to weigh in international matters, it had to co-operate with others. That power gap also explained why the British government decided to cut its military expenses. Britain chose to adjust her finances to her actual international role.<sup>27</sup>

Then, does that mean Britain's military decline was only relative to the rise of new superpowers? Or did Britain lose actual military capability? To answer that enquiry, let us start with numbers.

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<sup>23</sup> See Raymond Aron, *Paix Et Guerre Entre Les Nations* Calmann-Lévyed, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> "National GDP," Our World in Data, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/national-gdp>.

<sup>25</sup> "Population." Our World in Data. Accessed 1 June 2021. <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/population>.

<sup>26</sup> That much was also true of the USSR, as we will see in part 2.

<sup>27</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 194.

Wilson himself reported to his cabinet that the British military commitments were unsustainable in the 1960s. The country could no longer fulfil their role in the defence of Europe as part of NATO, nor appropriately maintain their nuclear force, nor guarantee their military presence overseas as previously committed.<sup>28</sup> Not only did Britain reduce her defence forces, she also withdrew from theatres where she had historically played a role in maintaining peace and stability. This brought much criticism from the US, which counted Britain as an ally in their military operations, and was especially disappointed in her reluctance to get involved in the Vietnam war. America's own reaction embittered the British, to the point that the British Foreign Office no longer considered their relation to be "special"<sup>29</sup>, as Churchill had qualified it after the Second World War.<sup>30</sup> We thus see that there was a *de facto* decline in British military capability, and that it had an incidence on diplomacy and international relations.

### 1.3 Political Decline

For some members of the government, the most pressing issue was not the economic decline, but the political isolation from which Britain suffered after the Second World War. They argued that economic difficulties were temporary whereas their political isolation would only get worse with time.<sup>31</sup> This was also the opinion of the successive Prime Ministers Harold MacMillan (Conservative), Wilson, and Edward Heath (Conservative). They believed that Britain's influence would shrink if kept outside the EEC. They were also convinced, wrongly according to Stephen Wall, that a British membership was needed for the EEC to be influent. Instead, Wall notes that there was in fact no qualitative change in the influence of Europe over

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 293, 367-368.

<sup>30</sup> A letter to the British Foreign Office in June 1973 also drips in bitterness from the fact that in proportion to their GDP, Britain's contribution to NATO was greater than the US'. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 481)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 194-195, 235.

international matters when Britain joined the EEC.<sup>32</sup> What was it that drove this political decline?



Figure 9: Harold Macmillan (left, credit: *The Telegraph*) Harold Wilson (Center, credit: *Globalsecurity.org*) and Edward Heath (right, credit: *Britannica.com*)

Britain's political sway was lacking for several reasons. For one, and as previously mentioned, her military had been marginalised by the rise of the two superpowers, and her financial difficulties. Those financial difficulties also restricted her ability to compromise, and complicated her participation in multilateral agreements.<sup>33</sup> For example, one of the main issues of Britain's accession had been her economic ties to the Commonwealth which, as they were, would have been a formidable competition to French agriculture within the CAP due to the Imperial Preference policy.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, President de Gaulle famously wanted the United Kingdom "naked" (by which he meant alone) to limit her impact on the Common Market. It had been a hard pill to swallow for the British, and it took a full decade to find a common ground.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 209. Walls also notes that for PM Heath, the EEC was more important for the political advantages it offered than for economic ones. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III* Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume II*, 333)

<sup>33</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 158.

<sup>34</sup> This doctrine, as its name indicates, established preferential treatment between Britain and the Commonwealth (e.g. decreased tariff rates, priority in the allocation of public contracts, indirect economic aids to shipping, etc...). See Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Imperial preference." Encyclopedia Britannica, Invalid Date. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/imperial-preference>.



Another explanation for Britain's political decline is the collapse of her empire, although it was compensated to some extent by the Commonwealth.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, decolonisation was encouraged and exploited by both superpowers for their own diplomatic and propagandic purposes. British colonies had left a crumbling Empire to join the spheres of influence of the two new titans. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Britain managed to limit her losses on that front, thanks to the Commonwealth and other groupings, such as the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA), as well as her willingness to protect her former colonies.<sup>36</sup>

In a few words, as a result of an indubitable economic, military and political decline, Britain felt compelled to end her isolation and to join forces with the Europeans. Her efforts may appear strange today, as we witness the return of British isolationism through Brexit. That is why, we should also take a step back, and analyse her decline through the historical context of the Cold War.

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<sup>35</sup> Stephen Wall notes that Heath's attempt to tighten the links between Britain and the Commonwealth in the 1970s was largely successful, except for Canada, which relied on the US and did not see how Europe could match the US in defence, i.e., nuclear capability. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 427) For Edgar Morin, author of *Penser l'Europe*, Britain became however "reliant on" Europe rather than "superior to" them, and observes that the "European circle dominates the Commonwealth circle". (Edgar Morin, *Penser L'Europe*, Collection Folio, Gallimard, 1990, 167)

<sup>36</sup> For an example of such military protection, through the Cyprus crisis, see Julian Lindley-French, *A Chronology of European Security & Defence, 1945-2007* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 71, 81.

## 2 Europe and the Cold War:

The Cold War, which lasted until the collapse of the USSR in 1991, was characterised by a constant state of tense suspicion between the western bloc and the eastern bloc. During that period, the EEC took the side of the US for two reasons. On the one hand, the European Community shared the US' liberal values, and they grew closer after the Second World War. As such, they appeared as a natural ally. On the other hand, the USSR was seen as a ticking communist bomb. This menacing neighbour directly impacted European integration.

### 2.1 The Soviet Menace

Although estimating the extent of the threat posed by the Soviets is difficult, even posteriori, calling it existential is by no means an exaggeration. In fact, the Western leaders of the time might even have been underestimating them.<sup>37</sup>

The USSR was much more militarised than the West. In 1960, the USSR defence budget represented 20% of its GDP (over twice as much as America's 8.6%), and even a year before its collapse it remained exceptionally high (12%) compared to its American rival (5.3%). This does not mean the absolute defence spending of the USSR was always superior to that of the US. Their defence budget only surpassed America's from 1975 to 1987, during the second arms race. But the Soviets had another advantage: its army. In 1975, the Red Army comprised of 4.3 million soldiers. In contrast, the United States had some 2.1 million. Throughout the period, the Soviet army starkly outnumbered the western European armies and the US' combined.<sup>38</sup>One

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<sup>37</sup> Jose Luis Ricon, "The Soviet Union: Military Spending," Nintil, May 31, 2016, <https://nintil.com/the-soviet-union-military-spending/>.

<sup>38</sup> This Soviet focus on its military alarmed western leaders. While the Soviets talked of peace, they also increased their military activities. Yet, as I will illustrate later, it also helped to unify Europeans, and even encourage independence from the US. See Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 496.

explanation for that high number may be that the Soviets had to compensate for the weaker armies of their satellite states. For example, at their peak, Poland's was barely above 400,000 in the 80s while Hungary's reached briefly 156,000 at the beginning of the 60s. Another compelling reason could have been to keep revolts in check and to exert a hold onto their allies, as exemplified by the Czechoslovakian invasion of 1968.

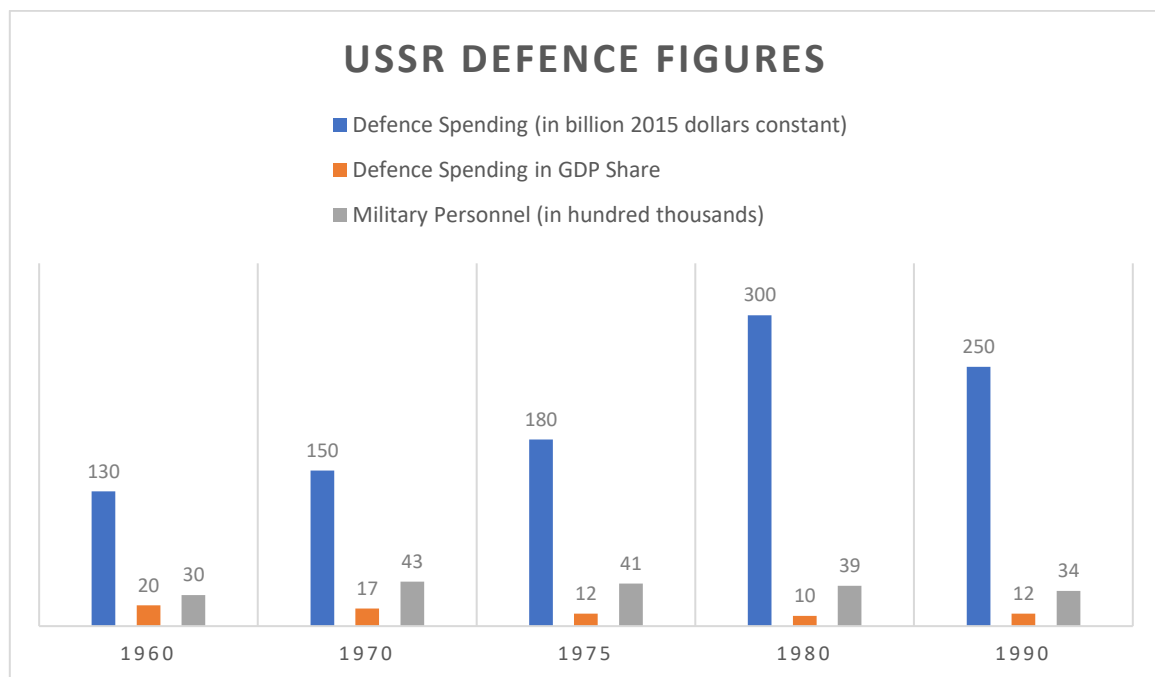


Figure 10: "Military Expenditure (% of GDP)," Our World in Data, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/military-expenditure-share-gdp-sipri> ; "Military Personnel," Our World in Data, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/military-personnel> ; "Military Expenditure by Country," Our World in Data, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/military-expenditure-by-country-in-thousands-of-2000-us-dollars>.

It should be noted that the USSR also exerted an indirect pressure onto western societies, through the ideological war waged between communists and the more liberal political parties. The Red Scare was but the epitome of the terror inspired by the USSR. In the case of America, the threat was exaggerated to the point of self-harm, much like an autoimmune disease.<sup>39</sup> In

<sup>39</sup> McCarthyism shaped politics, driving society more conservative by making it risky to associate with the left. Indeed, those suspected of being communists saw their free-speech rights severely restricted. (Williams Yohuru, "Red Scare," History.com, A&E Television Networks, June 1, 2010, <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/red-scare>). The Red Scare also shaped the American cultural landscape, manifesting in movies and fiction,

Europe, communists were also active in their propaganda. They worked against the unification of Europe, and depicted it as an imperialist endeavour.<sup>40</sup> To strike indirectly at NATO, they fomented rebellion in Spain and Portugal to undermine stability in Europe.<sup>41</sup> The Soviets therefore represented a double threat, militarily and ideologically. It was precisely because of this Soviet existential threat that Europe was able to renew itself.

## 2.2 European Diplomacy

Indeed, the Soviets were as much a threat to the existence of Western Europe as it was an opportunity for its revival. They accelerated European integration by making it a necessity for Europe's survival.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Britain's accession benefitted from the Soviet threat after the Czech crisis. Albeit France wanted to put a limit to enlargement, which already had four applicants, she also understood that having Britain join the EEC would be greatly advantageous. There was an obvious need to make Europe stronger, and Britain's entry would certainly help in that regard.<sup>43</sup> Edgar Morin also propounds that this extra-European menace, by virtue of diverting Europeans from internal antagonisms, stifled nationalisms and pacified the continent. It was an external threat that settled old grudges (i.e., territorial *casus belli*) and united European populations.<sup>44</sup> This pacification of European relations was also remarkable on the state level.

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as evidence by the increased popularity of spy movies. Beyond the Red Scare, movies played a major propagandic role in the ideological struggle between the US and the USSR.

<sup>40</sup> Morin, *Penser L'Europe*, 163.

<sup>41</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Edgar Morin explains that unless Europe became a force of its own, it would see only two alternatives: extermination or vassalage. (Morin, *Penser L'Europe*, 211)

<sup>43</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II*, 300.

<sup>44</sup> Edgar Morin, *Penser L'Europe*, 165-166. Morin also refers to a poll by SOFRES suggesting that the French and German population were not only reconciled, but also felt by large amicable.

While the USSR indirectly helped Europeans forming a cohesive group, it also was at the centre of a particular debate: what diplomatic stance should Europe take concerning the USSR? This question implies another during the Cold War, namely, how independent was Europe from the US? The EEC 5 were very much satisfied with the state of military dependence on America, as I will expound later. However, this was not the opinion of France, and to some extent that of Britain. It was illustrated by France's complacent stance with the Soviets<sup>45</sup>, when compared to other European countries. A noteworthy example of that can be found in the handling of Germany's divided territory. Germany wished for unification, but France, under President Charles de Gaulle, wanted to keep the status quo out of pragmatism.

Indeed, one problem was Germany itself. After the catastrophe of the Second World War, many nations (especially France and the USSR<sup>46</sup>) were squeamish at the idea of a German reunification, not to mention it possessing a sizeable army or nuclear weapons.<sup>47</sup> De Gaulle also understood that the Soviets would not accept a complete rehabilitation of Germany. It would give too much power to the West and upset the balance of power. The Soviets would have them neutralised<sup>48</sup> before it happened; this was how the French interpreted the Soviets' attempts at securing a non-aggression pact with Germany. Without Germany, perhaps the status quo could change, but in favour of the USSR. For that reason, France would try to maintain the status quo, the cold war, by preventing the USSR from making Eastern Germany (the German Democratic Republic, or GDR) a permanent possession, while keeping options open for West Germany (the

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<sup>45</sup> It also appears that while US President John F. Kennedy did not mind de Gaulle's objective of European independence from the US, he could not help but worry about how he could manage to do so without selling out Europe to the Soviets. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, p. 32)

<sup>46</sup> In a letter to de Gaulle in 1965, PM Wilson remarked on that :

*'Throughout their history, the Russians had been obsessed by Germany. France had as much reason to be concerned by the German problem but France's reaction had been to cooperate with Germany and to sign the Franco- German Treaty. The Russians, however, were still fearful. They feared the possibility of a national German nuclear capability; they feared the possibility of a Franco-German nuclear collaboration; they feared the ANF and the MLF. It was impossible to exaggerate Russian feelings on this score.'* (quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 95)

<sup>47</sup> Britain and the US were in favour of reunification, but they stayed wary of Germany. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 58, 63)

<sup>48</sup> By which I mean of course that the Soviets wanted to make Germany neutral.

Federal Republic of Germany, or FRG). By the same logic, he wanted no *détente* and counted on nuclear deterrence to sustain peace.<sup>49</sup> His British counterpart, PM Wilson, had also believed the Soviets would not make a move so long as Germany remained divided and without nuclear capability.<sup>50</sup> It seems they were correct: the Cold War never escalated into an all-out conflict. However, their assurance may have been a mistake.

## 2.3 Nuclear Deterrence and Mutual Destruction

In *The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity*, Toby Ord answers de Gaulle's argument of a peace sustained by nuclear deterrence:

*“How close have we come to such a war? With so much to lose, nuclear war is in no one's interest. So we might expect these obvious dangers to create a certain kind of safety—where world leaders inevitably back down before the brink. But as more and more behind-the-scenes evidence from the Cold War has become public, it has become increasingly clear that we have only barely avoided fullscale nuclear war.”*<sup>51</sup>

He then takes the example of the infamous Cuba crisis, when the Soviet Union had started to install nuclear missiles in Cuba. The escalation had been lightning-fast. As soon as Monday 22 October 1962, US President John F. Kennedy “warned that any use of these nuclear weapons would be met by a full-scale nuclear retaliation on the Soviet Union.” Furthermore,

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 63, 70.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>51</sup> Toby Ord, *The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity*, Hachette (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 32.

military plans had been drafted to prepare a possible invasion of Cuba, and the defence readiness condition (DEFCON) of the American forces was brought to level 3 to prepare for nuclear war. Two days later, on Wednesday, US nuclear missiles were under DEFCON 2. It was the last possible step before nuclear warfare: the missiles were armed and ready for launch, while nuclear bombers were up in the skies. On Saturday, an American spy plane was shot down. Kennedy sent an ultimatum to the Soviets warning they would launch air strikes if they shot another plane or if the Soviets did not back down within twenty-four hours.<sup>52</sup>

Khrushchev, head of the USSR, then complied and that was the end of the Cuban crisis. Yet, it is only as Ord goes into further details of the conflict that we truly understand how fortunate this outcome was. During those events, both Kennedy and Khrushchev had been restraining the warmongering impulses of their military advisors. Kennedy had committed to attack Cuba should a spy-plane be destroyed; when the very situation arose on Saturday, he changed his mind. As for Khrushchev, his control over his own troops was not as absolute as he had wished, and the destruction of the U2 plane had been against his orders. The Soviets also had more than 90 nuclear missiles ready on Cuba, with the code of launch delegated to local command. Sensing the impending disaster, he banned their deployment without his explicit consent, and enforced the de-escalation.<sup>53</sup>

During the Cold War, there were many such nuclear short-calls. Some were accidental in nature. We can cite the more famous Soviet nuclear false alarm incident of 1983. On Monday 26 September 1983, a Soviet officer, on duty at the command centre for the early-warning system, received a notification that the radar had detected incoming nuclear missiles launched from

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 32-33.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 33.

the United States. Knowing that it would invite immediate nuclear retaliation, he decided against reporting, and waited for collaborating evidence, which never came.<sup>54</sup>

The forementioned events had the particularity of striking home of the two superpowers. Would such tense situations with nuclear fallout have arisen in Europe?

On one hand, the Euromissile Crisis, the closest analogy available, was nowhere near this tense. It began in 1977 with the deployment of the new soviet nuclear missiles (SS-20), the range of which was by far superior to its predecessors and which worried Europeans. It ended in 1987 with the ban on land-based missiles with a range of over 500km through the INF Treaty.

Although the crisis marked the restart of the Cold War after a period of *détente*, it did not bring the world close to the brink of a nuclear war. It did spur Europeans and NATO to update their nuclear capability and to work together more closely. A few days after the Soviet nuclear false alarm incident, NATO had prepared a military exercise which simulated, among other things, a Soviet nuclear attack. It lasted from 7 November to 11 November.

On another hand, outside such crisis and after the 1960s, it was reasonable to think that there were little risks of war in Europe by virtue of the US and the Soviets having about equal nuclear capability.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, PM Macmillan had remarked that China was a growing thorn in the USSR's side. As it tried to develop its own nuclear weapons, China became the focus of the USSR. With the Soviets' attention turned elsewhere, Europe could take advantage

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<sup>54</sup> For other examples of close-calls, see "Accidental Nuclear War: a Timeline of Close Calls," Future of Life Institute, 5 April 2021, <https://futureoflife.org/background/nuclear-close-calls-a-timeline>, and Toby Ord, *The Precipice*, 91-92.

<sup>55</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II*, 427. The marginalisation of Europe before those two superpowers motivated Britain to further defence co-operation with Europeans. For example, as a result of the 1960s nuclear arms race, Britain proposed to enter a co-operation with France to balance the power ratio between Europe and the US. It was also encouraged by the US. Nixon's foremost preoccupation had been this nuclear parity, and he started rethinking NATO strategy by appealing for a greater European contribution to the alliance. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II*, 457-458)



of the situation to decrease the tension in the West and come to an understanding with the USSR.<sup>56</sup> Due to that situation, Britain and the US now thought it would be inappropriate to go forward with the MLF.<sup>57</sup> It would disturb the balance of military power and could make the USSR panic. This concern was not shared by France and Germany. France wanted to develop their own independent military strength, i.e. their own nuclear weapons, while the FRG did not want to upset the Soviets and encourage the territorial division of Germany.<sup>58</sup>

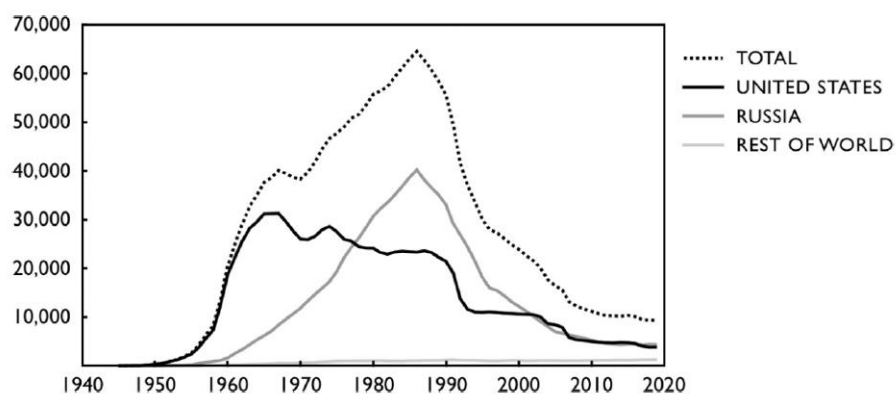


Figure 11: Total Number of Nuclear Warheads. From Ord, *The Precipice*, 94.

