Macron’s nuclear doctrine: the road to a ‘Eurobomb’?

The United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union leaves France as the sole nuclear power within the bloc. French President Emmanuel Macron has been quick to assert his position. In a speech to military officers in Paris on Friday, 7 February, Macron called for more military coordination between EU member states and proposed that France’s nuclear weapons system should play a central role.

On the surface Macron’s proposals appear to amount to little more than advocating classic ideas of nuclear ‘deterrence’, but with French, rather than US or UK nuclear weapons, at the centre of a new deterrence arrangement.

However, the proposals are significant, and significantly troubling, given the context within which they have been made. Macron points to the near-collapse of the global system of nuclear treaties and control measures as one of the motivations for a new approach to deterrence and ‘security’. He has previously called NATO “brain dead”. In his speech he correctly refers to a new ‘arms race’ and worries that

Continued on page 8 ...

NATO and ‘Defender Europe 2020’

Rae Street

Defender 2020 is described by the U.S. Army Europe as ‘the deployment of a division-size combat-credible force from the United States in Europe, the drawing of equipment and the movement of personnel and equipment across the theater to various training areas.’ Actually this will be the largest US military deployment in 25 years.

There will some 36,000 personnel – including 25,000 from the U.S. and units from Britain - across Germany, Poland and the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In other words the exercises will take place right up to the Russian border.

And it is lengthy. The drills will take place over five months, but mainly in April and May. Yet the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, said that Defender Europe is not directed at any particular country!

But no matter what the NATO leaders say, Defender Europe must be directed at Russia. The NATO exercise is all about moving troops quickly to counter an invasion. So that must be a Russian invasion, but there is no evidence that Russia is about to invade the Baltic states. The Russians have made it clear that they will not ignore this and will respond to what it perceives as threats to its national security.

At the same time, the U.S. is deploying what it calls ‘low yield’ W76-2 warheads on its nuclear armed submarines as part of a strategy to counter moves, says US Under Secretary of Defense, John Rood, by ‘potential adversaries, like Russia’.

A new arms race has been born. All of this is going to escalate hostilities with Russia. What is needed is a de-escalation and disarmament, not re-armament.

NATO, in the main dominated by US nuclear armed foreign policies, is a dangerous force not only in Europe, but across the world. We should be opening up the debate on its value and the dangers it represents.
Are Trident Submarine Commanding Officer’s absolved from responsibility?

Commander Robert Forsyth RN (Ret’d)

In an exchange of correspondence conducted with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) between December 2017 and November 2018 I sought to establish how a Commanding Officer (CO) of a Trident submarine could satisfy himself that obeying an order to fire was lawful, observing that they may not know their targets or the effects of their weapons on them.

The essence of MoD’s various replies consistently stated that Trident COs would only be ordered to fire within the constraints of International Humanitarian Law. This did not explain how this reconciled Article 33 of the Rome Statute and the Nuremberg Principles with the Joint Services Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict (JSP 383) which places direct responsibility on the CO not to obey an order which is manifestly unlawful.

Nuremberg Principle IV
“The fact that a person acted pursuant to (an) order of his government or of a superior does not relieve him from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him”.

Rome Statute
Article 33(1) states that superior orders ‘shall not relieve [the CO] of criminal responsibility unless:
(a) The person was under a legal obligation to obey...
(b) The person did not know that the order was unlawful; and
(c) The order was not manifestly unlawful.

More recently a former Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Nuclear, Chemical & Biological) has stated on a public website: “The SSBN command has no knowledge of the targets which the PM has ordered... [which] absolves them of the Nuremberg Principles, which are based on the simple fact that a subordinate subject to them has knowledge of the specifics of the order and discretion in carrying them out.”

The MoD have declined to comment on this statement but, assuming it does reflect MoD opinion, then the assumption is that the SSBN CO can totally rely on an order to fire as being lawful and so he does not need to form his own opinion. In the first case, the Attorney General’s misleading advice during the 2003 Iraq war, as documented by the Chilcot Inquiry, would seem to expose the fallibility of this assumption. Secondly, other international jurors may not agree that COs are so absolved.

