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MASTER OF DEFENCE STUDIES RESEARCH PROJECT

ST MALO: THE ADVANCEMENT OF BRITISH DEFENCE INTERESTS

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This Master of Defence Studies Research Project reviews the developments in British defence policy during the period 1945-1998 and proposes that the joint French-British announcement at St Malo in 1998 advanced British defence interests. The St Malo initiative was a reversal in British governmental attitude towards an autonomous European Union military capability but it enabled Britain to raise its standing in Europe. Furthermore, the British government maintained its special relationship with the US while the initiative laid the foundations for improved military interoperability, an improved European military capability, and by incorporating the European Union developments into a NATO framework, it maintained NATO's dominance as the primary European security organisation.

INTRODUCTION

> "The British are, by instinct, an international people. We believe that as well as defending our rights, we should discharge our responsibilities in the world."[1]

It has been claimed that the British Armed Forces are "woven into the historical and cultural fabric of the nation."[2] Notwithstanding this, Britain has undergone several major upheavals in its defence policy since the end of the Second World War. In the late 1940s, the major perceived threat to Britain was the Soviet Union and its communist allies, and NATO was formed to counter this threat. At that time, Britain still saw itself as a world power and its defence policies reflected the traditional stance of maintaining military influence throughout the world.[3] However, these ambitions and empirical responsibilities failed to be matched by the required resources so Britain focussed more and more on the defence of Europe against the Warsaw Pact through NATO.[4] By 1975, Britain's out-of-area military capability was virtually eliminated and the withdrawal of many residual forces deployed beyond Europe "marked the end of Britain's world role."[5] In concentrating on NATO, Britain resisted attempts, such as those by France, to create a more independent European military capability that was not reliant on US forces.[6] This strategy was maintained until 1998, when a joint British-French initiative was announced at St Malo. This initiative aimed to provide the European Union (EU) with a "capacity

[1] George Robertson, introduction to *Strategic Defence Review*; available from http://www.mod.uk/issues/sdr/intro.htm; Internet; accessed 21 November 2002.
[2] S Cowper-Coles, "From defence to security: current issues and practical realities," *Survival* 36, no 1, (Spring 1994), 146.
[3] Julian Lider, *British Military Thought After World War II* (Hampshire: Gower, 1985), 419.
[4] Stu0.02 0 0 10.02 313.123.35924 143.34006 Tm0.0.7602 310502 0 0 10.02 665 131.8161ce0roft, A Dor(m)Tj10.02 0 0 10.0281

for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces."[7] Thus, in formulating and committing itself to the St Malo initiative, Britain had adopted a new paradigm in defence policy; it was a "sea change in the UK's attitude towards EU defence…and is widely considered the start of the European defence project."[8] This change in the British government's attitude towards EU defence was linked its Strategic Defence Review (SDR).

The SDR was published only five months before the St Malo announcement and was a result of the newly elected Labour government; the SDR formed part of its election manifesto.[9] The Review concluded that defence policy should be led by foreign policy and it also created a new defence mission - defence diplomacy. This mission "reflected the [new] government's internationalist agenda and the desire that Britain should be a force for good in the world."[10] This internationalist agenda was further developed so that by 2002, Jack Straw, the British Foreign Secretary, claimed that "[g]iven our influence in many fields, and our investments overseas only coming second to the United States, we need an ambitious foreign policy with global reach."[11] He continued by declaring that "Britain has a clear and self-confident role…as one of the world's most influential nations."[12] For this to be true, the UK must be fully involved in world politics. It must also be at the centre of decision-making processes and have something to contribute in a wide range of circumstances, not least in the context of defence. Therefore, 'modern'

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[7] Maartje Rutten, Paper No 47, preface to *St Malo to Nice: European defence: core documents, Informal European Summit Portschach,* available from http://www.iss-eu.org/chaillot/chai47e.html; Internet; accessed 18 December 2002.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Stuart Croft, *Britain and Defence…*, 23.
[10] *Ibid*, 23.
[11] Jack Straw, Lord Mayor's Lecture, London, 13 November 2002.
[12] *Ibid*.

British defence policy should identify national interests and reflect the internationalist agenda of its government.

British interests that are examined in this essay include political relations, alliances and military capability. The SDR drew attention to "Britain's position as a leading member of the European Union and this was linked into Britain's membership of NATO and the importance of the United States."[13] Thus, Britain's standing in Europe had become a defence policy interest in addition to maintaining NATO's primacy in defence matters. British defence policy also includes the following four objectives: improving interoperability; developing a European military capability; establishing NATO/EU relationships;[14] maintaining a strong US relationship and preventing misunderstanding between the US and European partners.[15] These interests form the basis for the examination of the 1998 reversal in British defence policy at St Malo. This paper reviews British defence policy during the period 1945 – 1998 and seeks to demonstrate that the St Malo initiative advanced these British defence interests and objectives.

[13] Stuart Croft, *Britain and Defence…*, 23.
[14] UK, Ministry of Defence, *The Future Strategic Context for Defence* (London: Director General Corporate Communication, 2001), 17.
[15] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy 2001*, available from http://www.mod.uk/issues/policy2001/context.html; Internet; accessed 13 November 2002.