The Cold War was a complex and tense period of history, and the diverging interests made it difficult to co-operate. Nevertheless, the threat of the USSR proved itself a boon by fostering European unity. The Cold War saw the birth of a European community, as nations reached out to one another and made alliances to compensate for their individual weaknesses.

<sup>56</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II*, 62-63.

<sup>57</sup> The Multilateral Force was a military agreement under NATO, proposed in the early 1960s. It proposed to strengthen Europeans by giving them some level of nuclear capability through NATO. In effect, European NATO members could not use those weapons unilaterally, as it was a shared ownership. That was a subject of discord between the US, Britain and France, the last two of whom pursued nuclear sovereignty.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

### 3 Britain and Multilateralism

The formation of a European community had been influenced by the emergence of multilateralism, which had taken the form of several alliances. Some had been purely economical in nature (EFTA), others had been purely military (NATO). Others were broader, perhaps more political in nature, like the EEC or the WEU (Western Europe Union). Defence had naturally been the focus of many initiatives. There had been many attempts for the creation of an organised European defence, in vain.<sup>59</sup> Few, if any, survived to this day or had the same impact as NATO. It had been harder to set up a common policy in defence than in economic policy. Economic alliances survived more easily and even coalesced into a greater union, like EFTA and the Common Market. Britain's entry to the EEC was fraught with challenges, defence being the most severe.

#### 3.1 The EEC

By the 1960s, the EEC was split between two opposing ideologies, two opposing visions for the fledgling European community. The first one was the prospect of a European federation, which had also been referred to as a United States of Europe. It had been the popular approach after the Second World War, which found its apostles in Schuman and Jean Monnet. This approach implied a supranational entity which would govern over member states, taking many of their national prerogatives. This position was dominant in the EEC Six. At the time, France was the only member opposed to it, although she did so ruthlessly. Indeed, she called for a confederation. A confederation is a loose form of federation, insofar as the central government has more limited power over member states, and none whatsoever on their citizens (e.g. it could

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<sup>59</sup> The most famous are the Pleven Plan, the European Defence Community, the Elysée Treaty, and the Fouchet plan.

not set up a confederal tax). A confederal government would find its focus on facilitating collaboration between its members and on aligning their interests.

Although the EEC was formed with the idea of paving the way to a federation<sup>60</sup>, Wilson remarked to French journalists in October 1967 that it was losing momentum. Back then, it was still far from being a strong federal body.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, Wilson publicly expressed that he would go along with federalism if that was the wish of the community. He would not hinder their efforts, but nor would he hasten the process. One reason for his acceptance of federalism was defence. He spontaneously associated federalism with a common defence policy, and he looked forward to join the EEC as it would make it easier to collaborate on defence.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the British people shared and approved this vision during his second term, in the 1975 Referendum. To the question “Do you think the United Kingdom should stay in the European Community (the Common Market)?”, about 67% of the voters answered in the affirmative.<sup>63</sup>

The EEC had not been valued for its economic, but for its defence benefits. Indeed, a survey by Gallup found that the voters had been most persuaded by the arguments that Britain was better off inside the EEC for the sake of defence, international influence and international standing.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Early speeches calling for a European Union were made by Robert Schuman and Monnet. See for example Schuman’s speech of 9 May 1950.

<sup>61</sup> It is also important to note that federalism is a continuum. There are different types of federalisms, which I will distinguish as ‘strong federalism’ and ‘weak federalism’. For example, the early EEC’s decision making was still in the hands of the nation members, who all had the power to veto decisions. In comparison, the supranational body of the EEC was also very limited. As such, the EEC could at best be described as a weak federation.

<sup>62</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 235. However, since EEC members disagreed on how to proceed on that point, he continued to collaborate on defence through NATO and the WEU.

<sup>63</sup> Which is peculiar, as public opinion had been starkly against joining the EEC (72% of No) in 1970, before the oil crisis. (in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 353-354) It may be that the economic crisis convinced the British people that it would have been even more catastrophic if Britain had been out of the EEC. It may also be due to the unreliable nature of polls.

<sup>64</sup> In Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 588.

The pamphlet distributed by the government is revealing of the relation between Britain's decline and her urgent need to stay in the EEC. Here is the very first argument they mentioned:

***“What are the facts?”***

***Fact No. 1*** is that in the modern world even the Super Powers like America and Russia do not have complete freedom of action. Medium-sized nations like Britain are more and more subject to economic and political forces we cannot control on our own. [..]

*Since we cannot go it alone in the modern world, Britain has for years been a member of international groupings like the United Nations, NATO and the International Monetary Fund.*”<sup>65</sup>

If even the most powerful nations of the world had limited freedom, then what of Britain, which had become a mere “medium-sized nation” which “[could not] control” its own fate? The sentiment of decline is clear. The pamphlet also adamantly rejects the possibility of unilateralism (“*we cannot go it alone*”), and puts her membership to the Common Market on the same level as NATO and the UN, which were essential institutions respectively for British defence and international standing (as a permanent member of the Security Council). The pamphlet suggests a continuity; if Britain is part of the UN and NATO, why should we not be part of the EEC?

The pamphlet also touches the question of federalism, which appears to have been a serious concern of the voters. Indeed, a whole section (named “Will Parliament Lose Its

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<sup>65</sup> “1975 Referendum Pamphlet,” Harvard Digital, Accessed 1 June 2021, <http://www.harvard-digital.co.uk/euro/pamphlet.htm>, 11; emphasis are theirs.

Power?") was dedicated to it, suggesting the loss of competence was a major preoccupation to the voters. The section mentions that "no important new policy can be decided in Brussels or anywhere else without the consent of a British Minister answerable to a British Government and British Parliament." Thus, it guaranteed that the British legislative power had not been impacted, and that no European law could be forced down the throat of British citizens. However, it can be argued that the pamphlet was deceptive.

First, Stephen Wall notes that the EEC was unlike the UN or NATO. The rules which governed the EEC changed with the cumulative transfers of competence and the precedents set by the European Court of Justice. Therefore, while European laws required the Parliament's assent for now, it might be bypassed later. Second, he points out that "legislation adopted at EEC level was incapable of amendment by Parliament in Westminster"; if Britain disagreed with an EEC legislation, all it could do was leaving the EEC. Finally, not all decisions were taken unanimously or could be vetoed. Some decisions, like for CAP policies, were decided by majority voting. As such, Britain had already lost part of her sovereignty.<sup>66</sup>

That the government manipulated so strongly public opinion in favour of the EEC shows Britain's commitment to the EEC. Britain had to be in the EEC, even if it meant losing national competences. Defence, however, was a national competence that could not be taken easily. That is why Europeans relied on alliances for their defence rather than on federal bodies.

### **3.2 European Military Alliances: the American Problem**

Western Europe could count on several organisations and treaties to facilitate the collaboration between its armies. Some were much less successful than others, like the

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<sup>66</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 584-585.

European Defence Community (EDC) and the Elysée Treaty, and were gradually forgotten. In retrospective, however, they revealed the European will to harmonise their defence. They were visions of what Europe could have been, perhaps introduced too soon, at a time when Europe could not yet entirely trust itself.

The most prominent military alliance in the West, and only one extant, was NATO, led by the US. It was formed on 4 April 1949, in the beginning of the Cold War during the Berlin Blockade, when the USSR prevented the West from accessing Berlin by land. It established a defence community of twelve countries, including Britain and France, but initially excluding West Germany. According to its article 5, an attack on one of its members is considered an attack to all others. They are obligated to help, but the means to do so is left to their discretion.<sup>67</sup> NATO was the backbone of the West's defence. European defence treaties were built on it, and that provided a sense of security for a devastated post-war Europe. It was however a problem in the long term to Europe's defence integration, which will be developed in Chapter 3. Even in the early days of the EEC, reliance on America hindered the progress of a purely European defence. For example, the Elysée Treaty, signed in 1963 between France and Germany, was an attempt by De Gaulle to initiate a Franco-German collective defence, independent from NATO. It failed when the German parliament (Bundestag) amended the treaty before ratifying it. The amendment in question placed the Elysée treaty within NATO's framework, killing the initiative in its cradle.

France, and later Britain, was particularly involved in efforts to establish a common defence policy. It was synonymous to making Europe independent militarily from the US. Yet

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<sup>67</sup> Here is what the article says: "*The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, **each of them** [...], **will assist the Party or Parties** so attacked **by taking** forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, **such action as it deems necessary**, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.*" (Nato, "The North Atlantic Treaty," NATO, 1 April 2009, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm); the emphases are mine)

beyond that, France wanted to make Europe the third superpower, which was not to the liking of other Europeans.<sup>68</sup>

Another noteworthy organisation that had, however, some limited use during the cold war was the WEU. Born in 1954 from the modified Treaty of Brussels, it stipulated in its article 5 that its members (the to-be EEC 6 and Britain) would employ “all means at their disposal” to deal with an “armed aggression in Europe”.<sup>69</sup> It was a promising start for a European defence as it was, but it had a fundamental problem. While appearing independent from NATO, it implicitly established itself as a branch of NATO. Indeed, article four states:

*“In the execution of the Treaty, the High Contracting Parties and any Organs established by Them under the Treaty shall work in close cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.*

*Recognising the undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO, the Council and its Agency will rely on the appropriate military authorities of NATO for information and advice on military matters.”*<sup>70</sup>

NATO’s policy superseded and directed that of the WEU, as implied by the second paragraph. In *L’Europe a-t-elle un avenir stratégique*, Nicole Gnesotto explains that the WEU was an “empty shell” from its birth, as all military competences it could have inherited from the Treaty of Brussels had been given to NATO in 1951.<sup>71</sup> What was supposed to be a European defence initiative became directed by the US. In the end, the WEU was employed through the

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<sup>68</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>69</sup> “Traité De Bruxelles Modifié (Paris, 23 Octobre 1954),” CVCE, Accessed 1 June 2021, [https://www.cvce.eu/obj/traite\\_de\\_bruzelles\\_modifie\\_paris\\_23\\_octobre\\_1954-fr-7d182408-0ff6-432e-b793-0d1065ebe695.html](https://www.cvce.eu/obj/traite_de_bruzelles_modifie_paris_23_octobre_1954-fr-7d182408-0ff6-432e-b793-0d1065ebe695.html).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Nicole Gnesotto, *L’Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?* (Paris: Colin, 2011), 20.

Cold War more as a political and military forum than a full-fledged defence organisation like NATO.<sup>72</sup>

Both the EEC and Britain recognised the issue of reliance. They knew the situation could not last, and in time strove to form their own defence policy, independently from the US. In fact, the EEC provided an excellent opportunity for Britain to gain such independence.<sup>73</sup>

The decision to join the EEC was rational rather than ideological, as well as consensual to some extent<sup>74</sup>, and a natural solution to her decline in a polarised world. Yet, even if Britain wanted to join the EEC, there remained an insuperable obstacle. So long as President de Gaulle held the rein in France, Britain could not be part of the European project.

### **3.3 Reaching out to the EEC: the French Issue of Accession**

While de Gaulle's position toward Britain was not one of principle – he, himself, felt that the EEC needed Britain – he had severe disagreements with his counterparts from across the Channel. There were two main causes for tensions in Anglo-French relations and the General's successive vetoes. One was the expected economic impact of a British entry. The

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<sup>72</sup> That was not the first time Americans hijacked a European defence project. Another promising defence initiative had been the European Defence Community (EDC). The US, who wished that West Germany could be rearmed as a precaution against its neighbour, pressured the French to let them do so. As previously mentioned, the French were wary of a German rearmament after two world wars. Consequently, they proposed to create a defence equivalent to the CECA with the same members which took the form of the EDC. France proposed the Pleven Plan, projecting the formation of a European army directed by a European Defence Minister. It also put the army directly under NATO commandment. Every country signed it on 27 May 1952 in Paris. Yet, what French diplomacy had done, French domestic politics undid. Two years later, the French parliament buried the project alive. To French politicians, rearming Germany and dissolving the French army was bad enough, but a European army commanded by Washington was simply unacceptable. (Gnesotto, *L'Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 18-19)

<sup>73</sup> This subject will be developed in Chapter 2. Britain had a different view from France of what military independence meant, as she remained a staunch proponent of the Atlantic Alliance during the Cold War. It did not mean she was leaving her defence up to the US, but only that she accepted their leadership. See Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 61.

<sup>74</sup> See Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 359-360.



fierce competition it could generate for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) could be devastating to French interests. Agriculture was so important to France that de Gaulle nearly threatened to terminate the EEC unless its members agreed to the CAP.<sup>75</sup> As far as Britain was concerned, French demands were impossible to agree to. De Gaulle wanted Britain without her Commonwealth, on which she was completely dependent.<sup>76</sup> The other main cause for de Gaulle's vetoes is British defence policy and reliance on the US.



Figure 12: French President Charles de Gaulle (credit: Wikipedia)

One particular bone of contention was the role of defence in the EEC. For de Gaulle, it was the *sine qua non* of European unity. Political and economic questions could be smoothly resolved once EEC members agreed on a common defence policy. Furthermore, it also meant having independent nuclear capability, that is to say to stop relying on America.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, Macmillan then Wilson both prioritised the economy. For the first, the greatest stakes in joining the EEC were economic, and certainly not in defence.<sup>78</sup> He was confident that it would not be a problem with de Gaulle, and did not even list it as a potential issue in his pre-negotiation memo.<sup>79</sup> Unsurprisingly, his meeting with de Gaulle at Rambouillet in December 1962, where

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<sup>75</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 69.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>77</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 55.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 53.

they discussed about the Nassau agreement, the MLF and NATO, was a disaster. De Gaulle later recounted the event to the German chancellor of the time Konrad Adenauer. It had made a terrible impression on him, and he went as far as to say that Britain had no role to play in Europe.<sup>80</sup> As for Macmillan, he garnered from the Italian Prime Minister Amintore Fanfani that de Gaulle's opposition to the MLF was a very plausible explanation for de Gaulle's first veto.<sup>81</sup> The British Foreign Office also shared this belief, adding they should use NATO as a wedge between France and the rest of the EEC.<sup>82</sup> In a speech made on 18 March 1966, Wilson agreed with this interpretation:

*“The French refusal at that time was due to the inept handling of Anglo-French relations and the duplicity shown by the Tory leaders concerned. In the meetings with President de Gaulle at Rambouillet they failed to deal straight with him. It was the Nassau Agreement that slammed the door of the Common Market in Britain's face.”*<sup>83</sup>

Of course, and as Stephen Wall wisely remarks, the intention behind this speech was to smear the image of the opposition. Nevertheless, beyond the possible exaggerations, Wilson did believe Rambouillet's handling had been a blunder, and he resolved to take de Gaulle's obsession on defence seriously.<sup>84</sup> Wilson's metaphor of the slammed door conveys the shock produced by de Gaulle's veto in Britain. In reaction to the veto, and a mere month after, de Gaulle reported that Macmillan had backpedalled and contacted him: “[he] came to tell me we were right to build a nuclear force. ‘We have ours’, he told me. ‘It will be necessary

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the EEC Five were in conflict with de Gaulle on defence. Back in the 1960s, they were particularly reluctant to march toward defence independence from NATO and the US. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 43)

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 116.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 169. For all that, Wilson still prioritized the economy even if it meant lowering Britain's military commitments. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 144)

to reach a point of uniting them in a European cadre independent of America’.”<sup>85</sup> Macmillan, however, resigned due to his deteriorating health in October 1963 and left the issue to his successors. In summary, it seems that defence had been the most important reason behind de Gaulle’s first veto in 1963. What of his second veto in 1967?

The second veto was also completely unexpected. After his election, Wilson had been working on a rapprochement between France and Britain. They had been allies against the rest of the EEC on a number of issues. For instance, both were vehemently against reinforcing the EEC’s supranational competences, especially where defence was concerned. They both preferred a decentralised European confederation, as conceptualised by de Gaulle under the name *Europe des Patries* (Europe of Nations). Wilson made an appeal to this vision when he spoke during a British parliament session on 11 February 1966. His vision of European Unity was not one “of imposing federal or common foreign and defence policies on the basis of majority decisions, but to get the widest measure of agreement possible on international questions”.<sup>86</sup> Wilson and de Gaulle exchanged warm letters on this subject, and both expressed their intention to tighten the relations between the two countries. NATO and the reliance on America remained however a difficult subject.<sup>87</sup> In fact, this may have been the root cause for de Gaulle’s second veto.

Macmillan’s failure at Rambouillet should have served as a stern warning for Wilson. Defence policy was a staple to de Gaulle’s vision of Europe and the world. Yet, the problem may not have been so much a lack of understanding on Wilson’s part, as again the impossibility of de Gaulle’s demands. When Wilson asked British officials if there was an incompatibility

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<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 37-38.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 96.

between Britain's obligations to NATO and an EEC membership as de Gaulle saw it, the answer came strongly in the affirmative. Britain would have had to choose between NATO and de Gaulle's version of the EEC. The solution to the situation was clear: it was safer to wait for de Gaulle's departure, when France would be most vulnerable to the EEC 5's pressure.<sup>88</sup>

Of course, it did not stop the British from trying to change the General's mind. Britain resolved to persuade and to isolate France<sup>89</sup>, so as to improve their chances of accessing the EEC while de Gaulle was still in power.<sup>90</sup> While in Versailles on 19 June 1967, Wilson engaged him in a tense, revealing discussion. Wilson threatened to initiate economic retaliation in the case of a veto, but the manoeuvre fell flat. Since the stick yielded no results, Wilson resorted to the carrot. He then extolled the merits of a deep Anglo-French collaboration, of what could be accomplished, if only Britain could join the EEC. He mentioned that he had told US President Lyndon Baines Johnson that Britain were taking up the reins of their military and political destiny. As such, Britain was ready for an independent collaboration with France on military, industrial, research and civil nuclear policies. De Gaulle welcomed his words, but he had yet to be completely convinced. Would Britain be able to contradict the US, to stand apart from the US in all major matters, e.g. defence policy and foreign policy concerning areas like Asia, the Middle East and Europe? Wilson asserted that she would, adding that British industries were increasingly reliant on the US, and so that joining the EEC was urgent. It would be in both their interests if Britain could be accepted into the EEC soon.<sup>91</sup> In the end, de Gaulle was still dubious of Britain's intentions, of whether she was truly wanting to become a European instead of an

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 130-131. As it turned out, they were right. De Gaulle's successor, President Georges Pompidou, was favourable to Britain's entry, and did not focus on European defence as much as de Gaulle did (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 353)

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>90</sup> They took advice from Jean Monnet, who believed they should give up on the defence and political side (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 153). But Monnet's was wrong about de Gaulle, and he did not anticipate the second veto. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 209-210)

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 211-213.

Atlantic island, between America and Europe. His veto was to delay Britain's entry for six more years.

In summary, Britain calculated that she needed to compensate for her global decline and her political isolation. Her military had become marginal in the face of the two superpowers, and she needed to protect herself from the Soviets. The solution she found was to invest herself in military alliances like NATO and to join the EEC. NATO was to provide her with America's might, while the EEC protected Britain's political standing and solved her financial difficulties. Her dreams were dashed by French President de Gaulle. He wanted Britain to throw in her lot with the EEC, especially where defence policy was concerned. To de Gaulle, Britain could not be truly European unless she completely dedicated herself to a European defence policy. Britain, even after he was gone, thus set out to develop her defence co-operation with EEC members. In fact, defence played a major role in Britain's European integration, which is the focus of Chapter 2.