Humanity faces two existential threats

Humanity faces two existential threats: increasing dangers of nuclear war and climate disruption. Human beings created these threats, which can only be reversed by mass popular actions.

2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the beginning of the nuclear era which threatens human survival today. It marks the birth of international efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, and the 25th anniversary of the UN Climate Change Conference. It also marks the 10th NPT Review Conference to be held at the U.N. in April and May.

Our international coalition of disarmament, climate, justice and peace organizations is organizing a World Conference, rally, march and petitions presentations in New York City April 24-26 on the eve of the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

We are engaging the broadest possible collaborations with nuclear weapons abolition, peace, justice and environmental constituencies as well as with diplomats and politicians from countries which are actively and meaningfully committed to achieving a nuclear weapon-free world, a sustainable environment and social and economic justice.

We are committed to preventing nuclear war, prohibiting and eliminating all nuclear weapons, and working in solidarity with the world’s Hibakusha. We are equally committed to stemming and reversing the climate crisis, to social and economic justice, and to building the intersectional movements we need to prevail.

For more information: see worldconference2020.org or write: JGerson80@gmail.com
On September 10, 2019, incoming European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen presented her ambitions for the next five years. In her Mission Letter von der Leyen stated that she wanted her team to be “a geopolitical Commission” that would be more “strategic, more assertive and more united” in its foreign policy approach. In a speech on the state of Europe two months later in Berlin, she stressed that “[s]oft power alone won’t suffice today if we Europeans want to assert ourselves in the world. Europe must also learn the language of power”.

**Hard power**

While the term “geopolitical Commission” is new, the call for a more muscular EU follows a clear impetus in EU security and defence since 2016. Among these were the 2016 EU Global Strategy, the launch of the process of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the introduction of a single military headquarters in Brussels and a new European Defence Fund (EDF). These initiatives were prompted by a widespread concern in Brussels with the EU’s ability to act in an increasingly ‘dangerous’ world. Developments in and around Europe, such as the so-called migration crisis at Europe’s Southern borders, a resurgent Russia in the East, Brexit, and criticism of NATO all invoked a sense of crisis that increased support for a more muscular, masculine, and more militarised EU.

While the EU assumes that a more militarised approach to foreign policy is the right and rational course of action to counter these threats and the multiple crises Europe is facing, critical reflection is gravely needed. First of all, what we are witnessing today in Brussels is a normalisation of militarism and the extension of militarism beyond the military proper. This allows for the transfer of military strategy, equipment and funding to other policy domains, such as migration or development.

A case in point is the European Peace Facility (EPF), a new fund of initially €10.5 billion for the next seven years. The new EPF explicitly allows for the provision of funds to non-EU partners to enable them to buy military equipment. Whereas peace organisations have called on the EU to stop the EPF and to “avoid investing in militarised approaches that are prone to failure and risk”, the EU’s diplomatic service, the EU External Action Service (EEAS), has defended the new approach by stating that “our security is not for free” and that “hard power has to complement soft power”.

**Militarising R&D**

Secondly, current EU initiatives blur the line between the military and the civilian sphere by militarising the EU’s Research and Development (R&D) funding, thereby fundamentally challenging “the nature of the European Union (EU) as a peace project”.

The institutional embeddedness of the EDF – currently organised under the newly created Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space – and the approach taken – focusing on market competitiveness, industrial regulation, and innovation rather than defence cooperation per se – present a significant development within European defence cooperation. This approach enables the EU to use its own budget to finance the development of military capacities, even if EU treaties do not allow for the EU budget to finance military instruments and operations. While this use of the EU’s budget for military purposes is unprecedented, the marketisation of security and defence limits our ability to hold the EU accountable in defence as it becomes increasingly subject to principles of competitiveness instead of governing and regulation.