A REVIEW OF BRITISH DEFENCE POLICY DURING THE PERIOD 1945 - 1998

> When I was a boy Great Britain with her Empire was the richest and most influential power on earth. For generations the British Fleet had maintained the peace of the world…We lived in a golden age of prosperity and security – an age in which, if some foreign potentate looked like being troublesome, their lordships of the Admiralty sent a cruiser to the Baltic or Straits, wherever it might be, and His Majesty's Foreign Secretary dispatched a few well-chosen words of disapproval by hand of a King's Messenger to His Majesty's Ambassador – and that, as a rule, was that.[16]

British Defence Policy - Post World War II

One might be tempted to agree with the author and academic Julian Lider who wrote,

> military policy is always developed in close connection with foreign policy. Although it concerns both domestic and international affairs, the official views concerning its aims and contents are couched mainly in terms of foreign policy, and the main arguments for the specific shape and size of the armed forces are derived from that field.[17]

This is intuitive. Unfortunately, it has not necessarily been true for British defence policy during the Twentieth Century. Prior to the First World War, the War Office was the "grave of many a promising career in politics"[18] and defence policy in Britain was avoided by politicians to the extent that it was "often noted how the House of Commons emptied when defence debates were imminent."[19] Thus, many politicians wanted little to do with defence issues and, to make matters worse, a minister in the War Office had "a very slow office, an enormously expensive office, a not very efficient office, and one in which the minister's attentions can be entirely negatived by all his sub-departments, and

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[16] John Slessor, *Some British Strategic Problems*, lecture at the United States War College, April 1948 quoted in Julian Lider, *British Military Thought After World War II* (Hampshire: Gower, 1985), 419.
[17] Julian Lider, *British Military Thought…*, 417.
[18] Ian Beckett and J Gooch, *Politicans and Defence* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), viii.
[19] Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945* (London: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988), 2.

those of each of the sub-departments by every other."[20] Furthermore, before 1914, although the Treasury had the power to forbid the sanction of any expenditure by the War Office, it was more a matter of principle rather than actuality and the War Office acted almost independently of other government departments.[21] After 1918, public consciousness about defence issues was raised but defence policy continued to be formulated with little 'external' interference.[22] Unlike the US system, which comprised a network of committees to oversee Congressional decisions, Parliament had only two committees for accountability. These were the Public Accounts Committee and the Select Committee on Estimates and both were concerned with public expenditure rather than policy.[23] This lack of accountability often led to policies that were not well coordinated between the War Office and the Foreign Office, and divergent views between the two departments were sometimes caused by the dilemma that Britain "possessed much overseas territory yet lacked the resources necessary to defend it effectively."[24]

After 1945, Britain was determined to retain its status as a great power. Although the Second World War contributed to the collapse of the Empire, Britain did not lose any territory and, thus, formally retained its responsibilities and political influence in the World.[25] The 1945 Defence White Paper insisted that while "the security of the United Kingdom is one of the keystones of Commonwealth Defence…equally the United Kingdom alone, without the support of the Commonwealth, would lose much of its

[20] Hampden Gordon, *The War Office* (London, 1935), quoted in Ian Beckett and J Gooch, *Politicians and Defence* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), viii.
[21] Ian Beckett and J Gooch, *Politicians and Defence…*, xi.
[22] Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 3.
[23] *Ibid*, 3.
[24] *Ibid*, 31.
[25] Julian Lider, *British Military Thought…*, 419.

effective influence and power."[26] However, the main threat to European security had now become the USSR, which between 1947 and 1949, made direct threats to the sovereignty of Norway, Greece and Turkey. This, together with the coup in Czechoslovakia and the blockade of Berlin, led Western European leaders to act. The signature of the Brussels Treaty in 1948 "marked the determination of five Western European countries – Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom – to develop a common defence system."[27] America recognised the European commitment to defence and NATO was formed in 1949. This was seen as a success for Britain, although it also meant that its military was now formally committed to Europe in addition to its commitments to other parts of the world.

By 1950, the British economy was exhausted and its economic base from foreign territories and colonies could no longer be relied upon.[28] A relative economic decline against the US was also "irreversible."[29] Despite this and the commitment to European defence, a broad defence policy was maintained and Empirical responsibilities continued. British defence planners still viewed the Middle East as a "vital strategic area and the maintenance of our position in the Far East is essential to the security and well being of the Commonwealth."[30] This dichotomy of defence policy and affordability was compounded by the post of Minister of Defence still being regarded as a "political graveyard from which more able men escaped as soon as possible."[31] Moreover, "post-War politicians were to be faced with a generation of experienced professionals [the

[26] UK, Ministry of Defence, *1945 White Paper* (London: HMSO, 1945) quoted in Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945* (London: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988), 31.
[27] NATO, *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 2001), 29.
[28] Julian Lider, *British Military Thought…*, 419.
[29] *Ibid*, 419.
[30] UK, Ministry of Defence White Paper, 1950 quoted in Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 31.

military] who were accustomed to having their views heard and, frequently, acted upon without prior reference to competing civil authorities."[32] Therefore, during the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, the three Services often pursued their own agendas with little input from the Minister of Defence.[33] Little, it seems, had changed from earlier times and politicians did not wish to remain in the Ministry for long.[34]

In the 1950s, the Korean War and the Suez Crisis ensured that Britain's defence burdens remained as onerous as before and the country was still spending nearly 10 percent of its GDP on defence.[35] Recognising Britain's inability to continue to fund the military on such a scale, some senior officers argued for a concentration of capability on the nuclear deterrent in order to reduce expenditure on conventional forces.[36] This was resisted by the Army and the Royal Navy but the failure of operations in the Suez turned the tide against large conventional forces and "enabled the supporters of nuclear deterrence to triumph."[37] Thus, in 1957, the Defence White Paper declared that Britain would in future rely on nuclear deterrence for her defence.[38] The US had already adopted a similar stance, which had enabled it to "reduce considerably the size of America's conventional forces." This type of defence policy appeared to offer the British a similar opportunity to reduce the burden of its defence expenditure.[39] Therefore, the British armed forces manpower was planned to be reduced from 690, 000 to 375, 000 by 1962.[40] At the same time, it was proclaimed that Britain's nuclear capability would be truly