## Chapter Two: British Defence Co-operation and European Integration

*There is no doubt that we cannot continue to afford expensive national developments and production programmes to produce relatively small numbers of equipments. Increasingly we must obtain new weapons systems in collaboration with other nations, to share development costs and achieve more economic production runs.*

(The Lord Trefgarne, Minister for Defence Procurement, in an address to a Bow Group conference on 27 May 1986)<sup>92</sup>

It seems fitting to begin with Draper's own introductory quote. It is, I believe, indicative of the EEC members' mindset by the end of the Cold War. First, because it reveals the growing difficulty of medium-sized countries to keep up with the two superpowers. If Britain and her neighbours wish to stay relevant militarily, they must band together. That is their conclusion, their solution to Europe's decline, derived from over twenty years of collaboration. Second, it also suggests that even a government often depicted as anti-European – such as Margaret Thatcher's – actually found in defence a common cause with other European nations. This chapter therefore focus on the hopes of an EEC made by defence collaboration.

I will first develop in this chapter the role Britain played in the European defence industrial co-operation, from defence production to military research. Then, I will analyse the place of defence in her diplomacy. Finally, I will analyse through case studies how such politico-military collaboration proceeded at times of war.

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<sup>92</sup> In Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 1. The 's' to equipment is not mine.

## 1 Collaboration Between European Defence Industries

National defence industries became increasingly European from the 1970s onward. It was not thanks to political will, as I mention later. It was by large the effort of the national industries themselves which enabled their Europeanisation. While defence industries benefitted from the involvement of international institutions, the EEC's importance was less prominent than NATO. Indeed, although the EEC wished to promote collaboration on procurement policies, it did not know how.<sup>93</sup> Instead, it was NATO which provided the cadre for initial procurement collaboration, when Europe was still completely dependent on the US.<sup>94</sup> NATO structured the first collaborations, and the experience thereof was used to optimise the European production process. Thanks to that, some of the most experienced European nations went from being workshops to designers. Their expertise was recognised and European industries were enlisted even on American projects, such as the multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS). It began its European production in 1987 using an American system, and was designed with the help of Britain, France and the FRG. Italy was initially involved as well but dropped out.<sup>95</sup> As can be surmised, it was a gradual process. This analysis therefore begins with the most basic form of defence industrial collaboration, which is production collaboration.

### 1.1 Military Industrial Production

Production co-operation became easier as new structures were established. The earliest success was the CNAD<sup>96</sup> (Conference of National Armaments Directors), a NATO committee

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>94</sup> De Gaulle had tried to initiate a Franco-German procurement co-operation, but failed as the German refused to form a collaboration outside NATO, and certainly not at the expense of Americano-German relations. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 31)

<sup>95</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*., 9.

<sup>96</sup> In the early 1950s, NATO had already created agencies specially focused on collaborative production and standardisation, the Defence Production Board and Military Agency for Standardisation. Yet, progress had been particularly slow in the 1950s and 1960s, which explains the creation of the CNAD. (Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*., 13-14)



that was specially created in 1966 to smoothen procurement collaboration. It became a forum where high-level delegates could meet informally, ensuring continuity despite changes of governments, and have political, technological and economical discussions for military collaboration. It was hoped that the CNAD would help procurement co-operation be quicker, more cohesive, and would give it a stronger impetus.<sup>97</sup> Evidence suggests it did. By 1970, the CNAD had identified and kick-started four bilateral and trilateral projects.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, thanks to the CNAD, it was no longer necessary to reach a NATO-wide agreement for collaborations; members could then freely develop projects together.<sup>99</sup> In that regard, it helped spark European independence from America when there was yet no properly European armament organisation.<sup>100</sup> The CNAD's priority was improving collaboration between European defence industries, and it was active in doing so. It established in 1968 an experimental conference gathering representatives of defence industries to hear their opinion of why progress in arms collaboration had previously been so slow<sup>101</sup>, and that same year, NATO created more branches under the CNAD to support it. It was not, however, a specifically European structure. In 1976, a decade after the CNAD, the IEPG (Independent European Programme Group) was created to remedy that.<sup>102</sup> It had many of the CNAD's objectives, although it also filled in the holes left by the Treaty of Rome when it came to defence. The European Community relied on external structures to ensure its defence (i.e., NATO for strategy and global defence policy, the WEU for European defence policy, and finally the IEPG for procurement)<sup>103</sup>. As a result, the IEPG focused on making European industrial more competitive in the face of American industries

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 23-24.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 23-24.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 25-26.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>103</sup> Their defined role is of course not that clear-cut, and organisations sometimes compete where they think their prerogatives are.

and on promoting the standardization and interoperability of their equipment.<sup>104</sup> To do so, defence ministers and national armament director met respectively once and twice per year.<sup>105</sup>

NATO also played a role in production collaboration. In fact, the principal advantage of NATO and European collaboration was economic. For one, governments were able to save much of their budgets by sharing the cost of major projects right from the development stage.<sup>106</sup> Collaboration also represented a source of revenue for major British industries, which benefitted from the increased commerce between NATO and Britain, despite the economic crisis in the 1970s.<sup>107</sup> Evidence suggests that the defence sector became increasingly active during the Europeanisation of defence projects. In Britain, the defence procurement programme represented 7% of all British manufacturing programmes in 1977. Then, from 1979 to 1986, the total defence expenditure for procurement rose annually by 40%. It means that by 1987, the procurement budget had been multiplied by twenty. That same year, it was estimated that procurement collaboration with other countries represented 15% of that budget, or 1275 million pounds.<sup>108</sup> This can be linked to the intensification of multilateral collaboration at the time (figure 13). Indeed, European procurement projects became increasingly ambitious, as nations gradually left aside bilateral projects to focus on multilateral projects, like the MRCA project (Multi-Role Combat Aircraft).

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<sup>104</sup> Trevor Taylor, "Procurement in European Defence," *Utilities Policy* 1, no. 2 (January 1991): 144–148.

<sup>105</sup> "Independent European Programme Group," Union of International Associations, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100006524>.

<sup>106</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 12. The cost of defence procurement in Britain had been rising, in real terms, at 10 per cent per year since 1945, therefore much faster than her GDP. (Alistair Finlan, *The Royal Navy in the Falklands Conflict and the Gulf War: Culture and Strategy*, 2004, preface, 5)

<sup>107</sup> Finlan, *The Royal Navy*, 2004, 57.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

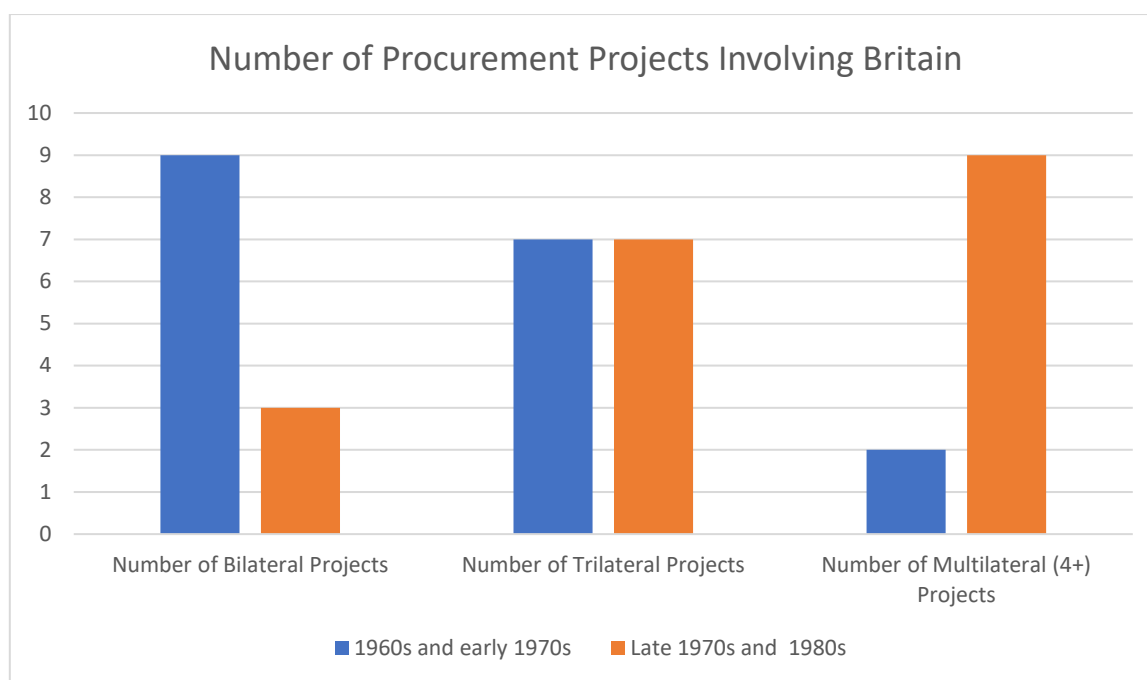


Figure 13: Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 94.

British defence firms found in Europe enthusiastic partners. For instance, firms like Rolls-Royce and de Havilland were respectively specialised in the production of engines and propellers for airships of foreign design.<sup>109</sup> Britain's role was crucial to the development of European projects, which resulted in her European industrial integration. Aviation had been the first area of European military procurement collaboration, since it was easy to divide the production of parts between the different countries. It fostered close inter-company relationships, for example between Rolls-Royce and Turbomeca, a French firm. Some companies were even to merge, such as the French company Aerospatiale and Germany's MBB<sup>110</sup>. Some projects were to grow in size, from being bilateral to trilateral and then multilateral co-operations, like the previously mentioned MRCA project.<sup>111</sup> The enthusiastic involvement of British industrialists in the development of an independent European armament

<sup>109</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 3.

<sup>110</sup> Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 59.

industry was crucial, and contrasted with the government's otherwise disappointing contributions.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, the other main collaborative ventures of the 1970s, which consisted of battle tanks and warships, received no incentives from the British government.<sup>113</sup> It can also be noted that the government limited the collaboration in Europe on land and naval projects as a result of pre-commitments in national projects.<sup>114</sup> Consequently, major firms moved away from public funding to focus on private collaborations, which they saw as their lifeline.<sup>115</sup> Some British firms were splendidly successful, such as British Aerospace, Plessey, Rolls-Royce, Ferranti, and Westland. They earned a laudatory reputation as collaborators and consortia leaders.<sup>116</sup> Examples of early European collaboration in the 1960s were the FH70 howitzer<sup>117</sup>, made jointly by the firms Vickers (British), Rheinmetall (German) and Finmeccanica (Italian), and the Anglo-French helicopters (Lynx and Puma).<sup>118</sup> While Western defence industries were generally in good shape after 1970<sup>119</sup>, Britain's had been profiting the most from the situation. Indeed, her industry had grown stronger than her rivals by the end of the Cold War. In 1987, Britain displaced France and even the USSR in arms exports, granting her the second place behind the US.<sup>120</sup> European integration therefore proved to be greatly beneficial to Britain's defence industry, and conversely, British defence industries contributed to Britain's integration.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>117</sup> A howitzer is a long-range artillery gun.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 27. The Lynx was designed by Westland and Rolls-Royce, while Sud Aviation and Aérospatiale did the Puma. However, the production was to be shared. It was agreed that 70% was to be produced by Britain (Westland) and 30% by France (Aérospatiale). It was a fruitful venture, as over 2500 units were manufactured between 1968 and 1987. (Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 80)

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 65.



Figure 14: a Puma Helicopter (left, credit: Wikipedia) and Lynx Helicopters (right, credit: Rotor & Wing International)

Perhaps the crowning achievement of European defence industries was in 1986 with the Single European Act. It institutionalised industrial procurement policy in the EEC by including the armament industries in the decision-making process, and guaranteeing that members would maintain their technological and industrial capability for the sake of European security.<sup>121</sup> So, major British manufacturers flourished financially thanks to the increased European collaboration, the development of which they greatly contributed. This good fortune was not just for basic production projects, but also for complex, innovative ventures.

## 1.2 Military Research

First, there is a clear link between military manufacturing and military research. Major manufacturers are usually also more or less specialised designers in order to gain a competitive advantage on the defence market. How did a complete production process look like?<sup>122</sup> First, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) sent a list of requirements (equipment and technology they would like to see developed) to local manufacturers; in order to obtain the order, defence firms

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> See also Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 6-7.

competed on the designs. Some firms were very specialised, like Rolls-Royce, and produced only specific parts; for example, the lynx helicopter was made jointly by Rolls-Royce, who made the engine, while Westland built the rest. Then, when the manufacturers were selected, they created prototypes, tested them, and had them approved for operational service. That last phase took many years: the lynx's manufacturers were selected in 1967, and its virgin flight occurred four years later (1971), while its introduction into the military only took place in 1977; more than ten years had passed between its conception and its introduction. Time is sensitive in military research, and the fear of technological obsolescence is great enough to make countries hesitate when it comes to complex international collaborations.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, the vitality of a nation's military and research may depend on such collaborations. Wilson had thought so, when he deemed it necessary to join the EEC, especially in order to share the cost of expensive R&D projects.<sup>124</sup> Britain was also eager to partner with the EEC on civil technology<sup>125</sup> and science research<sup>126</sup>. Yet, it was a tumultuous co-operation fraught with disappointments<sup>127</sup>, which contrasts with the more successful military research collaborations.

Britain did not however always find collaborators. For example, she had solicited France and the FRG for thirty years in vain, from the 1950s to the 1970s, to co-develop main battle tanks (MBT). It was with great disappointment that Wilson's government, during his second premiership, gave up on MBT collaboration, and went to design the 1980s model on their own. It led to the production of the Chieftain 900. It was built by the public manufacturer Royal

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>124</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 235.

<sup>125</sup> For example, Prime Minister James Callaghan thought that the creation of the Joint European Torus (JET) nuclear fusion programme was an opportunity to institutionally integrate Britain in Europe, as there had yet to be a European institution or agency based in the UK. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Volume III, 43)

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 288.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 295, 298.

Ordnance Factory Leeds exclusively for the sake of export to cover the cost of development. It was a bitter experience for Britain. The Chieftain 900 was a complete disaster in terms of sales: it attracted no buyers in the end, and the project was scrapped in 1985.<sup>128</sup> Beside a possible lack of competitiveness, the reason for the tank's unpopularity may have been structural. The demand for MBTs decreased after the Vietnam war, when the versatility of helicopters outcompeted some of MBTs tactical roles. As a result, there was little incentive for an MBT collaboration. In fact, the first successful European MBT project, the Leopard 3, began only decades later, in the 2010s.<sup>129</sup>

In contrast, the development of helicopters was pursued much more enthusiastically. Helicopters revealed themselves versatile, unlike MBTs. In fact, co-operation began as soon as Britain saw France developing helicopters of different roles. In the beginning of the 1960s, the French were doing research on a lighter type of helicopters for observation and reconnaissance, the SA340. By 1963, Westland had joined hands with Sud Aviation (soon to be Aerospatiale). Beyond military use, helicopters are also propitious for civil roles, such as natural disaster relief.<sup>130</sup> There was thus a wider market for them in Europe. Additionally, the research and manufacture of parts could easily be divided by countries. Therefore, helicopters were very much suited for European collaboration.<sup>131</sup> As mentioned previously, the Anglo-French collaboration on helicopters had been mostly of a manufacturing nature; there was no co-operative research involved. Each country was supposed to design and produce the parts they designed and then assemble the aircraft. That had been the first step of a more European approach, and one without the need of a supranational bureaucracy.<sup>132</sup> Indeed, it led a decade

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 74-77.

<sup>129</sup> See John Pike, "Leopard 3," Global Securities, accessed May 28, 2021, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/leopard3.htm>. As far as I am aware, there is not any earlier successful European MBT collaboration.

<sup>130</sup> For example, Britain deployed her Pumas during the *Mexico City earthquake in 1985 and the Jamaican floods in 1986*. (Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 80)

<sup>131</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 79.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 81

later to a joint declaration made in 1978 by Italy, France, Germany and Britain, which stated their intention to build together the next generation of helicopters. The project encountered many problems and delays, however.<sup>133</sup> The name of the model was later called the Eurocopter Tiger. With such a name, there can be no doubt of the political symbolism behind the project, suggesting an interest for defence integration, if only in procurement programmes.<sup>134</sup> The many European collaborations on helicopters illustrate the increasing importance of defence in European integration efforts. Indeed, other European helicopter projects include the NH90 ASW in 1986 (France, Italy, Spain and Netherlands)<sup>135</sup>, or the Tonal (Britain, Italy, Spain, Netherlands)<sup>136</sup>.

While these collaborative ventures looked promising, they also revealed Britain's unreliable character as a partner. Indeed, in the end Britain left both projects. The NH90 project continued without Britain, but the Tonal as well as the Joint European Helicopter Company died in their infancy in 1990. These projects were political failures for the British government. They indicated reluctance and sent mixed signals on her determination to be part of the European Project.<sup>137</sup> In Britain's defence, she was not the only one to leave the Tonal project, as the Netherlands also withdrew from it. Also, politics aside, it was not uncommon for a

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<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, 82. The prototype's maiden flight was in 1991, but achieved operational readiness only in 2008.

<sup>134</sup> While I have read many criticisms against the lack of political will in support to defence collaboration, there exists counter-examples where political will did make the difference. For instance, Wilson had engaged talks with France in the late 1960s to develop together missile and aircraft technology (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 211-213), which bore fruit a decade later. Indeed, a stark contrast was between the collaborative effort applied to aviation and missiles, and that of armoured fighting vehicles. (Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 60)

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 83. The joint European Helicopter Tonal was also the opportunity to test closer associations between the participating nations' firms through the new Joint European Helicopter Company.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.



country to choose to develop its own models or to import better ones (as Britain and the Netherlands did<sup>138</sup>).<sup>139</sup>

Despite false starts, these European ventures had been successful commercially. From the 1970s, European helicopters started replacing American models in Western Europe. By the end of the 1980s, there were in total about 3,500 Western European military helicopters and 10,000 American ones. Europe had produced 1,100 helicopters between 1974 and 1984, and European industries were expected to build up to 7 times as much in the 1990s.<sup>140</sup> In addition, helicopters enabled long-term European collaboration, like the Agusta A129 Mangusta. It was the first attack helicopter designed and produced completely in Europe<sup>141</sup>, and it is still being produced by the Anglo-Italian AgustaWestland.<sup>142</sup>

All in all, great progress in industrial collaboration had been made during the Cold War, although there was still much to be achieved. This progress had been thanks to the firms themselves, rather than the governments. While procurement had not been their priority, defence policy played a major role in European diplomacy.

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<sup>138</sup> Britain and the Netherlands important the American model AH-64 Apache. Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was a willing European in defence policy, yet she favoured above all the Atlantic alliance. This will be developed in the next part.

<sup>139</sup> The subject can be perplexing. The rising cost of developing defence technology and the proportional decrease of defence budgets in real terms did not always convince nations to join hands. In theory, in a bilateral collaboration, as much as 35% could be saved on R&D and 10% on production costs. (quoted in Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*., 106) It is however only in theory, and in practice a multilateral project can be more costly than if done alone. Of course, the potentially disastrous results of unilateral projects (such as the Chieftain 900) had to be kept in mind. Which is why the most practical solution for the Minister of Defence could be simply to buy existing models.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>141</sup> “Agusta A129 Mangusta.” Military Wiki. Accessed 1 June 2021.

[https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Agusta\\_A129\\_Mangusta](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Agusta_A129_Mangusta).

<sup>142</sup> Agusta and Westland merged in 2000, and then became a subsidiary of the multinational Italian company Leonardo in 2015. Other European helicopter companies would soon emerge after the end of the cold war, such as the Franco-German Eurocopter in 1992.

## 2 Diplomacy and European Defence

The Cold War saw a rapprochement between Britain and EEC members thanks to the coordination of defence policy. Britain was needed in the EEC as much as she wanted to show her commitment. Yet her principal interlocutors had been France and Germany, whose collaboration remained so tightly knit that Britain felt left out. While Anglo-European relations were not always smooth, Britain's significant contribution to European defence facilitated her integration in the European community. In fact, the progress of European defence integration was great enough that it allowed a certain degree of independence from the US.

### 2.1 Defence Agreements and Rapprochement

As pointed out previously, French and British industries were particularly eager partners. Politics would make collaboration more complex on the state level. Defence policy had been particularly problematic in the 1960s, and it remained so afterward to a certain extent.