**Whose security?**

Third, while the EU justifies militarism and the use of military force by referring to the need to protect on the one hand the ‘security, prosperity and democracies’ of European citizens, and on the other hand ‘lives abroad’, we should interrogate whose security the EU’s militarism is actually protecting and defending.

Militarism reduces resources for other public investments at home and abroad, such as social security. Moreover, it hinders the consideration of local contexts and structural causes of insecurity. Militarism – as a response to crisis – in this way reinforces causes and consequences of crises and produces new insecurities, particularly of already marginalised groups.

While the presence of militarism in European politics more broadly is not a new development, the EU is currently advancing militarism and ‘hard’ power – moving away from its normative power image – and legitimises this with reference to a set of crises encircling Europe. Yet, militarism produces more insecurity, especially for women and marginalised groups, but also for European citizens. It normalises aggressive forms of masculinities by valuing ideas of power, strength, and rationalism, and by connecting them to military force. That EU member states agree on strengthening EU security and defence in the current political climate should not surprise us. The idea that Europe is surrounded by threats and has to be protected from the dangerous world around us perfectly feeds into the current discourses of nationalists and populists in Europe.

Policy makers in Brussels and scholars have to reflect more seriously on the consequences of normalising militarism within security and defence and beyond if they are serious about addressing people’s insecurities.
Dave Webb, CND Chair

It may have been lost among all the fuss about impeachment, but on December 20 President Donald Trump signed the US National Defence Authorisation Act for 2020, rubber-stamping a record defence budget of $738 billion.

Not only did this Act allocate $71bn for overseas contingency operations (ie war) but it also established a Space Force as the sixth branch of the US armed forces and created a new senior military position to take charge.

At the signing, Trump said that forming a Space Force marked “a big moment” and that there were “going to be a lot of things happening in space. Because space is the world’s newest warfighting domain.”

US Secretary of Defence Mark Esper was quoted in Space News as saying that “outer space has evolved into a warfighting domain … Maintaining American dominance in that domain is now the mission of the United States Space Force.”

As US journalism professor Karl Grossman, author of the book Weapons in Space, commented, this has come about “despite the landmark Outer Space Treaty, which designated space as a global commons, to be used for peaceful purposes.”

The treaty was created back in 1967 by the US, the Soviet Union and Britain and most states are now parties to it.

It was devised during the nuclear arms race of the cold war and it only bans the placing of weapons of mass destruction in space.

However, according to Article 1 outer space should be “the province of all mankind” and “free for exploration and use by all states without discrimination of any kind.”

Trump claims that a Space Force is needed because Russia and China are militarising space, but Russia and China have tried for many years to expand the treaty and every year they submit a resolution to the UN for the “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space” (Paros), which would ban the placing of weapons in space.

Each time the US, and on many occasions Britain, has opposed and vetoed the move. As Grossman points out, “the weaponisation of space is essential to US imperialist ambitions for ‘full spectrum dominance’ over the entire planet” and we now have an arms race in space which is seriously undermining global security and greatly increasing the risk of a nuclear war.

Grossman also points out that much of the US space weaponisation programme can be traced back to the end of the second world war.

At that time Wernher von Braun and his team of scientists, who had developed the V2 for the nazis, were illegally smuggled to the US to continue their military programmes there.

They went on to develop a whole range of US missiles and rockets, including Pershing and the Saturn V rocket that was used for the US manned space missions.

Now the US Space Force is causing widespread concern and a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman called its authorisation “a serious violation of the international consensus on the peaceful use of outer space,” adding that it would “undermine global strategic balance and stability, and pose a direct threat to outer space peace and security.”

He went on to add that the world should now “adopt a cautious and responsible attitude to prevent outer space from beginning a new battlefield and work together to maintain lasting peace and tranquillity in outer space.”

This would seem to be a good suggestion as things are developing fast. In just a few decades outer space has become vital for global commercial, political and military interests.

In particular, the US military depends heavily on satellites for communication, navigation, surveillance, reconnaissance and the command, control and targeting of missiles and drone operations.