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[31] Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 39.
[32] Ian Beckett and J Gooch, *Politicians and Defence…*, xviii.
[33] *Ibid*, xix.
[34] *Ibid*, xix.
[35] Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 64.
[36] Lawrence Freedman, *Britain and Nuclear Weapons* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1980), 5.
[37] Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 64.
[38] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Defence: Outline of Future Policy* (London: HMSO, 1957).
[39] Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 80.

independent since Britain would both manufacture and deploy the weapons systems. However, this independence lasted only three years, after which the UK chose to purchase weapons from the USA.[41] Despite this focus on the nuclear deterrent, Britain's defence problems were not alleviated because the government did not reduce overseas commitments. Indeed, the defence obligations after 1957 remained as before, "but now with less manpower and in a steadily deteriorating economic climate."[42]

When the Labour Party won the general election in 1964, it had not been 'in office' for over 13 years. In general though, "the broad thrust of security policies was not a matter of dispute between the main political parties."[43] There were periods when the Labour Party had been "caught up in the debate" on nuclear weapons but, by 1963, support for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament had reduced and there was little pressure on the new government to tackle the nuclear issue for ethical reasons.[44] Nevertheless, Dennis Healey summarised his first impressions as Secretary of State for Defence as follows:

> Britain is spending more on defence than any other country of her size and wealth. We are still trying to sustain three major military roles – to maintain an independent strategic nuclear striking power, to make a major contribution towards the allied defence of Western Europe, and to deploy a significant military capacity overseas.[45]

In 1968, the Ministry of Defence finally agreedto withdraw from military commitments east of Suez. It was a change in policy that was forced on the British government by a series of economic and financial crises.[46] However, according to the Foreign Office, it

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[40] Michael Dockerill, *British*

was an unexpected and unpredicted move since only two months before the announcement, a Foreign Office Minister had assured Britain's Persian Gulf allies that "she had no intention of withdrawing her forces from the region."[47] Once again, there had been a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office. Notwithstanding this, the switch in focus from conventional forces to the nuclear deterrent had not produced the expected budgetary savings and the only route left open to the government had become a reduction in overseas responsibility.[48] Therefore, Britain concentrated on NATO in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s.[49] Britain also retained its independent nuclear capability, although by the mid-1980s, there were huge differences of opinion on this subject in Parliament.

The chasm in opinions between the major political parties was a paradigm change from the "consensus that had characterised the approach of successive British governments, Labour and Conservative, to issues of national security."[50] The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament had been reinvigorated following decisions to base US nuclear weapons in Britain and many people had come to fear nuclear war more than the Soviet Union itself.[51] In 1987, the Labour Party fought a general election campaign with a manifesto in favour of unilateral disarmament, the Social Democratic/Liberal Alliance could not agree on a defence policy, and the Conservatives supported the acquisition of the Trident SSBN strategic deterrent.[52] The Conservative Party were elected to

[47] *Ibid*, 98.
[48] *Ibid*, 98.
[49] UK, Ministry of Defence, *The United Kingdom Defence Programme: the way forward* (London: HMSO 1981).
[50] Martin Holmes, *et al, British security policy and the Atlantic Alliance: prospects for the 1990s*, (Washington: Pergamon Brassey's International Defence Publishers, 1987), vii.
[51] Stuart Croft, *Britain and Defence…*, 76.
[52] Martin Holmes, *et al, British security policy…*, vii.

government and, as a result, the 1987 Statement on the Defence Estimates defined the main defence roles for Britain as:

> the provision of nuclear forces, including the maintenance of an independent nuclear deterrent; defence of the United Kingdom itself, our homeland and a vital support base for NATO; land and air forces based in Europe and contributing to forward defence, together with the capability for massive reinforcement from the United Kingdom, if required; and maritime forces in the Eastern Atlantic and Channel Areas, and contributing to forward defence in the Norwegian Sea.[53]

By 1988, a colossal 95 percent of the defence expenditure was devoted to NATO commitments.[54] Then one year later, the defence strategic environment was transformed with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Post Cold-War British Defence Policy

> "And what now shall become of us without any barbarians? Those people were a kind of a solution."[55]

The bipolar world had provided a foundation for defence policy over many years. There were sporadic efforts at European defence cooperation but they "rarely rose above the modestly useful; almost all countries preferred to act within the wider NATO framework, given the focus of the times upon a single massive challenge to be confronted."[56] When the Berlin Wall fell, in 1989, this was no longer true. The influence that Britain enjoyed in NATO through its special relationship with America and its nuclear status "would be challenged as these elements became less important as NATO's

[53] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Statement on Defence Estimates 1987* quoted in Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 122.
[54] Michael Dockerill, *British Defence since 1945…*, 124.
[55] Cavafy, *The Complete Poems of Cavafy* trans R Dalven (Hogarth Press, 1961) quoted in S Cowper-Coles, "From defence to security: current issues and practical realities," *Survival* 36, no 1, (Spring 1994), 142.
[56] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation," *RUSI Journal* 146, no 2 (April 2001), 54.

security agenda broadened."[57] Furthermore, France was attempting to "limit the scope of NATO and to construct…some sort of European defence entity to look after European tasks, consciously separate from NATO and distanced from the United States influence."[58] In response to these challenges and to prevent the weakening of NATO, during the early 1990s Britain repulsed French attempts to drive a European initiative.[59] However, with all this political change, the UK needed to redefine the roles of its armed forces whilst restraining them to budgetary limits.