Leaders from both countries had tried to establish bilateral defence co-operation throughout the Cold War. For example, right before the Nassau agreement, de Gaulle expressed to Macmillan his desire for France and Britain to collaborate on nuclear capability.<sup>143</sup> Although Macmillan did not take the offer, he was supportive of France building their own nuclear arsenal. It would be necessary, in his eyes, that Britain and France eventually united their nuclear strength to ensure European independence.<sup>144</sup>

However, Macmillan's successor did not seem to share that view. While there was a common ground between Wilson and de Gaulle, there was a fundamental rift between them on

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<sup>143</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Vol. II*, 37. The French had hoped Britain could conceive their defence policy outside NATO and America's influence.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 37-38.

the West's reliance on America. Wilson, like MacMillan, could conceive Britain's European integration through closer defence arrangements, but that was a matter for the future.<sup>145</sup> How soon depended on de Gaulle. Britain was isolated at the time and she could contribute much to European safety. As long as de Gaulle let them enter the EEC, Wilson argued, military co-operation could be bolstered to the next level. Britain had wanted to pressure the French into accepting her into the EEC, but two could play that game.

The French government moved forward with their policy of reconciliation with Germany. In 1965, Chancellor Ludwig Erhard and de Gaulle publicly declared they were intensifying Franco-German collaboration, and promised a greater extent of coordination in foreign policy with the EEC, without Britain. That was a hard pill to swallow. Britain had wanted to be part of the decision-making. Not willing to be left out, Britain insisted on at least being consulted.<sup>146</sup> Wilson wanted in, and to play an active role in the European Community. On the other hand, he was also worried it might harm British defence interests at NATO.<sup>147</sup> As previously mentioned, this hesitation proved fatal in his dealings with de Gaulle, leading to a veto.

Up until the veto, Wilson had endeavoured to warm up Anglo-French relations. He put an emphasis on their shared interests and the advantages of having Britain in the EEC. For instance, de Gaulle and Wilson both disapproved of supranationalism and the relinquishment of sovereignty in defence, even in the form of majority voting. Britain could be an ally to France in the EEC against the other five members. In a letter, de Gaulle acknowledged this convergence of interests, and called for closer collaboration in concrete matters, although repeating that it

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 118.

had to be without NATO. Wilson's reply was encouraging, and he expected Anglo-French relations to be friendlier.<sup>148</sup> Wilson's prediction turned out to be correct, to some extent.

Later that year, on 12 July 1965, Alain Peyrefitte, the General's spokesman, declared publicly that:

*"[The] two great nations, France and Britain, are fated . . . to develop that which unites them more than that which separates them, to draw progressively closer to each other, and together to build a future based on exchanges, cooperation and friendship."*<sup>149</sup>

The speech marked the rapprochement between the two countries. Its tone may seem overly cautious and diplomatic, insisting that the process would take time. However, the newspaper *Le Monde* took Peyrefitte's reserve in stride, and insisted on the speech's significance:

*"In all this tumult [the British EEC membership crisis] at the bedside of Europe, remarks which, in other circumstances might appear conventional, acquire a new significance. Observers have therefore noted with more than usual care the allusion made in Calais on Sunday by M. Peyrefitte to the ever closer interconnection of French and British Interests".*<sup>150</sup>

Therefore, put in its context, this speech was as friendly as it could get. In Britain, the perspective of a rapprochement was taken with similar enthusiasm. Edward Heath, freshly elected leader of the opposition, went to Paris to deliver a speech to promote British accession. He called for a compromise between Britain and France on agriculture, to which de Gaulle

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 96

<sup>149</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 104.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

responded very positively, although still prudently.<sup>151</sup> Additionally, in the beginning of 1966, the correspondence between de Gaulle and Wilson was at its warmest. Deceitfully so, perhaps. While a tight collaboration was welcomed by both leaders, there was a dissymmetry in its interpretation. First, there was a contrast between Wilson's enthusiastic attitude and the French. While the French trod carefully, Wilson was excessively lauding their relationship. In one letter, he wrote:

*"I much appreciate the generous remarks which you make about Great Britain in your letter. You who know this country so well will fully understand that it is the overwhelming desire of the British people, animated as they are by a spirit of respect and affection for France and her achievements, to have the closest possible relations with their French neighbours."*<sup>152</sup>

There is little doubt that Wilson wanted to mollify de Gaulle on Britain's accession. His fawning tone was an attempt to make the general empathetic ("you who know this country so well") and to establish more intimate relations between the two countries, while glossing over possible British anti-Europeanism ("*it is the overwhelming desire of the British people*"). If Wilson believed that he had convinced de Gaulle to let Britain in<sup>153</sup>, the general reportedly declared he did not budge from his 1963 position, and was certainly not going to do so for the sake of Anglo-French friendship. The British were deluded if they thought otherwise.<sup>154</sup> The new German Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger, favourable to the British entry, warned Britain that they should handle de Gaulle carefully and patiently.<sup>155</sup> It went unheeded. Then, on 23 October 1967, when it became clear that France was about to veto their entry, Wilson grew

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 108.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 115

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p. 169. Wilson had thought that he had avoided MacMillan's own mistake on defence policy, and that he had placated de Gaulle.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 115

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 238

more desperate in his tactics and met Kiesinger in the presence of reporters. While said in good humour, he alluded to the possibility that Germany could be abandoned to the Soviets if it did not align itself with Britain and the US instead of France.<sup>156</sup> The chancellor, for all the submissiveness he had shown during the meeting, retorted he had no angle to convince de Gaulle, and was powerless to change his mind.<sup>157</sup> After the veto, the British adopted a more ambiguous stance toward France, alternating between appeasement and provocations.<sup>158</sup>

While the prospect of politico-military collaboration in the 1960s with France had looked bleak, Britain also looked for co-operation in defence policy and research with other EEC members.<sup>159</sup> The task was much easier than with France. The EEC 5 were already in favour of British accession, and even more so than Britain, they relied on NATO for protection. As a result, their defence policy was not incompatible with Britain's. Disagreements did arise on the subject of a common European defence policy, and the issue of a supranational defence. However, neither side was in a hurry, and Britain had correctly predicted that progress would be slow and irregular.<sup>160</sup> An edifying example is the Fouchet Plan. First proposed in 1961 by France, it was an attempt to establish a political union centred around defence and foreign policy coordination, but which also proposed technological and cultural co-operation. It was rejected by the EEC 5 because the proposed government would not have been supranational enough, and it would have been independent from the NATO framework. It was however an opportunity for Britain. It was a plan which not only aligned with her interests, but could also remedy Anglo-French relations. That was why Wilson, once elected, repeatedly tried to revive it after the

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 239-240

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 240-241

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 236-237.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. 234. Furthermore, while the path to the EEC was blocked, she took the less satisfying alternative known as the WEU to deepen her European integration. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 293)

<sup>160</sup> The status quo was still uncomfortable for Britain, and she wished the EEC Five took more initiatives. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 296)

second veto. British Ambassador to France Christopher Soames wrote that Britain could have been the key to the whole project. He believed that if the initiative came from Britain, then the French would rally to save their plan, and that the rest of Europe would follow.<sup>161</sup> It had been plausible. Right until the end, de Gaulle had been antagonising the other EEC members, save for Germany, because of his tendency to strong-arm them during negotiations. As a result, said members saw in Britain a promising alternative to French leadership. Defence was in that regard an opportunity for Britain to take the lead of Europe. For that reason, Britain began to design her own plan, using the Fouchet Plan as a guide, and tried to isolate France from the EEC.<sup>5</sup> It ultimately failed. Germany's relationship with France was too strong.<sup>162</sup> Wilson's only recourse was to keep the Fouchet Plan and negotiate its terms, which was essentially going back to square one. Another opportunity arose when Italy unofficially prodded Britain on an alternative. Italy was interested in setting up a military and political commission to take care of EEC foreign policy and defence. Italy needed Britain's backing to force Germany into taking a position. While Britain evaded the issue of supranationalism, she kept the proposal ready for an opportune moment, which never came.<sup>163</sup> It is noteworthy that, despite ending in failure, these attempts revealed in the British government an increasingly open stance on supranationalism.<sup>164</sup> In short, despite its promises, defence failed to be the key to Britain's political integration into the EEC in the 1960s. How did that change with de Gaulle's departure?

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 316-317.

<sup>162</sup> In a letter to PM Callaghan, an ambassador remarked bitterly:

*"The relationship between [France and Germany], going back to the de Gaulle/Adenauer treaty in 1963, had become so close and was so obviously in the interests of both countries that the French could get away with something approaching murder and still not affect the fundamentals of their relationship with Germany. But the Anglo-German relationship was a more delicate plant, despite the fact that in so many basic ways, especially over defence and relations with the Americans, Britain and Germany saw much more eye to eye than did the Germans and the French."* (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Volume III, 27)

These concerns continued in the 1980s. (ibid, 179)

<sup>163</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. III, 318-319. See also the Soames affair, which was a resounding scandal that damaged Anglo-French relations. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. III, 320-327)

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

At first, Britain's plight continued despite the arrival of de Gaulle's successor, George Pompidou. Elected on 20 June 1969, the French President had a government of pro-Europeans, although it did not necessarily mean they would go easier on Britain.<sup>165</sup> The turning point came with the election of Edward Heath, who was also a fervent European, in 1970. The following year, their defence ministers met to discuss military co-operation. While Britain was still dependent on the US, France might still be willing to form a military nuclear collaboration. Nixon had been notified and welcomed the initiative. He gave Heath as much leeway as he could, in the hope it would make it easier to reach an agreement.<sup>166</sup> However, in 1972, Pompidou gave him the cold shoulder when Heath personally made the offer. The French President did not promise anything more than talks about nuclear weapons research collaboration. I have found two explanations for this change of heart. First, when Britain joined the EEC, there was eventually to be a single defence policy for the EEC. France and other EEC members were afraid of the USSR's reaction to the possibility of Germany being included in any nuclear co-operation. Second, France had omitted to say that she had already started nuclear co-operation with the US. She had also managed to reach complete nuclear autonomy, from collecting the raw materials to manufacturing. The price for said autonomy had been steep, and it would have been disadvantageous to share the benefits then.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 333.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 379-380.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 433-434.





Figure 15: French President George Pompidou (credit: Wikipedia)

Additionally, it is noteworthy that Pompidou's stance on defence co-operation was much stricter in the context of British entry. Soames warned Heath in a letter of April 1971 that he must leave no doubt in Pompidou's presence that Britain was seeking closer political and defence co-operation in the EEC, and strove for an independent *Europe des Patries*.<sup>168</sup> Pompidou remained wary despite those efforts and even when he had consented to let Britain enter the EEC. He had warned that France was going to stay vigilant, expecting hardships due to British traditions and her "special commitments in certain fields, as in defence"<sup>169</sup>. Pompidou's wariness may have been excessive. Heath's cabinet had already been seeking European defence integration, as his cabinet confirmed in May 1972 that their EEC objectives should be to encourage a common political and defence policy.<sup>170</sup> He created communities the purpose of which was to explore the European integration of defence procurement, as well as to improve the collaboration between the government and the defence industries.<sup>171</sup> The Europeanisation of defence policy stalled in the 1970s on the state level, perhaps due to the economic crisis.

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 394.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. III, 406-407.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 437.

<sup>171</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 32.

Conversely, during the 1980s arms race, defence policy reappeared in the rhetoric of European leaders. Even PM Margaret Thatcher, elected in 1979 and not remembered for her Europhilia, believed defence policy was a propitious area for European integration.

*“NATO and the Western European Union have long recognised where the problems of Europe's defence lie, and have pointed out the solutions. [...] It is not a problem of drafting. It is something at once simpler and more profound: it is a question of **political will and political courage**, of convincing people in all our countries that **we cannot rely for ever on others for our defence**, but that each member of the Alliance must shoulder a fair share of the burden.*

*[...] We should develop the WEU, not as an alternative to NATO, but as a means of strengthening Europe's contribution to the common defence of the West.*

*Above all, at a time of change and uncertainty in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, we must preserve Europe's unity and resolve so that whatever may happen, our defence is sure. [...] But let us never forget that our way of life, our vision and all we hope to achieve, is secured not by the rightness of our cause but by the strength of our defence. On this, we must never falter, never fail.”*<sup>172</sup>

This extract from the Bruges Speech in 1988 highlights Thatcher's ambiguous position on European defence. On the one hand, she underscores the multifaceted role of defence in Europe. She describes defence as not only a fertile ground for “Europe's unity”, but she also insists it is the way to protect the European “way of life” and their “vision” for the future. She reminds her counterparts that the stakes were too high for any hesitation (“on this we must never falter, never fail”). On the other hand, like her predecessors, she clearly valued NATO and the

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<sup>172</sup> Extract from The Bruges Speech, 1988, taken from “Speech to the College of Europe (‘The Bruges Speech’),” Margaret Thatcher Foundation, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332>. Emphases are mine.

American umbrella. While she hoped that Europe bolstered its military and its coordination, she did not wish to replace NATO with a European defence community. That is to say, in her view, Europe was not to become militarily independent from the US. This had been a sore point in Anglo-French relations while President D'Estaing was in power. In the early 1980s, France and Germany wanted to make Europe stand apart from the US on defence, and the French government saw in the British too much willingness to stand on the side of the US.<sup>173</sup> President D'Estaing's successor, the socialist president François Mitterrand, was an easier interlocutor. He had a more positive opinion of NATO than his predecessors, and he repeatedly declared himself loyal to the alliance.<sup>174</sup> In fact, he welcomed Britain as a European partner and enthusiastically supported her, especially in time of need.<sup>175</sup>



Figure 16: French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (left, credit: Elysee.fr) and British (Conservative) Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (right, credit: CBC News)

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<sup>173</sup> Volume 2, p. 182-183.

<sup>174</sup> Raflik Jenny, « François Mitterrand et l'Otan », *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, 2011/1-2 (N° 101-102), p. 35-38. DOI : 10.3917/mate.101.0009. URL : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-materiaux-pour-l-histoire-de-notre-temps-2011-1-page-35.htm>.

<sup>175</sup> This can be seen during the Falkland War, which I will study in part 3.2.

During the Cold War, defence was thus significant in the diplomacy and the European integration of the British government. They had continued interests in developing defence co-operation with the EEC, and most particularly France. If defence played a large role in EEC diplomacy, what was Britain's defence contribution?

## 2.2 British Defence Contribution to the EEC

Britain shared responsibility for the defence of Berlin, and she did not hesitate to use the presence of her army there – called the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) – in her diplomacy. The number of British troops was not negligible. In May 1984, Thatcher reminded German Chancellor Helmut Kohl that she had 65,000 troops defending Europe's frontline.<sup>176</sup> British forces in Germany counted four armoured divisions, at least one artillery division, and some more in the form of infantry corps, RAF units and engineer corps.<sup>177</sup> It meant that about 20% of all British military personnel was in Germany at the time. It also represented over 10% of Germany's own defence forces, which numbered less than 600,000.<sup>178</sup> On the other hand, she was not Germany's only bulwark, and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt seemed to value France's military protection even more<sup>179</sup>, despite the presence of French forces in Germany being 40% inferior on its soil.<sup>180</sup> Indeed, France only had 47,500 soldiers in Germany, or nearly 10% of France's total forces. Britain's effort to station a large portion of her army – greater in both proportion and number – in Germany demonstrated her commitment to Europe's defence. Of

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<sup>176</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 277.

<sup>177</sup> Mark Davies, *British Orders of Battle & TO&Es 1980-1989*, Battlefront: First Echelon, n.d., 3-4.

<sup>178</sup> "Germany May Increase Troop Numbers to 203,000 by 2025," Deutsche Welle, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-may-increase-troop-numbers-to-203000-by-2025/a-46448111>.

<sup>179</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 216. A likely explanation, besides that of a bias induced by the intimate Franco-German relations, could be that in the outbreak of a war, French reinforcements would have been able to arrive more quickly than Britain's, since France did not need the intervention of a navy to deploy her troops.

<sup>180</sup> "Annexe Au Procès-Verbal De La Séance Du 19 Novembre 1998.," Sénat, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://www.senat.fr/rap/a98-0696/a98-06960.html>.

course, this was also an opportunity that Thatcher could exploit in her diplomacy. For her first meeting with Kohl, she was advised to “rub in the unique contribution made by Britain to the defence of Europe”.<sup>181</sup> Britain’s military presence in Germany was also an occasion to show the brilliance of British tradition. Queen Elizabeth demonstrated that through her Silver Jubilee review on 7 July 1977 in Sennelager. It was a success, and Sir John Oliver Wright, British ambassador to West Germany at the time, commented that “it demonstrated that there were still some things we did supremely well, provided we tried.”<sup>182</sup> Her troops remained in Germany even after the collapse of the USSR, unlike France. While diminished by the Option for Change policy, British troops became perfect guests and a window into Britishness, until their final departure in February 2020.<sup>183</sup>

In conclusion, Britain’s concrete contribution to the EEC’s defence was large, especially in proportion. It also served a minor diplomatic role<sup>184</sup> and helped Britain become closer to her allies. For all that defence integration, can it be said that Europe had become more independent from the US?

## **2.3 Toward Independence from America?**

The French governments, and especially de Gaulle, had tried to make Europe a politically separate third power in the 1960s and 1970s. Their British counterparts, while not always reliable as previously seen, agreed to some extent. Macmillan had concurred with de Gaulle that “it [would] be necessary to reach a point of uniting [their nuclear forces] in a

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<sup>181</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 236.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 92. Tense changed to fit the sentence.

<sup>183</sup> See “British Army Hands Back Last Headquarters in Germany,” *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, 22 February 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/22/british-army-hands-back-last-headquarters-germany>; Chris Summers, “From Occupiers and Protectors to Guests,” *BBC News* (BBC, 20 July 2004), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3842031.stm>.

<sup>184</sup> This diplomatic role of the army became larger later; see Chapter 3

European cadre independent of America”<sup>185</sup>. Wilson then fulfilled Macmillan’s nuclear independence objective<sup>186</sup>, and added industrial independence to his list of priorities.<sup>187</sup> As far as the defence industry was concerned, Wilson had been pursuing independence in missile and aircraft development.<sup>188</sup> Heath’s premiership was in continuity with his predecessors’, and managed to rally the defence industry to his government.

There had been years of tension between British governments and the defence industry. It stemmed from an issue that Britain had been trying to solve since the 1957 Defence White Paper, which was the division of responsibility in military procurement.<sup>189</sup> Indeed, the shared responsibility for defence procurement between ministries caused friction. For example, in 1957, the Ministry of Supply catered for land and aviation procurement, the navy being set apart. Then, in 1959, when the Army took control of its procurement, the responsibility for that of military aircraft was yielded to the Ministry of Aviation. It did not help that Wilson’s government had alienated the defence industry by cancelling major defence orders. Heath was the first to address the problem, and made it one of his government’s objectives to improve their relationship.<sup>190</sup> To do so, Heath created the Procurement Executive in 1971, and appointed an industrialist at its head.<sup>191</sup> It ensured the procurement of all three branches of the military, and served as an intermediary between the industry and the Ministry of Defence. Admittedly, although the relations between the government and the industry had improved by the 1980s, they failed to achieve a satisfactory level of collaboration.<sup>192</sup> This politico-industrial co-

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<sup>185</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 37-38.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 164.

<sup>187</sup> Wilson declared “One of our main purposes is to become less dependent on American industry as a by-product of developing European industry.” (quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 236) It is an example of Wilson as he sought European integration for the advantages it offered. It was in that regard a partial solution to Britain’s industrial decline. As such, he was not a fervent Europeanist, he pursued European integration for practical reasons rather than ideological ones.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 211-213.

<sup>189</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 56.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 31-32

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 32.

operation, similarly to British industrial development, had been an area in which Britain was late in comparison to France or the US. Both had become closer with their respective defence industries before 1970.<sup>193</sup> This lack of government coordination may have impaired Britain's ability to collaborate on the European level, as suggested by Britain's lateness in European equipment collaboration in the 1970s.<sup>194</sup>

Nevertheless, some of Britain's initiatives bore fruit, facilitating her industrial collaboration with other EEC members in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>195</sup> Indirectly, this fostered European independence as it would reduce the industry's involvement in the CNAD. Its British chairman had been succeeded by Americans since 1968, and the CNAD had remained henceforth under American control.<sup>196</sup> Ironically, the limited political will of governments on European industrial collaboration permitted to deflect some of the US' direct institutional influence. National industries only had to follow their economic instinct to fight off American competition. This collaboration on the European level had been all the more important as it permitted frailer national defence industries to gain independence from America. For instance, Italy marked their intention to be independent from America through its participation in the MRCA project.<sup>197</sup>

There were, however, some worries about the incompatibility between international competition and national defence capability (which could be weakened if national firms were uncompetitive). In other words, what happened if a national defence industry was uncompetitive? Would the nation be able to keep their defence capability, or would it put the

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 58. Germany had reached a similar level of organisation by 1960 through the Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung (BWB).