On January 14 General John Raymond, who was commander of the US Space Command, was sworn in as chief of space operations.

He has commented that there is a plan “to rename the principal air force bases that house space units to be space bases” and there is already an “official” US Space Force website.

Also, the 2020 military appropriations approved by Congress included $40 million for Space Force operations and maintenance and in a memo dated December 2, Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett also...
declared that France had allocated space programmes for some time but India have had extensive military programmes also will also be transferred.

Other nations are, of course, joining the new space race. Russia, China and India have had extensive military space programmes for some time but last July President Emmanuel Macron declared that France had allocated 3.6bn to its own military space force to take warfighting into space.

The following week Penny Mordaunt, British defence secretary at that time, outlined a new £30m space programme for the Ministry of Defence involving the development of small satellites.

The work will be supported by Artemis, a new transatlantic team involving British and US defence personnel working closely together.

This is not entirely unexpected. Britain designated space a Critical National Infrastructure in 2015 and Britain and the US have worked closely together on a range of military and intelligence programmes for years.

Britain also specialises in miniature satellites through Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL), founded in 1985 as a spin-off company of the University of Surrey.

In 2005 Elon Musk’s SpaceX company bought a 10 per cent share and in 2008 the EADS Astrium group purchased another 80 per cent.

SSTL has captured 40 per cent of the global small satellite market and the MoD has paid it over £4m to develop Carbonite 2, a small, low-orbit satellite launched in 2018 to provide high-resolution reconnaissance for intelligence gathering.

Artemis will probably be launched from a dedicated small-satellite launcher at the new Cornwall Space Hub at Newquay airport, or maybe one of those being developed at Sutherland in Scotland or in Snowdonia in Wales.

Mordaunt also announced that “today we show the sky is no longer the limit for our armed forces” and that Joint Forces Command will become Strategic Command and will co-ordinate the war-fighting domains: air, land, sea, cyber and space.

This echoes US Space Command, created in 1985 to co-ordinate the use of space by the US Air Force.

In 2002 it became part of US Strategic Command but was reactivated in 2019 as a precursor to Space Force.

Mordaunt talked too of facing up to “evolving threats” from “hostile actors in space” by working more closely with “international allies through Five Eyes, Nato” and also as the first partner in Operation Olympic Defender, a US-led international coalition aimed at deterring “hostile actions by rivals.”

Five Eyes is the intelligence-sharing alliance of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Britain and the US, established at the end of the second world war and described by Edward Snowden as a “supra-national intelligence organisation that does not answer to the known laws of its own countries.”

Originally formed to share intelligence on the Soviet Union, it has grown exponentially through the interception of electronic communications via satellites and fibre optic cables.

One major collection centre is the National Security Agency’s spy base Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire, and the alliance has now grown to at least 35 states, and includes 88 locations in US embassies and consulates around the world that eavesdrop on foreign embassies, communications centres and government installations.

Nato, of course, will also be participating. The London summit in December announced that it too would be developing a policy for warfighting in space.

In fact, many of the signatory states of the Outer Space Treaty are now deploying military satellites and four of them (the US, Russia, China and India) have also developed and tested anti-satellite weapons, representing a huge threat to international security.

If a vital satellite should malfunction at a time of international tension and another nation is blamed, the results could be disastrous.

There is some international resistance in the form of an international grassroots network that has campaigned against the militarisation of space for almost 30 years.

The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space connects activists and campaign groups around the world and co-ordinates an annual Keep Space for Peace Week in October to highlight the growing challenges.

Last October 40 events were held in 10 countries. The co-ordinator is Bruce Gagnon, from Maine in the US, who believes that the Pentagon is actively planning to fight a war in space.

He says that “this misguided notion is probably the most dangerous and frightening development of my lifetime – and I had thought the cold war era was bad. The idea that the US thinks it can fight and ‘win’ a war in space is indeed the height of insanity.