There is nothing new about defence reviews and, in the past, the UK has adjusted its security policy in relation to threats, political ambitions, economic interests and affordability.[60] Nevertheless, the environment in which defence policy was being formulated in the 1990s had changed dramatically from that in the 1980s. Many politicians thought that the end of the Cold War would make the World a safer place and this led to an expectation that defence commitments could be reduced. The Cold War concept of defence also reduced in importance as security became recognised as being dependent on political, economic and sociological influences rather than simply military power.[61] The new challenge for British defence policy-makers was to "devise a structure…appropriate to the new security structure and meeting our peacetime

[57] Andrew Dorman, *Reconciling Britain to Europe in the next millennium: the evolution of British Defence Policy in the post-Cold War era*, available from http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/doa01/; Internet; accessed 18 December 2002.
[58] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation," *RUSI Journal* 146, no 2 (April 2001), 54.
[59] Ibid, 54.
[60] UK, House of Commons Defence Committee Eighth Report Session 1997-98, *The Strategic Defence Review* (London: The Stationary Office, 1998), vol 1, xii.
[61] S Cowper-Coles, "From defence to security: current issues and practical realities," *Survival* 36, no 1, (Spring 1994), 142.

operational needs."[62] In 1990, the British government restructured its Armed Forces in what it called a "strategy-led but resource-disciplined" programme titled *Options for Change*.[63] However, the previous roles for the military were retained leading to the perception that the process was entirely resource-led.[64] In particular, reliance was placed on manpower ceilings rather than capabilities.

Following the Gulf War and deployments to Bosnia, the 1992 Statement on Defence Estimates provided a conceptual framework for defence in the form of "overlapping" roles for the armed forces, including "promoting the UK's wider security interests through the maintenance of international peace and stability."[65] The following year's Defence White Paper took this further by using these defence roles to devise military tasks, from which forces and capabilities could be derived.[66] Nevertheless, the House of Commons Defence Committee still criticised the process because it had not taken foreign policy into sufficient consideration.[67] In 1994, after the *Defence Costs Study* (DCS), the British government reaffirmed its commitment to a wider security policy and recognised that "defence policy is interleaved to a greater degree than in the past with foreign and economic policies in pursuit of our goals."[68] DCS resulted in the British Armed Forces becoming more deployable and sustainable, and a new Central Staff to coordinate defence policy and planning, military capability and equipment

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[62] Tom King, House of Commons debate 25 July 1990, available from http://publications/parliament.uk/pa/cm198990/cmhansard/1990-07-25/Orals.html; Internet; accessed 12 December 2002.
[63] Robert Mottram, "Options for Change:Process and Prospects," *RUSI* (Spring, 1991).
[64] UK, House of Commons Defence Committee Tenth Report Session 1989-90, *Defence Implications of Recent Events* (London: HMSO, 1990).
[65] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Statement on Def*

capability was formed. The defence policy itself was based on three roles. Defence Role One comprised home defence, and addressed the "preservation of an independent nuclear deterrent and the support to the civilian authorities in Northern Ireland."[69] Defence Role Two was the defence of Europe through NATO: this was the key role.[70] Defence Role Three was concerned roles outside the NATO area and support to the UN. The continuance of Defence Role One, mainly to justify Britain's seat on the UN Security Council, meant that the majority of defence cuts fell, once again, on the conventional forces.[71]

The support of the in-power Conservative Party for George Bush in the 1993 US presidential elections temporarily "soured" the British-US relationship because Bill Clinton was elected. At about the same time, a major reorganisation in NATO meant that Britain lost its one major command, whilst the EU and WEU appeared to grow in strength.[72] All this resulted in Britain being increasingly isolated in the international arena. Dr Andrew Dorman, Senior Lecturer at the UK's Joint Services Command and Staff College, described the situation as follows:

> For Britain and British defence policy the early years of the post-Cold War era were traumatic. The increased institutional competition between the various European institutions weakened Britain's position in comparison to its West European counterparts whilst the cooling of the special relationship left Britain no real counter-weight to the Franco-German axis within these institutions. Moreover, the cutbacks in defence had left Britain with poorly equipped forces, over-stretched in terms of overseas deployments and largely planning for traditional military tasks. As a result, Britain found itself caught between the two stools of the special relationship with America and a central role in Europe.[73]

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[68] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Statement on Defence Estimates 1995* (London: HMSO, 1995), 9.
[69] Andrew Dorman, *Reconciling Britain…*
[70] *Ibid*.
[71] *Ibid*.
[72] *Ibid*.
[73] *Ibid*.

Nevertheless, the priorities and roles of the military remained unchanged, and the 1995 Defence Estimates reflected exactly the same policies as those espoused in the early 1990s. By 1997, British defence policy had become outdated because it placed "too much emphasis on the possibility of a major threat to the UK."[74] This only served to raise debates between the 'Europhiles' and 'Eurosceptics' on subjects involving Europe. In particular, "eight 'rebel' Conservative MPs published a 'Mission Statement'…[which] contained a demand that 'foreign policy and defence responsibilities should be removed from the competence of EU treaties.'"[75] The government's position was that, while it supported the existence of the EU's Common Security and Foreign Policy (CFSP), it was opposed to deeper integration.[76] This point was not contested by the Labour Party whose Shadow Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, declared that he saw no case for merging the CSFP into the "bureaucratic machinery of Brussels or establishing a European army."[77] With all of this in mind, and perhaps as an attempt to take on the Conservatives in the issue of defence, the Labour Party fought the 1997 election with a pledge in its manifesto to:

> conduct a strategic defence and security review to reassess our essential security and defence needs. It will consider how the roles, missions and capabilities of our armed forces should be adjusted to meet the new strategic realities. The review we propose will be foreign policy led, first assessing our likely overseas commitments and interests and then establishing how our forces should be deployed to meet them.[78]

[74] Michael Howard, introduction to *Documents on British Foreign and Security Policy,* vol 1 (London: The Stationary Office, 1998), xv.
[75] *Ibid*, 330.
[76] *Ibid*, 331.
[77] *Ibid,* 331.
[78] *New Labour because Britain deserves better*, Labour Party Election Manifesto, 1997.