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>195</sup> I mentioned some of them in Part 1, from Anglo-French collaborations on aircrafts (such as the Puma and Lynx helicopters), vehicles and missiles, to European projects such as the MRCA.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 25-26.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 60.

country in danger? There had been three possible solutions to that issue. One was the removal of obstacles in European industrial co-operation. That is to say, to make competitiveness irrelevant on the European level, and make one seamless pool of defence industries. There had been little progress on that front by the end of the Cold War. The second option was to establish national comparative advantages, with government-sponsored specialisations of the national defence industry. Coordinated on the European level, each country would have their own specialty to build what they built best. The third was to create a neo-liberalist paradise, with the formation of European consortia, industrial groups, which would compete.<sup>198</sup> European firms chose the last option, and created consortia, from which stood out British firms like British Aerospace, Plessey, Rolls-Royce, Ferranti, and Westland as collaborators and leaders.<sup>199</sup>

It therefore appears that European defence firms had been a positive and active force of European integration. They collaborated in order to fight off American competition, and brought the Community together for multilateral procurement projects. Diplomatically speaking, European defence integration had been fraught with difficulties, and political will had been lacking during peacetime. In contrast, wartime provided an incentive to European leaders to stand together as one.

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. 66



### 3 Wartime Co-operation and Foreign Policy Coordination

Western Europe has known no war on its territory since the Second World War. It maintained its military forces preventively, out of suspicion toward the Soviets. Even the Atlantic Alliance could not force them to deploy their military to defend allies.<sup>200</sup> Consequently, only a political or strategic incentive could bring the European Community to fight another's war. As it turned out, the spread of communism was not enough to move them. Instead, it was the cultivated sentiment of solidarity and responsibility which was to unite their will to fight together. Indeed, by the end of the Cold War, European foreign policy meliorated from a loose agreement to full solidarity, and active co-operation on the frontlines. To illustrate this, I will analyse the level of European foreign policy and military coordination during the Vietnam War, the Falkland War, and the Gulf War.

#### 3.1 The Vietnam War: A Modest Example of Coordination

The Vietnam war lasted for twenty years, from 1955 to 1975, and involved the leader of the Western bloc (the US) and Vietnam, a former French colony which became embroiled in a civil war. It was a fight between the liberal South Vietnam, supported by the US and their allies, and the communist North Vietnam, supported by China and the USSR. That being said, both blocs trod carefully, fearing an escalation on a global scale. For that reason, Europe and the USSR pushed for an early peace – and, ironically, more enthusiastically so than the belligerents themselves.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Article 5 of NATO serves to unify the allies against a common foe, and does not specify the aid to be delivered.

<sup>201</sup> Lawrence, *The Vietnam War*, 74.

The Vietnam War had been an opportunity for Europe to show their independence from America. By shifting their focus away from Europe, the US found their influence there receding, and Britain deliberately used the occasion to bolster their candidacy to the EEC.<sup>202</sup> Yet, Britain and France were also worried that America was not only be trapped in Vietnam, but also forgot her commitments to Europe. As a result, Europeans pushed for a peaceful settlement while providing little more than rhetorical support.<sup>203</sup> Their interests peaked on 29 August 1963, at a time of military escalations initiated by Kennedy, when de Gaulle publicly advocated for the neutralisation of Vietnam. He wanted to reunify Vietnam under a coalition government which was to prevent a communist or Western domination. Proponents of this plan believed that, despite the possibility of a communist takeover, it was preferable to end the war early before any further violent escalation.<sup>204</sup> Additionally, European governments rejected America's appeals to get involved in the war and called for her withdrawal.<sup>205</sup> It was in vain, as Kennedy's successor, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, was resolved to make South Vietnam victorious. To that end, he decided to deepen America's military involvement.<sup>206</sup> The US' escalations and their repeated failures to achieve a peaceful settlement made their allies, but not only, increasingly sceptical of their intentions.<sup>207</sup> In return, those were the most trying times for trans-Atlantic relations. One occasion illustrates particularly well the tension produced by the war. In

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<sup>202</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 24, 28.

<sup>203</sup> Van Miezzen Zyl, *The Vietnam War: the Definitive Illustrated History*, First American Edition (London: DK, Dorling Kindersley, 2017), 118; Sylvia Ellis however mentions that Britain had also given at some point medical, financial and intelligence assistance. According to her, between 1964 and 1970, Britain provided £1,2M in aid to the US although her backing ended after the US Operation Rolling Thunder. The sustained bombing and napalm strikes, which began in 1965, unleashed waves of domestic criticism against the British government, especially for supporting the operation at the UN. With the 1966 election and a third of his party's financial support in the balance, PM Wilson decided to dissociate Britain from future US military interventions. (Sylvia A. Ellis, "Promoting Solidarity at Home and Abroad: The Goals and Tactics of the Anti-Vietnam War Movement in Britain." *European Review of History: Revue Européenne Dhistoire* 21, no. 4 (2014): 560-564)

<sup>204</sup> While this plan failed like most others, it did bring the US to the negotiation table. See Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History*, 1. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), 74-75.

<sup>205</sup> The US attempted on several occasions to have its most powerful European allies (France, Britain and Italy) to commit troops, in vain. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 102) European countries were facing domestic pressure to stay out of the war. (Ibid, 102, 87-88)

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 79-80.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 87-88, 102.

a meeting in Bonn on 25 April 1967, Johnson lashed out at Wilson for pulling out Britain's troops from South East Asia when her main allies (i.e., the US, Australia and New Zealand) were stuck fighting Communism in Vietnam. Johnson's anger peaked when Wilson showed reluctance in making a move without consulting his European allies.<sup>208</sup> His successor, Richard Nixon, was no less angered by Europe's pacifist diplomacy. In 1973, he resumed the bombing of North Vietnam after another round of negotiations broke down. This elicited condemnation from his European allies, such as France and Germany. He was said to be so furious that he threatened to cancel his European tour, and restricted the diplomatic exchanges between their ambassadors in Washington. However, Britain had chosen not to condemn the US, for which Nixon was very grateful.<sup>209</sup> Regardless of that tension, Europe, and most particularly France, played a major role diplomatically by bringing America to the negotiation table, organizing ceasefires and making peace possible.<sup>210</sup>

Therefore, it is fair to say the Vietnam war proved Europe was able to have a common foreign policy, if loosely. They worked together to bring back peace, even if it meant going against their protector. Of course, it might have been easy to stay clear of a war that did not concern them directly. How did the European Community react when one of their own was at war?

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<sup>208</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 185.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 457.

<sup>210</sup> Zyl, *The Vietnam War*, 209, 301.

### 3.2 The Falkland crisis: Britain and European Solidarity

The Falkland War marked the transition from a loose alliance to a proper European Community. While none of her allies sent troops in support, Britain had received the most flagrant display of solidarity from her European partners yet.

Hostilities between Britain and Argentina began on 2 April 1982, when the latter invaded the Falkland Islands, which are British territory. Much like the Vietnam War, and despite the conflict's short length, there were many attempts to reach a peaceful settlement. Unlike Vietnam, however, the war lasted just short of ten weeks, until Argentina's surrender on 14 June 1982. While it is undeniable that British military victories were instrumental in the quick victory, our interests lie in the diplomatic support provided by the EC. Indeed, the British diplomatic machine at the UN Security Council (SC) worked wonders despite a hostile context.<sup>211</sup> Before the war had even started, Britain managed to secure the sympathy of the majority of the SC<sup>212</sup> and, the day following the invasion, to put to the table Resolution 502. The resolution compelled Argentina to call off its "invasion", "[demanding] an immediate withdrawal of all Argentine forces from the Falkland Islands".<sup>213</sup> While the resolution acknowledged the illegality of Argentina's actions, it did not establish economic sanctions or a collective military response. That was as far as Britain could go, on her own, to put pressure on Argentina through the UN.<sup>214</sup> She still had another avenue: the EEC. Using the legal means at her disposal<sup>215</sup>, she quickly organized economic sanctions through the EEC, whose trade with

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<sup>211</sup> On one hand, Britain feared the USSR was going to use their veto (ibid, 39). On the other hand, the Falkland War was an ideological minefield at the UN. Third world opinion and anticolonial sentiment were influent. As a result, Britain's position was fragile at the UN since the Falklands was depicted as a colonial conflict, notably by the General Assembly. It did not help that two of the non-Permanent Members of the Security Council were Spain and Ireland also had territorial disputes with Britain. Finally, Britain could not rely on the US for help as the Reagan Administration's Latin America policy meant it was taking a pro-Argentina stance. (Sir Lawrence Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign Volume II: War And Diplomacy*, Routledge, 2005, 35)

<sup>212</sup> Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, 36.

<sup>213</sup> S/RES/502

<sup>214</sup> Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, 36.

<sup>215</sup> Such as Article 224 of the Treaty of Rome.

Argentina represented some \$4 billion in 1980. At first, only an arms embargo and other limited measures were set up. By 10 April, however, Britain had called a meeting with the EEC permanent representatives to go further. They established together a ban on all Argentine imports in addition to the arms export embargo.<sup>216</sup> The war underlined the value of Britain's relations with Europe. There was a stark contrast between the EEC members' continued support and that of America, which was ambiguous and changing<sup>217</sup>, even half-hearted after the sinking of the *Belgrano*.<sup>218</sup>

Ironically, this time it was Britain's turn to become furious at her transatlantic ally. Relations particularly soured after a declaration made by US President Ronald Reagan on 2 May. He assured Latin American leaders that "no American [believed] that colonisation by any European power [was] to be accepted in this hemisphere"<sup>219</sup>. The implicit accusation – that Britain was not in fact defending her territory, but waging a colonial war – infuriated Thatcher and further embittered Anglo-American relations.<sup>220</sup> On the other hand, Britain found in the European Community a loyal backer on the international scene. Right from the start, France had been the most vocal in her support. French President François Mitterrand made sure Britain would have his government's full support during the crisis. He remained adamant throughout, despite the protests of his Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasising that "if there wasn't a reflex of solidarity between England and France then between whom could such a reflex exist."<sup>221</sup> Italy was also supportive of Britain, but had to carefully express it. Its unfavourable domestic political climate and its various interests at stake made it difficult to show open support.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, 84-85.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 325. There was also a continuous material support from the US, as well as a provision of fuel and intelligence (ibid, 437-8). There was therefore a gap between the harsh American rhetoric and its material support.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>219</sup> In Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, 308.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Quoted in Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, 422. Tense changed to fit the sentence.

<sup>222</sup> About half of Argentina's population had Italian origins, and there were over a million Italians in Argentina who could turn Italian elections around, depending on their government's response. Moreover, Italy had also

Germany conveyed its support through NATO's own declaration of solidarity, and readily participated in economic sanctions.<sup>223</sup> Needless to say, not all Europeans were happy about the situation. Within the European Community, Ireland, who had joined the EEC at the same time as Britain, was her staunchest opponent. Historically, the Irish entertained tense relations with her, and insisted on remaining neutral as far as Britain was concerned. Despite this bad blood, they supported Resolution 502 and tolerated the EEC sanctions, even after the Belgrano incident. I must add, however, that this was done with great reluctance<sup>224</sup>, as Ireland did briefly attempt to withdraw their participation in the embargo.<sup>225</sup>

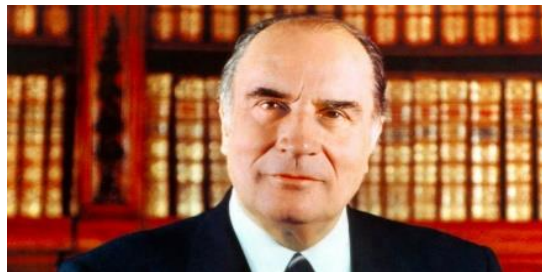


Figure 17: French President François Mitterrand (credit: Elysee.fr)

Of course, there was more to European solidarity than a free display of friendship. For Britain's co-members, it was also a way to pressure her into adopting a more accepting stance on EEC internal issues.<sup>226</sup> Additionally, Ireland and Italy did not enforce the EEC regulations.<sup>227</sup> That was however an understandable outcome, considering the context. Despite the hostility and domestic difficulties generated by the Falkland campaign, both countries kept their stance

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deep economic ties with Argentina and Latin America in general. (Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, 423)

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 422. However, Chancellor Schmidt did so grudgingly and under pressure; German support was liable to be cut if Britain proved herself too eager to shed blood.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 425. Such tension was cultivated domestically in both countries. On one side, Irish nationalists desired neutrality, basking in their traditional chant of "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity". On the other side, Irish hesitation and inconsistency infuriated the British and some went as far as advocating a boycott against them.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, 422-424.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 425-426. During a discussion about the future of the economic sanctions on 26-27 May 1982, Britain agreed to scale down their contribution by \$875M pounds instead of \$1.1 billion.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 427.

subtly supportive, as they were capable of sinking the economic sanctions and yet did not do so.<sup>228</sup>

In short, the Falkland campaign showcased the growing European solidarity on the international scene, and that despite internal conflicts. When embroiled in war, Britain received not just unanimous diplomatic support, but also benefitted from coordinated sanctions against her enemy. Although it was still short of actual military engagement, this war proved that Britain was part of a solid European block. The Gulf War provides us the opportunity to analyse the European Community's ability to stand together when all of its members were called to arms.

### **3.3 The Gulf War: Field Co-operation and Europe as a Single Machine**

The Gulf War occurred right before the end of the Cold War, from 2 August 1990 to 28 February 1991, when the USSR was starting to disintegrate.<sup>229</sup> It was waged between the US-led coalition and Iraq, who had invaded and annexed Kuwait to seize its oil-rich territory. The war was divided into two stages: first, the coalition was to gather troops and protect Saudi Arabia (Operation Desert Shield), and then to liberate Kuwait (Operation Desert Storm).

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<sup>228</sup> One last noteworthy moment may have been when the UN General Secretary tasked France and Germany to talk Britain into making more concessions for the sake of peace. France simply reported it without arguing in favour, while Germany did so *pro forma*. (Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, 448-449)

<sup>229</sup> By the start of the war, the USSR had lost 5 republics (Lithuania, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia and Armenia). ("Collapse of the Soviet Union - 1989-1991," Global Security, Accessed 1 June 2021, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/soviet-collapse.htm>.)

The European Community – and especially Britain – was among the most active participants of the coalition. Britain mobilised over 53,000 personnel for the Operation GRANBY<sup>230</sup>, the third highest number of deployed personnel of the coalition, behind the US and Saudi Arabia.<sup>231</sup> This war was mainly inland and on disadvantageous terrain, stressing the role of air power above all. It did not mean that Britain's navy or land forces were inactive. Her navy provided an essential support in logistics, and helped to enforce the embargo against Iraq.<sup>232</sup> Britain's maritime forces also defended the supply chain. They were not limited to support, and in fact, when it was required to go on the offensive, their results were proportionally much greater than even the US'.<sup>233</sup> The coalition's plans for the deployment of ground units took into account each member's specific advantages. For instance, France was valued for her reconnaissance expertise<sup>234</sup>, while Germany focused on logistics and European operations.<sup>235</sup> As major military powers, Britain and France made valuable contributions in combat; France flanked and pushed Iraq on western front, while Britain coordinated her armoured division with US forces to repel the Iraqi army at the centre.<sup>236</sup> Britain's navy also achieved notable success in field co-operation with the US, thanks to their complementary expertise. For instance, the Anglo-American helicopter combination of the Lynx and the US SH-60 was widely successful thanks to

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<sup>230</sup> "1990/1991 Gulf Conflict," UK National Archive (Ministry of Defence, 30 August 2011), <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120816163733/http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/HealthandSafety/GulfVeteransIllnesses/19901991GulfConflict.htm>.

<sup>231</sup> In comparison to the US, anyone's contribution may seem insignificant, however. For example, out of over 118,000 sorties, the US totalled about 90,000. The next three most active countries were Saudi Arabia (6,852), Britain (5,417) and France (2,258). Clearly, most of the combat effort came from the US. I do not argue that the European's contributions were anywhere near the US'; instead, I wish to stress that these contributions were born from a deep collaboration. The foundation of this collaboration was the understanding of each other's strength and the complementary efforts of the participants.

<sup>232</sup> Finlan, *Royal Navy in the Falklands and the Gulf War*, 124, 140. See also page 125, 136, 145 for more details on the contribution of the British Navy.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 152. Britain had been eager to contribute to the war effort, to the point that a high rate of exhaustion in her personnel had been observed. Additionally, the London Gazette reported that 'Lynx helicopters from Royal Navy escorts flew nearly 600 sorties in the northern Gulf on search and interdiction operations against Iraqi naval units' (quoted in Finlan, *Royal Navy in the Falklands and the Gulf War*, 152).

<sup>234</sup> Its armoured brigade especially, which were capable not only in reconnaissance but also in counterattack. (Eliot Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993, part 2, 78)

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>236</sup> See Cohen, *Gulf War*, part 2, 56.



complementary technologies. Britain's helicopters acted as air controllers thanks to their reputed Sea Skua missiles, while the US used their better radar and imagery technology for reconnaissance. The Lynxes also acted in concert with the US Marine Cobra AH-1 attack helicopter, when the target was not worth using the missiles.<sup>237</sup>

The British Air Force also contributed much to the war. The Royal Air Force was at some point the coalition's third-largest air force<sup>238</sup>, and was extremely active. For example, the RAF was second only to the U.S. in terms of mission variety and scale.<sup>239</sup> Air co-operation had been a significant facet of the war, and during the first phase of the war a considerable number of air exercises had been performed jointly (86)<sup>240</sup>, with regular British participation.<sup>241</sup>

While Britain and France had been the most active Europeans on the field, and thus had more opportunities to collaborate, other EEC members had also participated. Among other contributions, Italy deployed eight brand new Tornado GR bombers, which were born from the MRCA collaboration, while the Netherlands sent its 5th and 3rd Missile Groups, as well as its 334th Transport Squadron.<sup>242</sup>



Figure 18: the MRCA Tornado, credit: Wikipedia

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<sup>237</sup> Finlan, *Royal Navy in the Falklands and the Gulf War*, 149. The Lynx/Sea Skua combination had become popular after its remarkable success in the Falkland War. It also helped that previous NATO exercises had prepared navy helicopters for the same conditions as in the Gulf War.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 134. France initially occupied the third place. See also Cohen, *Gulf War*, part 1, 42.

<sup>239</sup> Cohen, *Gulf War*, part 1, 42.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 187.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 173-175. France also participated in some of them, but to a lesser extent than the British.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, 43.

Yet, perhaps Europe's most meaningful contribution was not in pure combat, but in her support. France was noted for her strategic support to other coalition aircraft. Among other contributions, she deployed Puma helicopters and C-160 Gabriel aircrafts equipped with jammers for sustained electronic warfare.<sup>243</sup> America also deeply appreciated Britain's diplomatic support, without which the political side of the war would have been unmanageable.<sup>244</sup> Europe had also established itself as a transport hub during the war. The European Desert Express was an operation that delivered crucial logistic support every day during the war. Aircrafts departed daily from Ramstein at the Rhein Main Air Base (Germany) to the theatre of operations.<sup>245</sup> Europe's contribution in materials and passenger transportation was small, but critical.<sup>246</sup> Small, because out of over 500,000 passengers transported by airlift during the war, the US aircrafts carried around 448,000<sup>247</sup> passengers (or about 90% of the total; figure 22). By process of elimination, it means that Europe only carried at most the remaining 10%. These 10% were however critical, because they included the wounded waiting for urgent medical care. Europe was effectively the aeromedical evacuation centre, connecting the battlefield and the US. About 75% of all evacuated littered passengers and ambulatory patients went to Europe to be treated or to be transferred elsewhere (figure 20). Europe's support was also noted in intelligence gathering thanks to its satellites (i.e., France's SPOT for area mapping and enemy movement tracking, and the European Space Agency's METEOSAT).<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>244</sup> Ken Matthews, *The Gulf Conflict and International Relations*. Routledge, 1993, 61.

<sup>245</sup> Matthews, *The Gulf Conflict*, 75.

<sup>246</sup> A month after the beginning of the war, the CINCMAC reported: "we would have an extremely difficult time doing Desert Shield without Rhein Main and Torrejon Air Bases." (Cohen, *Gulf War*, part 2, 58)

<sup>247</sup> This number was obtained manually, by adding each line of the column "passengers". The column "Passengers to Date" is the total cumulation of passengers, not that of the US.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 126, 130. METEOSAT was the only meteorological satellite system on a geostationary orbit, thus returning images regularly (every 30min). Also, out of 6 meteorological satellites, 5 were Americans.