“We should call it Pyramids to the Heavens. The aerospace industry is the contemporary version of the Pharaohs of Egypt and the taxpayers will be the slaves … it’s more than the right time for the public to declare a resounding No.

“It looks like it will be up to citizens as politicians are too easily persuaded by huge companies such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman and SpaceX.”

Dave Webb is national chair of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and convener of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.
Steps to nuclear doomsday: US puts low-yield nukes on submarines

Scott Ritter

The US has deployed “low-yield” nuclear missiles on submarines, saying it’s to discourage nuclear conflict with Russia. The move is based on a “Russian strategy” made up in Washington and will only bring mass annihilation closer.

In a statement released earlier this week, US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy John Rood announced that “the US Navy has fielded the W76-2 low-yield submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) warhead.” This new operational capability, Rood declared, “demonstrates to potential adversaries that there is no advantage to limited nuclear employment because the United States can credibly and decisively respond to any threat scenario.”

The threat underpinning justification for this new US nuclear deterrent had its roots in testimony delivered to the House Armed Services Committee in June 2015 by US Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, who declared that “Russian military doctrine includes what some have called an ‘escalate to deescalate strategy’ – a strategy that purportedly seeks to deescalate a conventional conflict through coercive threats, including limited nuclear use.”

US Space Force conducts first ICBM launch after Moscow warned of threat of renewed arms race. However, any review of actual Russian nuclear doctrine would have shown this to be a false premise. Provision 27 of the 2014 edition of “Russian Military Doctrine” states that Russia “shall reserve the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and/or its allies*, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy. The decision to use nuclear weapons shall be taken by the President of the Russian Federation.”

Despite this, the concept of ‘escalate to deescalate’ as official Russian military doctrine had become ingrained in official US nuclear doctrine by 2018, with the publication of the US Defense Department’s Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). Moscow, the 2018 NPR claimed, “threatens and exercises limited nuclear first use, suggesting a mistaken expectation that coercive nuclear threats or limited first use could paralyze the United States and NATO and thereby end a conflict on terms favorable to Russia. Some in the United States refer to this as Russia’s ‘escalate to deescalate’ doctrine.”

In response to this “made in America” Russian threat, the 2018 NPR identified a requirement to modify a number of submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with low-yield nuclear warheads to strengthen US nuclear deterrence by providing US military commanders with a weapon that addresses “the conclusion that potential adversaries, like Russia, believe that employment of low-yield nuclear weapons will give them an advantage over the United States and its allies and partners.”

As was the case with Robert Work’s 2015 congressional testimony, the 2018 NPR did not provide the source for the existence of a Russian ‘escalate to deescalate’ doctrine, except to note that it originated in the US – not Russia. Nonetheless, based upon the 2018 NPR, President Donald Trump requested that the Defense Department acquire a new low-yield nuclear warhead for the Trident SLBM, setting in motion a process which culminated in the recent announcement that this new warhead had reached operational capacity.

In response to President Trump’s request, a letter, signed by a laundry list of notable American statesmen, politicians and military officers, including former Secretary of State George Schultz, former Secretary of Defense William Perry and the former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General James Cartwright, was sent to the Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell, stating that there was no need for this new “low yield” warhead. The letter furthermore noted that the premise of this warhead – the so called ‘escalate to deescalate’ Russian doctrine – was derived from a “false narrative” combining non-existent Russian intent with an equally fictitious “deterrence gap” that could only be filled by the new nuclear weapon. This letter fell on deaf ears.

At a meeting of the Valdai Club in October 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the issue of Russian nuclear doctrine, prompted by questions raised by the publication of the 2018 NPR. “There is no provision for a pre-emptive strike in our nuclear weapons doctrine,” Putin declared.