The Strategic Defence Review

Compartmentalising of policy between NATO and the rest of the World could no longer be applied following the break-up of the Soviet Union. The Labour Party won the General Election in May 1997 and two weeks later, George Robertson as the new Secretary of State for Defence, ordered a "process of consultation with the widest possible range of expertise in defence and related areas."[79] This process became the Strategic Defence Review (SDR). It was published on 8 July 1998 and was aimed at "modernising and reshaping our Armed Forces to meet the challenges of the 21st century."[80] Moreover, it was "grounded in foreign policy."[81]

In the policy framework of SDR, NATO was designated as the basis for security.[82] The SDR also asserted that Britain was a "major European State and a leading member of the European Union…[whose] economic and political future is as part of Europe."[83] Nevertheless, it expected all military functions to take place within NATO and little reference was made to Britain's European allies.[84] December 1998 brought with it the shock of the summit meeting at St Malo between the UK and France. At this summit, Prime Minister Blair announced the "sea change" in the United Kingdom's attitude towards European Union defence and the lifting of its decades-long objections to the Union acquiring an autonomous military capability.[85] The Summit agreed that:

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[79] George Robertson, *Strategic Defence Review Foreword*, available from http://www.mod.uk/issues/sdr/foreword.html; Internet; accessed 13 November 2002.
[80] UK, Ministry of Defence, *The Strategic Defence Review*, (London: The Stationary Office, 1998), 1.
[81] *Ibid*, 1.
[82] UK, Ministry of Defence, *SDR: The Policy Framework*, available from http://www.mod.uk/issues/sdr/framework.html; Internet; accessed 13 November 2002.
[83] *Ibid*.
[84] Ken Alred *et al*, *The Strategic Defence Review: How Strategic? How much of a Review?* vol 46 (London: Centre for Defence Studies, 1998), 37.
[85] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation," *RUSI Journal* 146, no 2 (April 2001), 54.

> by the year 2003 they [EU Member States] should have modernised their armed forces so as to be able to draw from a pool of deployable units (15 brigades) to tackle the most demanding crisis management tasks, in operations up to corps level (up to 50, 000 to 60, 000 personnel, together with appropriate air and naval elements). These forces are to be militarily self-sustaining for at least a year.[86]

The *NATO Review* described the decision by the British government to use the EU as a framework for improving European defence capabilities as a change of "Copernican proportions: after all, one of the reasons for the failure of attempts to establish a European Defence Community in the early 1950s was the British refusal to be part of it."[87] Before the reasons for the change in Britain's defence policy are examined, this essay highlights some of the changes and agreements in NATO, the Western European Union (WEU) and the EU during the years preceding the St Malo announcement.

[86] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Statement on Defence Estimates, 1999*, available from http://www.mod.uk/policy/wp99; Internet: accessed 27 January 2003.
[87] Francois Heisbourg, "European Defence Takes a Leap Forward," *NATO Review* 48, issue 1 Spring 2000 [journal available on-line]; available from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2000/0001-03.htm; Internet: accessed 7 March 2003.

NATO, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

In the introduction to *Documents on British Foreign and Security Policy*, Professor Michael Howard advises readers to "take a deep breath before plunging into the thicket of documentation" on defence, NATO and the EU.[88] There are many books, articles and sources of comment on these subjects. The aim of this section of the paper is to provide a brief description of the developments in European security by reviewing the associated developments in NATO, the EU and the WEU. The three organisations cannot easily be separated when discussing European security issues and this section, therefore, adopts an approach that encompasses both chronological order with significant changes to security policy. Four themes recur throughout the past 60 years of European security history: the threat to European security, US engagement with demands for acceptable burden sharing, political equality between member-nations, and aspirations to develop a "more closely coordinated European defence effort."[89] These themes will be explored to provide a context for changes to NATO, the WEU and the EU, albeit from a British perspective.

From the Brussels Treaty to the Western European Union

By 1948, the Soviet Union was perceived to have become a direct threat to the security of Western Europe. A commitment for self-defence was, therefore, sought from several of the western European nations and this led Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to sign the Brussels Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence in March 1948. Thus, the Brussels Treaty Organisation (BTO) was formed. Nevertheless, Britain also recognized that

[88] Michael Howard, introduction to *Documents on British Foreign and Security Policy*…, xvii.