All in all, the Gulf War proved the European Community's ability to coordinate during military operations. Its contribution was not so much in numbers as in its expertise and specialisations, enabling a deep collaboration founded on complementarities.

The point of these case studies was not that the EC had become a perfect politico-military machine by the end of the Cold War. It had not. Instead, I wished to show that Europe had been able to become one functioning machine at all. Decade after decade, crisis after crisis, the community grew in number and unity despite their differences. This was perhaps especially the case for Britain. She had not been a member in name only, she became increasingly integrated industrially and formed a common front with her European allies, especially when the US pushed her away. Yet, for the community to grow further, they must overcome their differences rather than ignore them.

**Table 29**  
**Aeromedical Evacuation in the Gulf War**  
**(Patients Transported as of 10 March 1991)**

Date	Persian Gulf		Persian Gulf to Europe		Europe to CONUS	
	Litter	Ambulatory	Litter	Ambulatory	Litter	Ambulatory
Aug-90	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sep-90	92	247	181	346	89	291
Oct-90	99	310	214	400	77	262
Nov-90	86	303	277	395	170	485
Dec-90	129	377	304	503	154	484
Jan-91	270	550	414	818	483	1,180
Feb-91	324	410	725	890	446	846
Mar-91	600	227	567	507	336	476
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>2,424</b>	<b>2,682</b>	<b>3,859</b>	<b>1,755</b>	<b>4,024</b>

Source: USTRANSCOM History Office

Figure 19: from Cohen, *Gulf War*, 76.

**Table 23**  
**U.S. Airlift Shipment**

Date	Resupply/ Sustainment	Passengers	Cargo	Resupply/ Sustainment	Passengers to Date	Cargo to Date
	Cargo			Cargo		
24-Aug-90	-	21,554	11,428	-	34,207	29,475
31-Aug-90	-	17,206	12,443	-	55,761	40,903
7-Sep-90	3,688	10,635	23,165	6,188	72,967	53,346
14-Sep-90	3,373	29,119	24,210	9,876	83,602	76,511
21-Sep-90	3,966	12,009	13,453	13,249	112,721	100,721
28-Sep-90	6,029	12,967	11,541	17,215	124,730	114,174
5-Oct-90	5,177	14,454	14,669	23,244	137,697	125,715
12-Oct-90	3,961	14,699	18,310	28,421	152,151	140,384
19-Oct-90	4,788	7,500	4,942	32,382	166,850	158,694
26-Oct-90	3,805	5,880	8,402	37,170	174,350	163,636
2-Nov-90	5,437	7,056	9,418	40,975	180,230	172,038
9-Nov-90	8,558	6,834	11,030	46,412	187,286	181,456
16-Nov-90	10,225	4,417	12,104	54,970	194,120	192,486
24-Nov-90	10,052	2,568	12,563	65,195	198,537	204,590
1-Dec-90	8,141	14,390	22,562	75,247	201,105	217,153
8-Dec-90	8,539	19,149	17,773	83,388	215,495	239,715
15-Dec-90	8,671	25,952	24,820	91,927	234,644	257,488
22-Dec-90	9,355	34,680	16,899	100,598	260,596	282,308
29-Dec-90	6,306	47,137	26,647	109,953	295,276	299,207
5-Jan-91	6,254	35,379	22,841	116,259	342,413	325,854
12-Jan-91	6,454	26,275	24,064	122,513	377,792	348,695
19-Jan-91	10,771	22,509	28,832	128,967	404,067	372,759
26-Jan-91	6,726	15,064	26,886	139,738	426,576	401,591
2-Feb-91	15,883	14,726	27,091	146,464	441,640	428,477
9-Feb-91	9,796	13,110	25,576	162,347	456,366	455,568
16-Feb-91	10,440	11,060	22,810	172,143	469,476	481,144
23-Feb-91	-	-	-	182,583	480,536	503,954

Source: USCINTRANS SITREPs (S)

*Figure 20: from Cohen, Gulf War, 82.*

**Table 20**  
**Gulf War Strategic Lift Summary by Transportation Mode and Cargo Type**  
**(as of 10 March 1991)**

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total		Total Dry Cargo	Total Passenger
<b>Airlift</b>												
Unit Cargo in Short Tons	46,946	49,738	33,781	9,663	52,045	80,903	52,009	9,831	334,916	}	543,548	
Sustainment in short Tons	-	19,142	20,512	34,028	38,064	36,372	42,611	14,396	205,125			
Desert Express in Short Tons	-	-	2	235	399	580	637	213	2,066			
European Express in Short Tons	-	-	-	-	375	488	442	136	1,441			
Passengers	67,263	60,476	51,154	20,553	105,413	132,095	45,562	18,204	500,720	→		(99.45%)
<b>Sealift</b>												
Unit Cargo in Short Tons	253,023	252,013	326,930	206,416	356,025	721,281	297,888	27,210	2,440,786	}	3,142,295	
Tons	-	-	78,059	58,073	113,651	198,006	183,779	69,941	701,509			
Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants in Short Tons	333,640	508,534	517,038	1,011,243	894,061	1,088,825	1,336,807	412,858	6,103,006			
Passengers	315	681	436	186	465	516	147	12	2,758	→		(.55%)
<b>Air &amp; Sea Totals:</b>											<b>3,685,843</b>	<b>503,478</b>

Source: USTRANSCOM SITREPs (S);  
USTRANSCOM "MSC Lift Summary Report," Feb 92 (U)

*Figure 21: from Cohen, Gulf War, 94.*



## Chapter Three: Political Discord and Paradigm Shift

Britain's European integration had progressed by the end of the Cold War. Yet the journey had been neither smooth nor finished. As the second chapter hinted at, several issues hindered European defence integration. First, there continued to be contradictory stances toward the US and NATO within the EC. Second, Europe stumbled toward federalism without resolving the disagreements implied by a common defence policy. Finally, it resulted in the marginalisation of defence policy in the European project, which can be explained by a change of values and ideologies during the Cold War.

### 1 The European Community and its Continued Reliance on the US

I argued in Chapter 2 that Europe distanced itself from the US and was able to speak, to act independently and as one. For all that, it did not mean Europe intended to contest the American leadership. In fact, by the end of the 1980s, Europeans thought that they should strengthen their military in order to stay close to the US. Rather than being a burden on the transatlantic alliance, Europe wished to be the second pillar and to secure a reliable relationship with the US. As such, European defence policy remained defined by its reliance on the US.

#### **1.1 NATO and European Military Dependence**

A recurring criticism from the 1960s to the 1980s was the lack of political will in defence policy. From de Gaulle to Thatcher, it was a fact readily admitted by leaders preoccupied by the constitution of an independent European defence. It did not help that the establishment of a European army remained mostly under a federalist agenda. As such their intent was not so much

to make Europe a world-class military power as to check an item on their federal list, which is to say the transfer of a nation's competence to a supranational entity. There was therefore a divergence on the degree of interest expressed on defence integration, which slowed the process.<sup>249</sup>

The American focus on the Vietnam War left a political vacuum in Europe, triggering the rapprochement between Britain and other Europeans on defence. Yet, with the 1980s arms race between the US and the USSR, the future of European defence was re-examined. Many ambiguities remained in defence as the European Union was taking shape on the paper. The Single European Act (SEA) signed in 1986 promoted the consultation of members for foreign policy, calling for regular meetings every four years. It also gave the Commission and its president more agency in the decision-making of defence policy. The Presidency was also tasked to make sure the European Parliament's will was taken into consideration. However, the Community still had no intention of becoming independent on defence policy. In fact, the SEA explicitly rejected it: "Nothing in this Title shall impede closer co-operation in the field of security between certain of the High Contracting Parties within the frame work of the Western European Union or the Atlantic Alliance".<sup>250</sup> European defence policy was still reliant on NATO, and even the treaty of Maastricht signed in 1991 could not promote a defence policy openly free of NATO's influence.<sup>251</sup>

The attitude of some European countries showed subservience to the US. One particular conversation between Thatcher and Kohl shows that European leaders thought it was more important to build strong relations with the US than to pursue political independence. Indeed,

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<sup>249</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 525.

<sup>250</sup> Single European Act, Title 5, Article 30, point C.

<sup>251</sup> It gave the option to ignore European defence policy if it was incompatible with NATO's own policy. See Article 17.1 (Title 5) of the Maastricht Treaty.



in said conversation Kohl mentioned that if “tested on **loyalty**”<sup>252</sup> between the US and the USSR, the Germans would choose the US. It echoes to Edgar Morin’s two alternatives for Europe, vassalization or extermination. It was thought impossible to imagine Europe as a separate third power.<sup>253</sup> Kohl’s criticism of the Atlantic bridge metaphor for US-Europe relations is quite clear on that. “The concept of a bridge across the Atlantic was flawed, for a bridge needed a pylon at both ends and the European pylon was not strong enough.”<sup>254</sup> He considered that the EC should bolster its military capability to show their reliability as a partner. Kohl had been more preoccupied with US-Europe relations than the community’s internal affairs. He thought it was urgent to ward off America’s isolationist tendencies and to keep a close relationship with the US. Thatcher’s reply was wary. She wished to focus less on building military capability and more on a diplomatic rapprochement. She feared that further European independence would make Europeans appear more aloof than they were.<sup>255</sup> Again, it did not mean that they necessarily thought an American leadership was desirable. In a meeting in September 1980, Thatcher and French President Valerie Giscard d’Estaing agreed that American leadership should be avoided. The previous US administrations had been unreliable and unstable. As a result, they wanted the US as a partner rather than their leader, and to make Europe independent.<sup>256</sup>

Relying on NATO also generated concrete problems for smaller defence firms. NATO’s efforts in standardising its equipment had been seen as an attempt to force American products

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<sup>252</sup> PREM 19/1035. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>253</sup> Heath also could not see how Europe was to be militarily independent from the US. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 503)

<sup>254</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Volume III, 269.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 185. This had also been Heath’s conclusion after a series of abrupt and controversial decisions by President Richard Nixon in 1971. “Now, instead of joint action by the Atlantic nations in the common interest, Britain’s Prime Minister sees the United States ‘acting drastically’ to protect its own balance of payments and trading position. And he calls on the countries of Western Europe to secure their own prosperity and even their own defence”. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 420)

onto Europeans, effectively smothering European competition, especially small defence firms.<sup>257</sup> While there was much strategic merit to standardisation, it was also clear that it benefitted mostly the US. It was an easy way to sell their equipment to their allies. Moreover, the US had intended to design the models, while Europe was supposed to produce them like a workshop. It was ambiguous whether they intended to share the responsibility for designing the models later.<sup>258</sup> Standardisation was an issue for another reason. There was a hard limit to standardisation within NATO due to “the existence of trade secrets, patent rights, military traditions, the cost of scrapping existing equipment, and the desirability of a self-supporting defence industry”.<sup>259</sup> Additionally, NATO was ill-fitted for defence collaboration. First, it took too long to make several countries agree on a project. As a result, it was not rare for participants to walk out of a multilateral project and buy the American version <sup>260</sup>, Britain being a repeated offender.<sup>261</sup> Second, there was a political obligation for advanced countries of the alliance to help those less developed. As a result, defence industries were particularly leery of NATO collaborations, rejecting this kind of naïve altruism which went against their interests.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 10.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>260</sup> See Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 85.

<sup>261</sup> Although Britain continued to benefit from European defence collaboration, it also presented a new challenge for her. She had been leading efforts on European defence R&D and allowed her rivals to gain industrial expertise and skill. It was increasingly harder for to stay the leader in defence industrial collaboration. (Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 106-107)

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid*, 107-109. A strictly European industrial collaboration was the best way to compete against the US defence industrial, and it was vital to the survival of sectors producing missiles, land vehicles and warships.

## 1.2 An American Ambiguity: for a Strong Independent Europe Under American Domination

The US kept their defence relations with Europe ambivalent for decades. On the one hand, they felt that Europe was a burden, and therefore pushed for a European rearmament. On the other hand, they were reluctant to see their European allies gain independence.

The best explanation for that is the disconnection between politics and economics. In the early 1960s, President Kennedy was encouraging his European allies to increase their military capability. Yet at the same time, US NATO representatives insisted on keeping the Franco-German Concorde project under the control of NATO.<sup>263</sup> The representatives were caught between incompatible political and economic objectives. Politically, European collaborations had to be promoted in order to make Europe stronger militarily. Economically, US defence exports were a sizeable source of revenue and jobs.<sup>264</sup> Additionally, it was at a time when the US were beginning to push for the standardisation of European weapons. As just mentioned, the US may have wanted to transform Europe into their workshop. Under such a strategy, Europe could have grown stronger militarily using American products, but its defence industries would have been reliant on the US for its technology. In other words, if in the future Europe wanted to modernise its military, all it could do was to buy the new versions from America.

In the 1970s, US presidents Nixon and Carter<sup>265</sup> tried to reverse that trend, and pushed for inter-European collaboration. It saw disappointing results politically, as European economies had been struggling in the aftermath of the oil crisis in 1973.<sup>266</sup> The US government

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>265</sup> Carter notably promoted the IEPG in 1977 in the NATO handbook as “the principal forum for promoting equipment collaboration among European allies”. (Quoted in Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 27)

<sup>266</sup> Ibid, 28.

continued to promote inter-European collaboration in the 1980s, for example by purchasing European equipment. However, American economic actors worked against their government. American industries wanted to secure their share of the European market and thus worked to prevent the unification of European defence industries.<sup>267</sup> Additionally, US commitment to Europe was fragile. The government also had to factor in domestic pressure. As a result, the US' commitment to promoting European collaboration was conditional to economic and commerce prosperity.<sup>268</sup>

European independence was also threatened by the US' attempts to influence European politics. Indeed, American implicit support of a federal Europe sometimes strained or blocked talks on European defence. An example of that can be found when Nixon visited Europe in the early 1970s. This visit was ill-received by France. In a meeting with Heath, Pompidou indicated he was refusing to have any discussion with the US on European defence. This reaction came in opposition to Nixon seeing EEC member representatives together, which gave more legitimacy to a supranational Europe. Pompidou argued that Nixon could meet the Presidents of the Commission and of the Council of Ministers, but that he should otherwise meet the nation members bilaterally.<sup>269</sup> Clearly, Pompidou was afraid Nixon's visit would strengthen the federalists' position within the EEC. If the EEC was capable of conducting diplomacy with other nations, then it would compete with traditional bilateral diplomacy, and weaken national competence.

Nixon's intervention in Europe thus illustrates how the US could influence European political debates, as it reopened the bitter debate of federalism within the EEC, which is the focus of the next part.

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<sup>267</sup> See Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 103.

<sup>268</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 477.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid, 474.

## 2 What Vision for the European Community?

A significant obstacle to European defence integration was ideological. Even after 30 years of existence, it continued to divide the EEC. There was a divergence on what the role of nations and defence in the EEC should be. First, I will address the question of supranationalism, which had a direct on defence, as the latter was regarded as a nation's prerogative. The establishment of a federal Europe implied that nations would transfer to it at least some of their military competence. Not all members agreed to do so. As a result, there remained a fierce opposition between proponents of a *Europe des Patries* and *Europe de la Commission*. Secondly, there is much sense in the argument that the goal of the EEC was of economic nature, as indicated by its name (European 'Economic' Community). If so, then the fact it was to be renamed into the European Union with the Maastricht Treaty suggests a shift had occurred in the Community's priorities.

### 2.1 Toward a Federal Europe

The battle between Europeans of the Commission and Europeans of Nations had reached a status quo during the 1960s. Britain, who was not yet in the EEC, observed with wariness the talks on political and military integration. France had been fighting alone against the EEC's federalist tendencies.<sup>270</sup> A good illustration of its consequences on defence can be found in the negotiations of the Fouquet Plan. The Five rejected France's first versions and

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<sup>270</sup> France remained the staunchest opponent against federalism while Gaullists remained in power. While President Giscard had called for "a united France in confederate Europe" in a public declaration on 30 June 1977, his successor President Mitterrand's more federalist approach paved the way for the 1980s progress on federalisation. ("DECLARATION DE M. VALÉRY GISCARD D'ESTAING, SUR LA POLITIQUE EUROPÉENNE DE LA FRANCE, JEUDI 30 JUIN 1977," Elysée, 30 June 1977, <https://www.elysee.fr/valery-giscard-d-estaing/1977/06/30/declaration-de-m-valery-giscard-destaing-sur-la-politique-europeenne-de-la-france-jeudi-30-juin-1977>)

engaged her in a back and forth. Among other flaws, the French versions provided no clause for majority voting or supranational elements. Naturally, the EEC 5 had put forward a version which satisfied their supranational desires.<sup>271</sup> Britain, who had been observing the situation with interest, winced, as the Foreign Office remarked that its “strong flavour of supranationality caused [...] certain difficulties for [Britain]”<sup>272</sup>. Ironically, France’s best ally against federalism was Britain, whose entry she had repeatedly been rejecting.

Even with a favourable political climate, ideological opposition was still an obstacle to a common defence policy. Federalism slowly regained momentum in the 1970s, perhaps as a result of the first enlargement.<sup>273</sup> If the 1973 enlargement influenced the debate, then its effect was not immediate. In 1974, as British Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan had probed in an EEC meeting what his eight counterparts meant by constituting a European union. There were no identical answers, and no consensus. The very term “union” had a negative connotation for Britain and her political allies, so they preferred to think in terms of co-operation.<sup>274</sup> Later on, David Owen, as Foreign Secretary, noted in 1977 that there was a federalist tendency in the EEC. He rejected the possibility that it stemmed from an institutional bias (i.e. treaties). For him, it came from the members themselves. For instance, Germany was led at the end of the 1970s by a two-party coalition, the Free Democratic Party (FDP), who supported strong federalism (which included a supranational defence), and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) from which came Schmidt. Schmidt was very prudent and avoided taking too firm a position. He believed that the debate between federalism and confederalism should be dealt by “our

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<sup>271</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 316-317.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 317.

<sup>273</sup> While there might be a correlation between enlargements and rise of federalism, I did not find any solid evidence establishing actual causality. The question may be more complex than it seems as some politicians, like Foreign Secretary David Owen, had believed enlargement was going to weaken federalism. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. III, 97)

<sup>274</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 523-524.

grandchildren and not [by] the present generation".<sup>275</sup> As he suggested, it felt like the debate over supranationalism was stuck. In 1975, the Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tinderman discussed with PM Wilson and Callaghan (still Foreign Secretary) what fields were propitious for common European policies. Defence and Foreign Policy were good candidates, as they were popular in Britain and other European countries. Popularity was not enough, however, as there were still hard disagreements about the balance of power between the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament.<sup>276</sup> Federalism could also directly impact European procurement collaboration. Collaboration has its limits, one of which being the willingness to become interdependent with others. In an ideal industrial collaboration, each country has to specialise its firms and labour force, to pool its resources with the others', and then to allocate the labour force according to everyone's needs. Because internationalising resources implies sacrificing national industries' interests, it was dismissed as an impossible dream, or at least unlikely by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>277</sup> In a strong federation, the nations' squeamishness can be set aside by the supranational government to implement a federal defence policy. Federalism therefore appears by essence more propitious to a common policy and European integration than confederalism.



Figure 22: Prime Minister James Callaghan (credit: The Sun)

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<sup>275</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 97.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>277</sup> Draper, *European Defence Equipment Collaboration*, 8.

The 1980s saw federalism emerging victorious, and the EEC began to prepare for the formation of the European Union. On 19 June 1983, the Solemn Declaration on European Union (also known as the Stuttgart Declaration) laid out the future of the EEC. Its preamble reads:

*“The Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the European Communities meeting within the European Council,  
resolved to continue the work begun on the basis of the Treaties of Paris and Rome and to create a united Europe, which is more than ever necessary in order to meet the dangers of the world situation,  
[..]  
determined to achieve a comprehensive and coherent common political approach and reaffirming their will to transform the whole complex of relations between their States into a European Union.”*<sup>278</sup>

This extract is composed of the preamble’s first and last paragraphs. They are striking for the mirroring effects at play. Firstly, this preamble suggests the firm will of Europeans to come together on multiple levels. The document defines a union that is physical, mental and finally institutional. The very first sentence mentions the physical coalescence of nations (symbolised by the meeting of their leaders) into the “European Council”, a European institution. By the end of the document, this coalescence has been emphasized and mentalised (“common”, “their will”, “their states into a European Union”). The document goes from displaying a vague, theoretical and static aim that is “to create a united Europe” to a more

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<sup>278</sup> Bulletin of the European Communities. June 1983, No 6. Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities. "Solemn Declaration on European Union (Stuttgart, 19 June 1983)", 24-29.



concrete and dynamic vision “to transform [...] into a European Union”, as suggested by the adverbial particle ‘into’ and the capitalisation of ‘Union’, referring to the constitution of an institution. This preamble therefore leads the reader to believe that the process of federalisation was unanimous and already underway. An examination of the rest of the declaration reveals it was an exaggeration, if not erroneous.