“Our concept is based on a reciprocal counter strike. There is no need to explain what this is to those who understand, as for those who do not, I would like to say it again: this means that we are prepared and will use nuclear weapons only when we know for certain that some potential aggressor is attacking Russia, our
The **Open Skies Treaty** is an agreement between 34 countries, that allows for the overflying of those countries that are signatories to the Treaty. Its main purpose is to gauge the disposition and the readiness of any potential foe. It is hardly mentioned in the public sphere but it is an important safeguard which makes a very serious contribution to keeping the peace. As an article by Dr. Anna Péczell in the *Bulletin of Concerned Atomic Scientists* makes very clear, if the United States was to withdraw from the Treaty then this would have major destabilising consequences. There is in fact growing suspicion that withdrawal is being seriously considered by the Trump administration following various hints from “media sources”. Up to about 2018 the Treaty had run relatively smoothly, any information being shared with the observed country and disagreements being sorted out by a Consultative Commission. If withdrawal was carried out by the US it is a virtual certainty that the Russians would reciprocate and opt out of the Treaty as well.

The problems started with Russia’s insistence that there should be no overflying over Abkhazia and South Ossetia, also limiting the total length of flight hours over the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. Since the Treaty came into force on January 1st 2002 there have been over 1,500 flights of course there have been disputes, for example when the Russians introduced a new advanced form of sensor. These sensors, however, do not impinge on the terms of ground resolution as defined by the Treaty. The US response was the banning of flights over the Hawaiian Islands.

It is possible that the Russians are at fault regarding their actions but maybe this is a response to all the other treaties the US has withdrawn from under Trump. Whatever their reasons, the US has much to lose by withdrawal, and the world would move closer to the precipice of Armageddon.

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**John Daniels**

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Europe “must collectively realise that, in the absence of a legal framework, they could quickly find themselves exposed to the resumption of a conventional, even nuclear, arms race on their soil.”

Macron’s diagnosis of some of the problems facing European security is rational enough. The collapse of the INF Treaty, Trump’s attempt to sabotage the JCPOA (Iran Deal) within which the EU and EU member states play a significant role, Washington’s apparent determination to scrap New START and the US President’s conduct within NATO are all deeply worrying signs. As has been previously argued in END Info and elsewhere, the current global configuration and the aggressive policies being pursued, amount to a ‘Global Tinderbox’ that puts humanity at substantial risk. What is far from rational is his proposal to meet the risks we all face by replacing US and UK nuclear weapons with French ones.

Macron’s proposals are not the first time that French leaders have attempted to ‘Europeanise’ their nuclear weapons. When similar such proposals were made in the past, both UK and German governments blocked them. With the UK out of the picture, Germany is the remaining ‘barrier’.

The comments of the senior CDU politician Johann Wadephul are therefore of some concern. In an interview that seems perfectly timed with Macron’s speech, Wadephul claimed: “We need to consider working with France on nuclear weapons. Germany should be ready to participate in this nuclear deterrent with its own capabilities and resources.”

Do Wadephul’s comments suggest a decisive change in the direction of thought from Berlin? Perhaps. What we do know is that the German government has fully supported the militarisation of the European Union which has been underway for some time. In addition, France and Germany have already signed up to the Treaty of Aachen (see END Info 9) which is intended to cement plans for future reforms of the EU, including a French-German defense and security council.

The Treaty includes provisions that extend existing NATO commitments on reciprocal defence by “such action as it deems necessary” to “by all means”. In the context of French nuclear weapons, “by all means” surely includes the Force de frappe. By what means might the Treaty of Aachen develop into a EU-wide doctrine? The wheels seem to be in motion.

The major problem with Macron’s proposal has nothing to do with replacing US and UK nuclear weapons with French ones. Whatever flag is pasted on the side of a missile, the missile and its warhead are unacceptable. The problem originates in the dogma of ‘nuclear deterrence’ itself. Macron’s ideas are no great innovation, but a mutation that should be rejected. ‘Deterrence’ will not ensure European peace and security. Another approach is needed. Total nuclear disarmament is required for the continent of Europe, not just the EU, to achieve real security. Steps towards European Nuclear Disarmament are underway with growing support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As we have argued before, the establishment of a European Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone is an essential component of a new approach to common security.