European defence could only be truly achieved with US support. In signing the Brussels Treaty, the European nations had not only guaranteed military assistance to one another if attacked, but also demonstrated a commitment to European security as a whole. This assisted Senator Vandenberg in persuading the US Congress of the need for a trans-Atlantic defence pact and the Vandenberg Resolution was passed in June 1948, allowing the US to "adhere to collective defence alliances" in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.[90] Less than two weeks later, the Soviet Union imposed a blockade on Berlin in an attempt to disrupt the western defence schemes, but the effect served merely to accelerate the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. This was completed on 4 April 1949 by the members of the BTO, the US, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Portugal, creating NATO.[91] Soon after the Treaty was signed, Field Marshal Montgomery persuaded NATO members to incorporate the military functions of the BTO into NATO in order to avoid duplication of effort.[92]

Despite the fact that NATO dominated European security issues from thereon, it is worth noting that the Brussels Treaty "also recognized that Europe's security could only be provided by parallel efforts in the economic and social spheres."[93] Furthermore, in some important regards, the Brussels Treaty went beyond the North Atlantic Treaty.[94] For instance, Article V of the Brussels Treaty commits members in the event of an armed

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[89] Eurogroup, *Western Defense; the European role in NATO* (Brussels: 1988), 4.
[90] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest for European security* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Limited, 2000), 14.
[91] Petra Hassinen, *Western European Union – History and Future Prospects*, available from http://www.mv.helsinki.fi/home/phassine/leipa2.htm; Internet: accessed 23 March 2003.
[92] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 14.
[93] *Ibid*, 14.
[94] *Ibid*, 40.

attack to "afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid in their power," whereas NATO Article V only requires parties to "assist…as it deems necessary."[95]

In 1950, the US called for the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to be integrated into Western European defence to increase the ability of Europe to defend itself while the US was also involved in the Korean War. However, this idea was "unpalatable" to the French, who were still wary of a strong Germany.[96] By 1951, US frustration at the lack of progress on the integration of the FRG into NATO, led the former American Ambassador to great Britain, Joseph Kennedy, to demand a withdrawal of US military forces from "Berlin and, more generally, an ungrateful Western Europe."[97] Threats such as this spurred attempts to find solutions to the inclusion of the FRG in European defence and burden sharing, but again little substantial was achieved because the member-states could not reach collective agreement.[98] Then, in 1954, the US proposed two options for the defence of Europe: "bring Germany into NATO with the Federal government agreeing voluntarily to limit its arms *or*, if the French should object, to go ahead with a defence agreement without the cooperation of the French."[99] The British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, reluctantly agreed with the options until he remembered that the Brussels Treaty could be a solution to the impasse because it was non-discriminatory and it was not supra-national.[100] This appeared to meet the various criteria set by nations and a proposal was made that if the FRG were allowed to join the BTO, then both the US and Britain would commit themselves to keeping troops in

[95] NATO, *Handbook…*, 528.
[96] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 17.
[97] *Ibid*, 21.
[98] Werner Feld, *The future of European security and defense policy* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 73.
[99] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 37.
[100] *Ibid*, 37.

mainland Europe. France saw this as a victory because the Brussels Treaty placed arms restrictions on Germany and France had "finally attained assurances from Britain that it would never be left alone with a re-armed Germany."[101] Britain saw it as a victory because the US was now committed to maintaining troops in Europe. The FRG was content because it was included in a west European defence pact and the US hoped that an additional country would spread the burden of defence. When the Modified Brussels Treaty was signed, in October 1954, the WEU was formed. As a consequence of this and an agreement on the territorial status of Saar, it also became possible for the FRG to become a member of NATO.[102] These agreements, however, did not suit the Soviet Union and it renounced bi-lateral treaties made with Britain and France during the Second World War. Furthermore, in 1955, the Soviet Union signed a defensive treaty with seven satellites to form the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. "The alliance structures that dominated European security for the remainder of the Cold War were thus established."[103]

Re-birth of the Western European Union

The EU was formed on the basis of the Treaty of Rome in March 1957.[104] Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands initially signed the Treaty and formed the European Economic Community (EEC). However, the WEU was not used to establish a European security dimension to the EEC and it placed itself in a "position of secondary importance" to NATO.[105] As such, between 1954 and 1973, the WEU mainly provided channels of communication between individual nations, NATO

[101] *Ibid*, 38.
[102] Werner Feld, *The future of European security…*, 73.
[103] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 41.
[104] NATO, *Handbook…*, 352.

and the EEC. However in 1973, when Britain joined the EEC, even this role became largely irrelevant.[106] As a result, the WEU became almost inactive until 1984 and, as the European countries forged stronger economies, they continued to rely on the US presence for security through NATO.[107]

In 1981, the German and Italian foreign ministers, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Emilio Colombo, suggested extending the role of the European Community to include security issues but, once again, the member-states could not reach agreement.[108] The failure of the initiative prompted those countries in favour to look for another framework of consultation.[109] France, which had withdrawn from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966, was keen to develop a European security initiative and it proposed tri-lateral discussions with the UK and the US to progress its ideas.[110] However, several states in Europe were concerned about their exclusion from the proposed discussions and advocated the use of the WEU as a forum for exploring European security issues. This did not please all the European nations though. The FRG, for example, was reminded of its inferior status due to the arms restrictions in the Brussels Treaty. In addition, the UK and the Netherlands were not keen to resurrect the WEU in case it became a challenge to NATO.[111] Nevertheless, in the absence of any other appropriate suggestions, the WEU was reactivated in 1984 to be the focus for western European security matters.