The document remains evasive in the formulation of the Union’s various objectives, and even then, it did not always reach unanimity. For example, Denmark was noted expressing its dissent on several articles, including on Foreign Policy co-operation.<sup>279</sup> It was a smear on a document supposed to express unity. It did not bode well for the European project that the community was unable to reach unanimity on a vague seven-page declaration.

On the other hand, the declaration did notably strengthen the role of the European Parliament and the Commission in the community. Provision 2.3.7 guaranteed the involvement of the Parliament in international agreements and in future accessions into the community. As for the Commission, provision 2.4 added European Political Co-operation to its prerogatives. The article also permitted the Commission to be involved “where appropriate” in any “other activities within the framework of European Union”. What constituted as ‘appropriate’ was not defined, giving much leeway to the Commission. The Stuttgart declaration therefore signalled that the European Community, although divided in opinion, was about to form a federal

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<sup>279</sup> Here are the articles in question:

“1.4 *Desiring to consolidate the progress already made towards European Union in both the economic and political fields, the Heads of State or Government reaffirm the following objectives:*

[...]

1.4.2 *to strengthen and develop European Political Cooperation through the elaboration and adoption of joint positions and joint action, on the basis of intensified consultations, in the area of foreign policy, including the coordination of the positions of Member States on the political and economic aspects of security, so as to promote and facilitate the progressive development of such positions and actions in a growing number of foreign policy fields.*” (Solemn Declaration on European Union)

European Union. This momentum continued throughout the 1980s and climaxed at the end of the Cold War with the Maastricht Treaty.<sup>280</sup>

The Maastricht Treaty was hailed as a game changer for defence integration. It revived hope, after years of status quo where defence co-operation had been left to nations rather than European institutions. According to Nicole Gnessotto, the Treaty of Maastricht “juridically founded European defence”<sup>281</sup> through the creation of a political committee charged to “monitor the international situation in the areas covered by the common foreign and security policy and contribute to the definition of policies by delivering opinions to the Council”<sup>282</sup>. However, the Treaty merely left open the possibility of a defence community. In article 17.1, it is written that members should work toward closer foreign policy co-operation, and suggested that it “might lead to a common defence, should the European Council so decide.”<sup>283</sup> Admittedly, it was still a step further from previous propositions. In fact, the treaty also proposed to integrate the WEU into the EU (which it did in the 1990s), deepening the institutionalisation of European defence policy.<sup>284</sup> As such, it would be fair to say that by the end of the Cold War, the European Community had progressively built its capacity for defence policy co-operation through federalism. At that point, all it meant was that members were going to meet to decide a common direction so that their voices were coherent at the international. Europe was still very far from building its own independent army, or building a common European military structure, and especially ones independent from NATO.

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<sup>280</sup> The 1980s saw other signals showing the European Community’s preparation to their federalization, such as the EP approving in 1984 a draft treaty establishing the European Union, and the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986.

<sup>281</sup> Gnesotto, *L’Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 24.

<sup>282</sup> Article 25, Title 5 of the Maastricht Treaty.

<sup>283</sup> Article 17, Title 5 of the Maastricht Treaty.

<sup>284</sup>

## 2.2 Achieving European Unity: Through Defence or Economic Policy?

After the failure of the EDC in the 1950s, it was difficult to believe in defence as the keystone to European integration. President de Gaulle had continued to believe, but even Britain adamantly objected to the idea. In a discussion with PM MacMillan, de Gaulle posited that unity in defence was the first step to achieving tighter co-operation in other fields. MacMillan rejected this approach, retorting that “it [was] difficult to deal with any of these aspects [economic, military and political unity] in isolation; they are all part of one problem.”<sup>285</sup> Macmillan then explained that rivalry in one field would undermine unity in the others.<sup>286</sup> A few years later, Wilson was to be just as categorical. He wanted to leave no ambiguity on his opposition to defence integration, and eagerly made sure his cabinet stayed consistent with this line.<sup>287</sup> Evidence suggests that de Gaulle had been the last obstacle to a shift to economic integration. Indeed, as soon as de Gaulle was out of office, France put defence aside to favour an economic and monetary union.<sup>288</sup> It was the beginning of a trend.

As previously mentioned, defence was one of the more contested fields in European federalism. Political will was running short. As a result, the role of defence in European integration became increasingly marginalised in contrast to economic integration. This became clear early in the 1970s, even before Britain’s accession. As Heath’s Foreign Secretary, Alec Douglas-Home spoke to the EEC on 30 June 1970, declaring:

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<sup>285</sup> In Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 66.

<sup>286</sup> At some point, Stephen Wall also refutes the idea that the EEC could have a powerful military for its own sake. According to him, “this power would derive in large measure from economic achievements and prospects based on a Customs Union which its members are resolved to build up further into an economic union” (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 177). I find myself somewhat sceptical of this argument. Modern Russia is by no means a strong economic power (it is in fact labelled as a developing country), and yet its military power – outdated until recently – is world-class. Even at its peak during the Cold War, the USSR was not an economic power, and Western Europe consistently surpassed the USSR in terms of GDP by a factor of over 2.5 to 3. (Angus Maddison, *The World Economy*. Paris, France: Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006, 184)

<sup>287</sup> See Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 359.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid, 358.

*“[the British government shares the] determination of the Six to go into new spheres of cooperation beginning with economic and monetary matters, but at the same time laying the foundations for a new method of working together in foreign policy and defence.”*<sup>289</sup>

First, the contrast is evident through the use of the adversative conjunction ‘but’. It opposes ‘new spheres’ (economic and monetary policies) and ‘a new method’ (for foreign and defence policy). Although reiterated, ‘new’ is not equivocal in this extract. Indeed, they are to be opposed: on the one hand, ‘new spheres of co-operation’ connotes here ambition and progress by taking a step further. On the other hand, ‘a new method’ indicates previous failures and setbacks, contriving the EEC to make alterations to their plan. Through that one sentence, Douglas-Home subtly summarised the shift to economy for European integration.

That decision came with a price. The domination of economics over defence showed in international relations, and incurred incoordination. The vacuity of Europe’s defence policy meant it was defined by NATO, which combined EEC members and other Europeans (such as Iceland and Greece, before it joined in 1981). As a result, the US were unable to hold a unique forum to discuss European issues, as negotiations had to take into account non-EEC members’ interests, which was too much of a burden for Britain and other members.<sup>290</sup>

Additionally, the marginalised value of defence backfired on Britain’s role in the Community. Conservative Prime Minister James Callaghan was particularly vocal on Britain’s contribution to the defence of Europe, and in light of that, he believed it should be her only contribution. In fact, he felt that Britain was being penalised for it. During the Paris March summit of 1979, he exclaimed:

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<sup>289</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 362.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 480. NATO’s decision-making process is built on consensus, which means here that European non-EEC members could veto EEC members.

*“I do not raise the cost of our contribution toward the common defence of Europe, the cost of which has increased dramatically in recent years. But the overseas expenditure which has grown fastest, and which produces least by way of offset to our national interest, is our financial contribution to the Community. We cannot accept that we should become, by a substantial sum, the largest net contributor to the Community Budget.”*<sup>291</sup>

A strong feeling of exasperation leaks through Callaghan’s dramatic description. He draws attention to what he calls Britain’s sacrifice of her national interest through the use of superlatives. This sacrifice comes from the speedily (“fastest”) rising defence expenditures that yield the “least” returns, making Britain – according to him – the “largest net contributor”. This sense of sacrifice is also exacerbated by the employ of intensifiers such as “dramatically” and “substantial”. Was Britain’s contributions truly unfair? If so, why? French President Giscard believed that British financial contributions were indeed exaggerated, declaring that Britain was contributing 700 million units of account more than she should (which was about the same amount in dollars, according to Stephen Wall). According to him, half of it was due to her European trade balance, as she was trading outside the Community in higher proportions than other members.<sup>292</sup> Even so, the situation was critical for Britain. Unless her financial contributions decreased, Britain was going to “be unable to subscribe to the taking of any major decisions in the Community”, according to Foreign Secretary Peter Carrington.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 132.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, 158-159.

<sup>293</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 158.

Despite Britain's importance in the EEC, the shift to an economic integration underlined the misalignment of Britain and other EEC members' interests. In an interview with the French weekly *Paris Match* in May 1982, Claude Cheysson (French Foreign Minister) stressed that "it is not possible to imagine Europe without Britain. [...] We need Britain in the Community."<sup>294</sup> Yet, he also admitted that some EEC economic policies were deemed essential for all members but Britain, such as the CAP.<sup>295</sup> It did not mean that she necessarily opposed said policies, but that negotiations were laborious. The CAP had been the other main reason behind de Gaulle's vetoes against Britain's entry, and it remained decades later a subject of tension. Britain also skirted European monetary integration entirely. Both Labour and Conservative governments deliberately opted out of the European Monetary Exchange Rate System Mechanism (ERM) created in 1979, as the issue proved too divisive in Britain. It was only ten years later, in October 1990, that the government relented. Britain's membership did not last long. It ended barely two years later, on Black Wednesday, in the aftermath of the 1992 EMS crisis.<sup>296</sup>

It seemed that Britain had hit an impasse. While defence had been her greatest contribution to Europe, Europe wished to reason in economic terms which were not in her interests. Economy took over politics as the pillar of international relations, because neoliberalism became the universal rule accepted by all, regardless of the type of regime. As such, in the 1980s, even the USSR and China accepted some degree of liberalism.<sup>297</sup> This marginalisation of defence was revealed not just in international relations, but also in the evolution of European culture.

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<sup>294</sup> Quoted in Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community, Volume III*, 221.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Cobham, David, and Peter Macmillan. "Outsider or Latecomer? The United Kingdom and EMU." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1999): 149-62. Accessed May 4, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24590375>. The German Reunification presumably destabilised the system and brought about the 1992 EMS crisis. Britain failed to stabilise the pound above the established threshold, and was forced to leave the system.

<sup>297</sup> Gnesotto, *L'Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 146.

### 3 Defence and the Emergence of Pacifism and Post-Nationalism

Another limiting factor for defence as an integrational force was the cultural shift taking place in the West. In fact, the European project itself was also cultural in nature.<sup>298</sup> In the aftermath of the Second World War, a wave of pacifism hit Europe. The establishment of the EEC had been in no small part due to the will to pacify Europe. Pacifism became a significant value of western societies, as demonstrated by the numerous anti-war protests from the 1960s to the 1980s. It was a lasting movement in time, and also ubiquitous, taking hold from the US, where the movement was the strongest, to Europe and even Australia. It culminated with the rise of two ideologies, globalism and post-nationalism, which strove to erase borders.

#### 3.1 Defence Policy in an Era of Pacifism

Pacifism benefitted greatly from the mediatisation of the Vietnam War. Images of the pain and atrocities inflicted to locals generated sympathy internationally. The most famous example is the picture of Phan Thi Kim Phuc, also known as ‘napalm girl’. It was taken on 8 June 1972 by Nick Ut, after a misdirected bombing. In the photo, children can be seen running away, crying, while Kim Phuc is naked. It cannot be seen in the picture, but her back had been burned by the napalm. The photography quickly became influential. It made the front page of the New York Times on the very next day of its publication, won the 1973 Pulitzer prize and was chosen as the 1973 World Press Photo of the Year.

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<sup>298</sup> The Stuttgart Declaration dedicated an entire section to cultural co-operation, promoting for example “exchanges of experience, particularly among young people, and development of the teaching of the languages of the Member States of the Community” and “improving the level of knowledge about other Member States of the Community and of information on Europe’s history and culture so as to promote a European awareness”, suggesting the exchange of students and teachers. (See section 3.3 of the Stuttgart Declaration)



Figure 23: "Napalm Girl" by Nick Ut, 8 June 1972 (credit ABC news).

The Vietnam War had triggered anti-war protests even in the 1960s.<sup>299</sup> The anti-war movement bolstered other pacifist movements, such as the disarmament movement. Indeed, when the war ended in 1975, pacifist activists turned to nuclear disarmament, effectively reviving the cause. The movement had been active in the aftermath of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and lost influence with time. At the end of the 1970s, renewed concerns about the environmental danger of nuclear plants also strengthened the movement, and the UN became the stage to disarmament discussions in 1978.<sup>300</sup> Additionally, pacifist activism intensified in the 1980s with the end of the *détente*. In 1981 and 1982, global protests broke out to pressure governments against rearmament. In New York alone, a million pacifists gathered at Central Park to protest against nuclear proliferation. The cause was so mobilising

<sup>299</sup> See for example Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam's marches from 1967 to 1969. The "March on The Pentagon" (21 October 1967) has remained famous for the *Flower Power* photograph taken by Bernie Boston, where the actor George Harris can be seen putting a flower into the barrel of a soldier's gun.

<sup>300</sup> Lawrence S. Wittner "The Forgotten Years of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1975-78." *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 4 (2003): 435-56. Accessed May 5, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3648292>.



and popular that it had been the largest demonstration in US history.<sup>301</sup> In Britain, pacifism shaped the political landscape. Throughout the 1980s, the Labour Party promoted a unilateralist defence policy – that is to say, independent from NATO – at a time when a multilateralist and pacifist nuclear policy was popular. The issue proved fatal during the elections.<sup>302</sup>

This nuclear pacifism may also have been fuelled by the renewal of nuclear terror in the early 1980s. It came as a result of the Euromissile crisis<sup>303</sup> and the discovery of the existential threat induced by a global nuclear winter.<sup>304</sup> That had been a blow to both the US and the USSR, and further stressed the unacceptable danger incurred by waging a nuclear war. It left a deep influence on both bloc leaders of the time, Donald Reagan and Mickael Gorbatchev, and mollified their belligerence.<sup>305</sup> Along with the crowd's pacifist pressure, it probably contributed to their growing mutual desire to limit nuclear capability. Indeed, by the mid-1980s, both leaders had begun preparing and signing nuclear arms reduction treaties.<sup>306</sup> It was by far an unexpected development, considering their open hostility in the early 1980s.<sup>307</sup> Wars had never been thought so dangerous, so immoral, so undesirable, and the pain they caused so mediated. Conversely, pacifist values were at their strongest since the Second World War, and contributed directly to the marginalisation, if not criminalisation, of defence policy.

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<sup>301</sup> Ord, *The Precipice*, 62. The author also mentions his experience with similar demonstrations occurring in Australia.

<sup>302</sup> Iain McLean, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2003, 841.

<sup>303</sup> Lindley-French, *A Chronology of European Security & Defence*, 104. Understandably, the terror was mostly on the European side, where nuclear warfare could have decimated the continent.

<sup>304</sup> Ord, *The Precipice*, 62.

<sup>305</sup> In 1985, Reagan mentioned that “a great many reputable scientists are telling us that such a war could just end up in no victory for anyone because we would wipe out the earth as we know it. » As for Gorbatchev, he later declared in 2000 that “models made by Russian and American scientists showed that a nuclear war would result in a nuclear winter that would be extremely destructive to all life on earth; the knowledge of that was a great stimulus to us.” Both quoted in Ord, *The Precipice*, 312.

<sup>306</sup> “U.S.-Soviet Relations, 1981–1991,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State), accessed May 28, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/u.s.-soviet-relations>. In December 1987, they signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty which, as the name suggests, eliminate land-based missiles of intermediate and shorter range (from 500km to 5,500km). It had no effect on intercontinental missiles (ICBMs). However, in July 1991, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) quantitatively and qualitatively limited ICBMs.

<sup>307</sup> “U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Agreements at a Glance,” Arms Control Association, accessed May 28, 2021, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/USRussiaNuclearAgreements>. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 had strained their relations, and the previous arm reduction treaty, SALT II, was abandoned.

Defence policy itself was also threatened of obsolescence. Edgar Morin, in his book *Penser l'Europe*, explains that the Europeans' politico-military "impotence" in the face of the US and USSR was so unbearable that they chose to "run away from reality."<sup>308</sup> What was the point of a common defence policy if Europe could not possibly hope to match the two superpowers? Pacifism was then to be the cornerstone of European unity. According to Morin, there used to be no European identity, since the Community had had nothing in common but antagonisms<sup>309</sup>: "the old European identity was fragmented by bellicose nationalisms. The new identity is that of pluralism, of *unitas multiplex*".<sup>310</sup> In the aftermath of the Second World War, the desire for grandeur, and nationalism, were viewed with suspicion, if not hostility.<sup>311</sup> In practice, it also put an end to European militarism – especially that of Germany<sup>312</sup> – and the belief of the use of force as legitimate. There were to be no more traditional enemies, no more conventional wars. Instead, enemies were then only ideological and rhetorical, suggesting that the military was becoming obsolete in its traditional form.<sup>313</sup> This idea gained popularity at the end of the Cold War, with the collapse of the USSR and what some called the victory of liberalism.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Morin, *Penser L'Europe*, 203-204.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid, 197.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, 217.

<sup>311</sup> For example, de Gaulle was intensely criticised by Britain and the US, and was portrayed as a dictator for his use of propaganda and his paternalist attitude. (Wall, *The Official History of Britain and the European Community*, Vol. II, 33)

<sup>312</sup> Morin, *Penser L'Europe*, 167. Germany abandoned after the Second World War its Prussian militarist tradition and embraced pacifism. Morin adds that it replaced ambition with consumerism.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid, 199. On this point, I strongly disagree with Morin. Ideological antagonisms are not inherently less violent, and can in fact more cruel than traditional wars. Raymond Aron in *Paix et Guerre entre les Nations* declares that "wars the causes of which are human in origins are, often, the most inhuman because they are the most ruthless." (Aron, *Paix Et Guerre*, 86), referring particularly to the crusades and the Second World War.

<sup>314</sup> This was, for example, the thesis of Fukuyama [la fin de l'histoire (regimes démocratiques n'entrent pas en guerre entre eux; post-cold war = end of history, without major wars; and end of nationalism)].

By the 1980s, the European Community had already fulfilled its pacifist objective.<sup>315</sup> There was no fear of intra-European conflicts. For Morin, pacifism also meant decolonisation. He called for Europeans to reject their colonial past in what he calls a “decolonising purification”<sup>316</sup>. Only by doing so would Europeans be truly pacified and focused on Europe, as France did with Algeria.<sup>317</sup> Decolonisation meant homelands would no longer need to protect overseas territories, as Britain did during the Falklands War. Furthermore, the idea of a military obsolescence was also hinted by a new form of warfare, which had already defeated both the USSR and the US. In Vietnam and in Afghanistan, guerrilla warfare and terrorism had enabled small forces to push back against the two strongest military in the world. Overwhelming legions of soldiers and military budget no longer meant a swift and easy war. Even the greatest superpowers could therefore be forced to the negotiation table, regardless of their might.<sup>318</sup>

Defence policy had been marginalised by the emergence of pacifism and the rejection of nationalism and hard power, which had lost its legitimacy.<sup>319</sup> Furthermore, the army was also losing its principal *raison d'être* under the influence of emerging ideologies such as globalism and post-nationalism.

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<sup>315</sup> In that regard, the European project was a success. In his speech on 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman had insisted on the importance of maintaining peace between European countries. He believed that the value of economic integration was primarily in establishing a harmonious relationship. Beyond economic results, the European project was first and foremost about pacifism. Schuman wanted from the beginning a supranational Europe, monitored by the UN to maintain the peace.

<sup>316</sup> Morin, *Penser L'Europe*, 170.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid, 167.

<sup>318</sup> In traditional war theory, it relies on the simple fact that victory is achieved only when the enemy has lost the will to fight. See Chapter 1.3 (“Gagner ou ne pas perdre”) of Aron’s *Paix Et Guerre*.