By the time the WEU was reactivated, the European Community and its member-nations had developed economically and politically, and while "many interests were the

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[105] Werner Feld, *The future of European security*..., 74.
[106] WEU website, available from http://www.weu.int/History.htm; Internet; accessed 5 December 2002.
[107] Werner Feld, *The future of European security*..., 74.
[108] *Ibid*, 146.
[109] WEU website.
[110] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest*..., 74.
[111] *Ibid*, 74.

same as those of the major superpowers…there were other interests that were disparate from those of the US or the USSR."[112] Some European nations felt that the US had made important security decisions without sufficient consultation. Examples of this include the evolution of the Strategic Defence Initiative, in 1983, the Gorbachev-Reagan deal to reduce strategic nuclear weapons and the US air strike on Libya, both in 1986.[113] As was noted by Werner Feld, "the issue of true consultation among the alliance partners has on occasion been a sore subject for West Europeans."[114] This lack of consultation "encouraged greater exploration of European security cooperation" and, by 1987, the WEU had become a platform on European security interests, in which countries affirmed their determination to provide an integrated Europe with a security and defence dimension.[115] This platform also defined the WEU's relations with NATO and set the conditions for enlargement. Moreover, the Europeans began to see the WEU as a "potentially useful base upon which to build an all-European security and defense policy system."[116] In 1988, during an examination of the European role in NATO, the following points were highlighted:

1. "Developments have given rise to the debate about whether the Europeans are doing enough to insure their own defense."[117]

2. "The Alliance is likened to a bridge spanning the Atlantic and supported on twin pillars, Europe and North America. If the structure is to remain sound, the two pillars must be strong and evenly matched."[118]

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[112] Steven Bethlen, and I Volgyes, *Europe and the Superpowers; Political, Economic and Military Policies in the 1980s* (London: Westview Press, 1985), x.
[113] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 73.
[114] Werner Feld, *The future of European security…*, 2.
[115] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 73.
[116] Werner Feld, *The future of European security…*, 1.
[117] Eurogroup, *Western Defense; the European role in NATO* (Brussels: 1988), 1.
[118] *Ibid*, 4.

3. "Pressures to reduce the United States trade deficit and government spending have given new life to old arguments about burden-sharing within NATO."[119]

These issues were not new and they would continue to arise.

Post-Cold War Developments in European Security

The beginning of the 1990s saw two dramatic changes in European order: the end of the Cold War and the change from the European Community to the European Union. The combination of these two events was important for three reasons. Firstly, many former Warsaw Pact nations wanted to join the European Union because it was seen as a symbolic return to Europe that also offered economic benefits to members.[120] Secondly, a radically changed East-West relationship spurred "calls for European security systems [to be] closely tied to the EC."[121] Thirdly, the changed geo-political context of European defence challenged both the nature and the requirement for NATO.[122]

In December 1991, the *Maastricht Treaty on European Union* was the "first to contain provisions anchoring the Union's responsibility for all questions relating to its security, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy."[123] The major rationale for this was the,

> acceptance of the need for a higher profile on the international scene in order to be able to give a collective response to a clear demand made on Europe, to work together to defend its common interests, and to contribute to the creation of a fairer, more efficient world order that respects the EC's values, in particular human rights.[124]

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[119] *Ibid*, 18.
[120] Michael Howard, introduction to *Documents on British Foreign and Security Policy,* vol 1 (London: The Stationary Office, 1998), xvii.
[121] Werner Feld, *The future of European security…*, 19.
[122] *Ibid*, 144.
[123] Dr Eckhard Lubkemeier, "European Security and Defence Policy: A Key Project for European Unification," *RUSI Journal* 146, issue 5 (December 2001), 19. He is the Head of the European Security and Defence Policy Section at the German Foreign Ministry.
[124] Werner Feld, *The future of European security…*, 36.

In the Maastricht Treaty, it was agreed that although the EU would not have its own military forces or equipment, it could request the WEU to "elaborate and implement decisions and actions."[125] Many EU member states were keen to develop a common foreign and security policy to give them "one voice in world affairs."[126] Britain, however, did not support this approach because of the potential to weaken NATO, but could do little to stop it.[127] Thus, in November 1993, a three-pillared structure was established: Pillar I involves mainly economic policies; Pillar II deals with foreign and security policy; and, Pillar III contains justice and home affairs policies.[128] The aims of the CFSP are officially defined as follows:

1. safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union;
2. strengthen the security of the Union and its Member States in all ways;
3. preserve peace and strengthen international security;
4. promote international cooperation; and,
5. develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.[129]

Although the rhetoric and statements in the CFSP were full of promise, they were also sufficiently broad that governments could interpret them as they saw fit. Hence, the CFSP did not implement real improvements in Western Europe's ability to undertake

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[125] Dr Eckhard Lubkemeier, "European Security and Defence Policy: A Key Project for European Unification," *RUSI Journal* 146, issue 5 (December 2001), 19.
[126] *European Defence*, "A European Army?" available from http://www.european-defence.co.uk/article9.html; Internet; accessed 18 October 2002.
[127] Werner Feld, *The future of European security*…, 39.
[128] Pillar I is the legal framework for EU policies relating to the single market, international trade, development assistance, monetary policy, agriculture, fisheries, environment, regional development, energy, etc; Justice and Home Affairs, covers cooperation within the Union in areas such as civil and criminal law, immigration and asylum policy, border control, drug trafficking, police cooperation and exchange of information.
[129] EU website, "Common Foreign and Security Policy," available from http://ue.eu.int/pesc/pres; Internet; accessed 22 January 2003.

crisis management-type operations. The inability of the EU to deal with European security issues was exposed during the crisis in the former Yugoslavia in the period 1991-1995.[130] Therefore, France and Germany launched a plan for the integration of the WEU and the EC by 1996.[131] Italy, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Greece and Luxembourg supported the plan but, once again, Britain was opposed to it because of fears that it would weaken NATO.[132] Britain maintained this position until the dramatic announcement at St Malo of its intention to lead, with the French, in the formation of an autonomous EU military capability.