<sup>319</sup> Interestingly, there had been much opposition – especially from Britain – to the defence provisions in the Maastricht treaty precisely because the use of force was no longer thought legitimate. (Gnesotto, *L'Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 24)

### 3.2 Defence Policy in a Post-National Europe

Defence had also been impacted by the erasure of borders. During the cold war, this change was spearheaded by globalism and post-nationalism, both of which had a profound influence on international relations.

The rise of post-nationalism and federalism naturally transformed nationalist movements and national identities. After *l'Europe des Patries* and *l'Europe de la Commission*, a new kind of Europe emerged in the 1980s: *l'Europe des Régions*, or Europe of the Regions. Thanks to the federalization of Europe, regional movements found a new way to make their voice heard. It was no longer necessary to take up the arms to achieve independence, as the supranational arm of Europe permitted to circumvent national influence. There was a redefinition of nationalism in the 1970s, placing Europe as the solution. A study of the Troubles makes that clear. It was a conflict that took place primarily from about 1968 to 1998 in Northern Ireland. It opposed the Protestant unionists, who fought to keep Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, and the Roman Catholic nationalists, who wished to join the Republic of Ireland.<sup>320</sup> From the early 1970s to the 1980s, Irish nationalist parties used Europe to reach a favourable peace. An important player in the peace accords of 1998 was the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). John Hume, who became the party's leader in 1979, wanted to use European integration to facilitate the reunification with the Republic of Ireland.<sup>321</sup> Indeed, once John Hume was at the head of the SDLP, he used Europe to pressure both Britain and Ireland.<sup>322</sup> It led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, which formed the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference and promoted cross-border co-operation. The agreement also underscored Northern

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<sup>320</sup> See Jeff Wallenfeldt, "The Troubles". Encyclopedia Britannica, Accessed 2 May 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/The-Troubles-Northern-Ireland-history>.

<sup>321</sup> Philippe Cauvet, "Le Social Democratic Labour Party (S.D.L.P.) En Irlande Du Nord : Entre Nationalisme Et Européisme," *GRAAT On-Line*, no. 16 (February 2015), 39.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

Ireland's right of autodetermination.<sup>323</sup> Then, with Europe's support, and the realization of the Europe of the Regions, the SDLP moved toward post-nationalism. It was believed that post-nationalism could bring back peace for good, settling the conflict once and for all.<sup>324</sup> John Hume clearly expressed this idea later, when he wrote in 1996:

*"The European Union has blurred the traditional bounds of sovereignty and notions of territorial integrity... Both Unionists and Nationalists have always sought to express their rights in terms of territorial majority... but it is becoming ever more apparent that there are other valid norms we can assimilate... The changes that have taken place in Europe offer us the challenge to seek to replace bitter conflict with cooperation".*<sup>325</sup>

Hume describes borders not just as lines on a map, but as part of a system of values. In that regard, post-nationalism alters national identities through European integration. If borders generate wars, erase them. Conversely, post-nationalism, and therefore the federalisation of Europe, generate peace and should be pursued. Then, what defence policy should be adopted if European integration completed the pacification of Europe? With no internal conflicts to fear, Europe was to look outward. In the last years of the Cold War, a new approach to defence policy was promoted, born from the consequences of globalism.

Among the different definitions of globalism, the one that interests us is as an offshoot of internationalism, that is to say as a global "policy of cooperation among nations"<sup>326</sup>. It is well illustrated by the globalisation, which is a form of market globalism<sup>327</sup>, and the establishment

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>324</sup> See Cauvet, "Le Social Democratic Labour Party", 43.

<sup>325</sup> Quoted in Cauvet, "Le Social Democratic Labour Party", 43.

<sup>326</sup> Merriam-webster dictionary

<sup>327</sup> An example of market globalism is the generalisation of free trade agreements during the Cold War, which aimed to reduce tariff barriers and accelerate the flux of economic exchanges. It was best incarnated by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) signed in 1947. It went from 23 initial participants to 125 in 1995, when it was replaced by the World Trade Organisation. (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "General

and success of world-wide political organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and Interpol.<sup>328</sup> Leaving aside its economic perspective, globalism permitted countries from the other side of the world to have a political influence on others regardless of distance. During the Cold War, the UN and its General Assembly was a platform for international diplomacy. At wartime, it was a place where illegal behaviours were denounced (as Argentina's invasion was during the Falkland War), or punished – even militarily, as happened during the Gulf War, with the creation of a coalition. As such, it became a new player, and a new parameter for defence policy. The UN had made the maintenance of peace its indisputable prerogative, and established early that the will of the international community could not be ignored, even by the veto of the Permanent Members of its Security Council. This was asserted by the "Uniting for Peace" resolution of November 1950 (resolution 377). It enabled "the General Assembly [to] take action if the Security Council [failed] to act, owing to the negative vote of a Permanent Member, in a case where there [appeared] to be a threat to, or breach of peace, or an act of aggression."<sup>329</sup> This resolution gave the opportunity for smaller countries to have a voice at the international and to protect their right to peace. It meant that all countries, big or small, were responsible before the international community of not just their conduct of war, but of their belligerence. Therefore, in theory, the UN could get involved in any war. In practice, however, the UN Cold War military missions – assured by the international armed forces called the Blue Helmets – were mostly for observation, and making sure that cease-fires were respected.<sup>330</sup> As such, it

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Agreement on Tariffs and Trade." Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed on May 5 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/General-Agreement-on-Tariffs-and-Trade>).

<sup>328</sup> Interpol went from 50 members in 1955 to a 150 in 1989. ("Key Dates," INTERPOL, accessed May 28, 2021, <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Our-history/Key-dates>) Similarly, the UN more than tripled its initial membership of 51 in 1945 by the end of the Cold War, for a total of 166 members in 1991 ("Growth in United Nations Membership," United Nations, accessed May 28, 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/growth-in-un-membership>).

<sup>329</sup> "Peace and Security," United Nations (United Nations), accessed May 28, 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/peace-and-security>.

<sup>330</sup> "Past Peace Operations," Peacekeeping (United Nations), accessed May 28, 2021, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/past-peacekeeping-operations>. The UN was an important mediator

played the role of mediator in international conflict and, when necessary, was able to arbitrate on a legal level as well.<sup>331</sup>

In fact, Europe was also to make peacekeeping its new mission, especially after the Cold War. It was inscribed in the Maastricht Treaty that European defence policy also included “humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking”<sup>332</sup>.

In the end, European defence integration had been limited by NATO and the US’ influence. The Community continued to accept that its defence policy was dictated by the US, which undermined its attempts at defining a truly European approach. It did not help that federalism still encountered some resistance because of supranationalism, although said resistance only slowed down integration. Then, defence had been marginalised in the process of integration, making Britain’s contributions less valuable. Finally, the Cold War witnessed a change in popular values and war tactics which criminalised defence policy. The emergence of pacifism and post-nationalism devaluated the value of defence policy, especially when aggressive in nature, and brought about a new form of defence policy, based on the UN’s global peacekeeping mission.

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<sup>331</sup> International legal conflicts were dealt by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), one of the six principal organs of the UN. However, it could not condemn war crimes. This flaw became problematic in the 1990s, after the Yugoslavia Wars and the Rwanda Genocide, and brought about the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002.

<sup>332</sup> Article 17.2, Title 5 of the Maastricht Treaty. This change in the European approach became clear after the Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001). Gnesotto remarks that “peace preservation and crisis management became the top priority of Western democracies, [...] upsetting the traditional organization of armed forces.” (Gnesotto, *L’Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 27)





## Conclusion

To conclude, Britain's decision to join the EEC was directly impacted by her military decline. This decline derived from an economic growth that had been slower than the EEC members', leading to her industrial decline. Moreover, she had financial difficulties which resulted in the withdrawal of troops overseas and the demilitarisation of her economy. Her reduced military presence abroad provoked tensions with the US, and it signalled a loss of prestige and influence. This loss of influence was also due to the decolonisation process and the rise of the US and the USSR as the new superpowers. She was but a middle-sized country in front of their overwhelming defence budget and armed forces. It was especially worrying as the USSR was at Europe's door, and any war waged between the two superpowers meant the annihilation of Europe. The situation had been critical, and called for her entry into the EEC. She was to be part of this Community of Destiny whether she liked it or not, and she could not afford to stand alone. European integration was therefore seen as the solution to her economic, military, and political decline. Even so, entering the EEC had not been easy. The process took over a decade, from 1961 to 1973. France, under President de Gaulle, vetoed her application twice, and for the same reasons. The general's chief worry was that Britain had yet to show her commitment to Europe. In his eyes, the EEC should be considered as a third independent power, rather than the US' vassal. It meant forming a European defence outside of NATO's influence, which condition Britain could not accept. It was only with de Gaulle's successor, President Pompidou, that France relented and let Britain join the EEC in 1973.

The Europeanisation of Britain's defence policy had been slow politically. Britain's contribution to European defence was undeniable, and it was an asset in her European diplomacy. It was particularly true where Germany was concerned, as she had stationed there a fifth of her total forces. Her efforts were however marginalised by the EEC's focus on financial

contributions, which elicited bitter reactions from British leaders, such as Callaghan and Thatcher. The threat posed by the Soviet Union encouraged Europeans to stand together after the end of the *détente* in the 1980s. Thatcher signalled the end of a Europe protected by the US, as “[Europeans could not] rely forever on others for [their] defence”<sup>333</sup>. The European Community was to stand as an equal partner to the US. It meant staying loyal to NATO, while pushing for Europe’s rearmament. It was far from real military independence from the US, as NATO was an organisation led by the latter. Yet, it was a first step in that direction.

In contrast, European defence integration had been fast, industrially speaking. The late 1960s had been essential to the foundation of a European procurement policy. Collaboration on aircraft production was easy, and was the best way to start. As a result, Britain collaborated with France on helicopters and missiles, while setting up in 1968 one of the earliest R&D collaboration projects (the MRCA Tornado). Excluding Britain, it had involved 6 other participants, i.e., West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Canada. In the 1980s, multilateral procurement projects became increasingly popular in Europe. The MRCA project was expanded, and collaboration on aircraft such as the FH70 and SP70 went from bilateral to multilateral industrial collaboration. For all that, not all collaborations were successful. Despite repeated attempts, Britain was unable to co-operate with France on nuclear weapons and tanks during the Cold War, and her subsequent decision to make her own tanks had been disastrous in terms of sales. Even in the 1980s, countries walked out of European collaborations, nipping projects in the bud (i.e., the TONAL). Still, more than political will, it was the defence industry which had spearheaded European defence integration through procurement collaboration. It was in its interest to merge national firms into European consortia to resist American competition. Nevertheless, in time, the European Community was increasingly able to speak and act as one, if only during wartime. On the one hand, in terms of foreign policy, the Vietnam

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<sup>333</sup> Extract from The Bruges Speech, 1988.

War challenged Europe's reliance on the US, who aggressively pushed for its military support. The Community unanimously refused to get involved in their war, and merely played the role of mediator. Then, the Falklands War demonstrated an unprecedented sense of European solidarity. While no direct military support had been granted to Britain, the Community organised economic sanctions and supported her on the international stage. It sent a strong message that European governments stood united despite historical differences (in the case of Ireland) or domestic resistance (like in dev). On the other hand, the Gulf War showed Europe's ability to collaborate militarily. This collaboration was made possible by the specialisation of the Community's members. On the field, France and Britain worked directly with the US to repel Iraqi forces, benefitting from complementary technologies and expertise. Other Community members also contributed troops and aircraft, like Italy and the Netherlands, although to a smaller extent. Germany was a transportation hub for logistics and the wounded, while Britain's navy protected the maritime supply line. Each European ally had its own specific role, allowing the Community to work as a single machine rather than separate entities. As such, by the end of the Cold War, it is possible to say that Britain and other European countries had made great progress on European defence integration.

For all that progress, it is also true that European defence integration was far from complete. Even on the cusp of becoming the European Union, the EC was still divided by the question of federalism, and especially where defence was concerned. As such, the treaty of Maastricht left the possibility for a European defence community to future leaders. Additionally, the formation of a European army was still hindered by the continued reliance on the cadre provided by NATO, and thus by extension on the US. It also did not help that defence lost credibility and legitimacy. The mediatisation of the Vietnam War and of its devastating repercussions on civilians turned Western societies against military interventions. It revived the pacifist movement, which turned its attention to nuclear weapons after the Vietnam War. As a

result, the early 1980s witnessed waves of global pacifist protests during the second nuclear arms race, influencing for example the 1980s British political elections. It had also become clear that war should no longer be waged alone, no matter how superior one's army was. Guerrilla warfare had beaten the two mightiest armed forces in the world in Vietnam and in Afghanistan, further delegitimising military interventions. Moreover, post-nationalism also indirectly contributed to the marginalisation of the military. First, by erasing what it was supposed to protect: national borders. A nation is defined by its territory, itself delimited by a border. The federalisation of Europe blurred the concept of borders, with for example the implementation of the Schengen Agreements in 1985 and the Schengen Convention in 1990. Initially, an army was supposed to defend its national territory. Yet, between the removal of borders and the pacification of Europe after the Second World War, this prerogative lost some sense. The only relevant border became the Community's. It revealed an awkward gap between the existence of national armies and an increasingly federal border. It was an example of the two-speed European integration. Economic and political integration had been easier to agree to, while defence integration stalled. Secondly, national armies were expected to thwart armed rebellions. Such rebellions became less likely with the rise of pacifism and the emergence in the 1980s of the Europe of the Regions, which empowered regional separatist movements. European institutions provided a peaceful alternative, as it did for the Troubles. The marginalisation of national armies within and without national borders left them one final task, which was diplomatic in nature. Indeed, the rise of globalism through international institutions, such as the UN, meant countries could be held responsible for the way they conducted war. Those who did not follow the code of conduct could be sanctioned, and find armed coalitions formed against them. The EC partook in that policing. As such, by the end of the Cold War, the mission of European armies became more diplomatic, with the restoration of peace and supporting similar UN peacekeeping missions.

European defence policy had changed in nature after the Cold War. The Community members went from a defensive approach – protecting themselves from the Soviet Union – to fulfilling a political mission in the world.<sup>334</sup> In the beginning, Europe’s role as a preserver of peace was hampered by its maladjustment to the post-Cold War world. The Kosovo War (1998-1999) was an embarrassing moment for the European Union (EU), and was the turning point. From then on, the EU accelerated the transformation of its defence policy. During the conflict, the US had conducted 80% of NATO’s air operations, while Europe had been unable to satisfactorily mobilize even a portion of its 2 million soldiers.<sup>335</sup> It suggested that the EU was neither able to maintain peace nor to intervene militarily even when the war occurred at its doorstep. The EU therefore created the CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) in June 1999, and decided six months later to create a fast-response European army of 60,000 soldiers by 2003. It was to be deployable within 60 days and to maintain its presence on the theatre of operations for at least a year.<sup>336</sup> The CSDP itself explains that its role is to “[enable] the Union to take a leading role in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach toward crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets.”<sup>337</sup> In the decade after its creation, it performed 23 operations – military or otherwise – on four continents, totalling 67,000 deployed personnel.<sup>338</sup> The EU became a more reliable international partner, as illustrated by

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<sup>334</sup> Especially missions like EULEX Kosovo, which aim to propagate democratic principles, e.g. the Rule of Law. (Gnesotto, *L'Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 47)

<sup>335</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid. In 2004, the EU decided to develop further its flexibility by creating even smaller fast-response units called battlegroups. These units of about 1500 men were under the commandment of the EU, and could be deployed within ten days. (Gnesotto, *L'Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 43)

<sup>337</sup> “The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).” European External Action Service (EEAS). Accessed May 31, 2021. [https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/431/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/431/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp_en).

<sup>338</sup> Gnesotto, *L'Europe a-t-Elle Un Avenir stratégique?*, 45.

operation ALTHEA in Bosnia Herzegovina. European forces took over NATO's place as peacekeepers on 2 December 2004<sup>339</sup>, and the mission continues to this day.<sup>340</sup>

Progress on European defence integration has been slow since the creation of the European Union. While the Lisbon Treaty of 2005 has introduced a mutual defence clause, the EU has yet to take a significant step toward the construction of a European army. This debate still crystalises the opposition between federalists and those who are now called Eurosceptics, and calls from the former President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker in 2014 and 2015 to create a European army were met with dismissal.<sup>341</sup> For all that, defence integration has recently resumed for three reasons. Firstly, because of Brexit. Britain had been a major opponent to the formation of a European army, largely because she supported NATO and the concept of a loose European military alliance.<sup>342</sup> With her gone, a large obstacle to defence integration was removed. Secondly, because there was a new momentum in favour of the denationalisation of defence. In brief, this theory posits that since defence policy lost its significance on the national level, the army should come under supranational control for the sake of efficiency.<sup>343</sup> Additionally, defence is decreasingly seen as a defining facet of national identity<sup>344</sup>, meaning less resistance could be expected from nationalists. Finally, because it may be possible to encourage defence integration without taking away national competence. In fact, defence integration resumed under the project called European Defence Union (EDU), as proposed in February 2015. It was supported by the European Parliament the following year. Rather than to take military competence from member states, the project aims to help them

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>340</sup> "Military and Civilian Missions and Operations," European External Action Service, Accessed 1 June 2021, [https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en).

<sup>341</sup> Tomas Kucera, "What European Army? Alliance, Security Community or Postnational Federation," *International Politics* 56, no. 3 (June 2019): 323.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, 333.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid, 332.

fulfil their role as security providers.<sup>345</sup> Its objective is to improve European decision-making and defence co-operation between members. In the same vein, the creation of the European Defence Fund allows the European Commission to get involved directly in European defence by co-financing military research using EU fund.<sup>346</sup> This soft approach to defence integration may or may not bear fruit. Nevertheless, I believe that the EU is finally showing the kind of political will that can make a difference. The EU is, so to speak, ‘putting its money where its mouth is’, and the ball is now in the nation members’ court.

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid, 335.

<sup>346</sup> Chantal Lavallée, “The European Commission: an Enabler for the European Security and Defence Union,” Real Instituto Elcano, 26 April 2018, [http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano\\_en/contenido?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=%2Felcano%2Felcano\\_in%2Fzonas\\_in%2Fari59-2018-lavallee-european-commission-enabler-for-european-security-defence-union](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=%2Felcano%2Felcano_in%2Fzonas_in%2Fari59-2018-lavallee-european-commission-enabler-for-european-security-defence-union).

## Chronology

**24 October 1950**: proposal of the Pleven Plan and Treaty establishing the European Defence Community.

**29 October 1956 - 7 November 1956**: Suez Crisis. France and Britain become acutely aware of their decline.

**25 March 1957**: signature of the Treaty of Rome, establishing the EEC.

**1 November 1955 - 30 April 1975**: Vietnam War and gradual revival of pacifism.

**1961**: Proposal of the Fouchet Plan.

**10 August 1961**: First British application to join the EEC.

**15-16 December 1962**: MacMillan meets President de Gaulle at Rambouillet. They are divided on the matter of NATO.

**1963**: Britain's application is vetoed by France.

**1966-1969**: Creation of the CNAD (Conference of National Armaments Directors), and beginning of European procurement collaboration (Anglo-French production of helicopters Lynx and Puma, and first MRCA project for the Tornado aircraft)

**10 May 1967**: Second British application to join the EEC. It is vetoed by France again.

**1969**: de Gaulle resigns, Pompidou becomes France's President.

**1 January 1973**: First EEC Enlargement. Britain joins the EEC, along with Ireland and Denmark.

**2 February 1976**: Creation of the Independent European Programme Group (IEPG)

**1978**: Joint declaration between France, Britain, Germany and Italy for tighter industrial co-operation, MRCA expansion

**1981**: Nott Review ("The UK Defence Programme: The Way Forward") is released, advocating for further defence budget cuts.



**1 January 1981**: Greece joins the EEC.

**2 April-14 June 1982**: Falkland War.

**19 June 1983**: Stuttgart declaration, draft Union Treaty

**1 January 1986**: Spain and Portugal join the EEC.

**28 February 1986**: Signature of the Single European Act

**December 1987**: Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

**20 September 1988**: Margaret Thatcher delivers her Bruges Speech to the College of Europe.

**July 1991**: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)

**1990**: Britain and the Netherlands leave the Tonal project

**2 August 1990- 28 February 1991**: Gulf War

**1989-1991**: Gradual collapse of the USSR, starting with Azerbaijan's declaration of independence on 23 September 1989.

**December 1991**: Maastricht Treaty approved by European heads of national government.

**25 December 1991**: Dissolution of the USSR

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*PREM 19/1035*

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