According to Maartje Rutten's examination of European core documents in a 2001 Chaillot Paper titled *From St Malo to Nice*, "St Malo is widely considered as the start of the European defence project. The new opportunity presented by St Malo was very rapidly followed up by a multitude of farther-reaching declarations and proposals."[133] This included the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) at the Cologne European Council on 3-4 June 1999, in which the central aim was to "complete and thus strengthen the EU's external ability to act through the development of civilian and military capabilities for international conflict prevention and crisis management."[134] Furthermore, Dr Eckhard Lubkemeier claimed that "if the EU member states work together successfully in these fields, this will help forge a common

[130] *European Defence*, "A European Army?" …
[131] Werner Feld, *The future of European security*…, 39.
[132] *Ibid*, 40.
[133] Maartje Rutten, Paper No 47, *From St Malo to Nice: European defence: core documents, Informal European Summit Portschach,* available from http://www.iss-eu.org/chaillot/chai47e.html; Internet; accessed 18 December 2002.
[134] Dr Eckhard Lubkemeier, 'European Security and Defence Policy'…, 19.

identity and will deepen integration. The ESDP is therefore also a key project for the further unification of Europe."[135]

In December 1999, the European Council set the Headline Goal. It is the "most politically prominent component of the ESDP project"[136] and, in terms of military capabilities, it requires the ability "by the year 2003, to deploy within sixty days, and sustain for at least one year up to 60, 000 persons capable of carrying out the full range of Petersberg Tasks."[137] The Petersberg Tasks are "humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking."[138] It is unlikely that this can be achieved by the end of 2003 but the intent to improve and contribute effective forces seems to have been sustained since further decisions have been made on issues such as military structures to provide control and direction in a crisis and permanent arrangements have been made with NATO on "consultation and cooperation."[139]

In the post-Cold War period, NATO had also been attempting to make its security and defence role more applicable to the new strategic context.[140] For example, NATO endorsed "separable but not separate forces that could be made available for European-led crisis response operations other than collective defence" in 1994.[141] In 1996, agreements were made to allow the WEU access to NATO assets and NATO foreign

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[135] *Ibid*, 19.
[136] Ben Lombardi, *European Security and Defence Policy: The Military Component of the Headline Goal*, Occasional Paper 1/2002 for the Department of National Security Studies Canadian Forces College, July 2002, ii.
[137] EU, 'Common Foreign and Security Policy,' available on-line at http://ue.eu.int/pesc/pres accessed 22 January 2003.
[138] Dr Eckhard Lubkemeier, "European Security and Defence Policy'…, 19.
[139] EU, 'Common Foreign and Security Policy.'
[140] Werner Feld, *The future of European security*…, 1.
[141] NATO Fact Sheets, "Strengthening European Security and Defence Capabilities," available from http://www.nato.int/docu/facts/2000/dev-esdi.htm; Internet; accessed 18 October 2002.

ministers also decided to build up the European Strategic Defence Initiative (ESDI) within the Alliance.[142] The goals of the ESDI were to enable the European nations "to make a more coherent and effective contribution to Alliance missions and activities, to reinforce the trans-Atlantic partnership and to allow European Allies to act by themselves as required."[143] Later developments included the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1997, which incorporated the Petersberg Tasks into the Treaty on European Union.[144] In particular it was agreed that:

> the Secretary General of the European Council would assume the functions of High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy; a Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit would be established under his responsibility; the EU would draw up, together with the WEU, arrangements for enhanced cooperation between them within a year from the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam; humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking (the so-called 'Petersberg Missions' of the WEU) would be included in the revised Treaty (Article J.7).[145]

In an attempt to ensure NATO was a useful and evolving organisation, in 1997 at the Summit Meeting in Madrid, NATO leaders requested another review of the Alliance's Strategic Concept; a fundamental review of the roadmap of Alliance tasks and the means to achieve them. NATO had also launched initiatives such as the Combined Joint Task Forces that were designed to improve the defence capabilities of the Alliance. These initiatives aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of future multi-national operations across the full spectrum of Alliance missions and focused especially on improving interoperability among Alliance forces. In addition they were designed to make these forces more mobile, sustainable and effective.

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[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] Dr Eckhard Lubkemeier, "European Security and Defence Policy'…, 19.

Despite all of these agreements, by 1998 little had been achieved in real terms: there had not been any substantial improvements in the capability of European forces and burden sharing was still unequal in American eyes. NATO's European members spent approximately 60 percent of what the US did on defence and while they held standing forces of 2.4 million personnel, one million more than the US, the spending on equipment per soldier was only one third of the US equivalent. Thus the European allies had forces that could not easily deploy out-of-area and that were "out of sync with the requirements of the post-Cold War era."[146] With this as a background, the essay will now examine the reasons why Britain reversed its policy on an EU military capability.

[145] *NATO Handbook…*, 353.
[146] Francois Heisbourg, "European Defence takes a leap forward," *NATO Review* 48, issue 1 (Spring 200), 9.

BRITISH SECURITY INTERESTS

The first section of this essay examined British defence policy in the period 1945 – 1998. The second section has explained some of the reasons behind the changes and developments in European security. This section aims to demonstrate that the St Malo initiative, in 1998, advanced British defence interests. As Simon Duke commented in 2000, "there is one interesting and rather surprising parallel between the post EDC years and the current ones. In both cases the future direction of European security and defence may well depend upon an initiative from that unlikely European partner, Britain."[147]

British interests, in a strategic defence context, are defined by the British government in its annual defence policy documents. Since the 1998 SDR, defence policies have been led by an "ambitious foreign policy" in which Britain has a well-defined role "as one of the world's most influential nations."[148] In particular, British defence interests are: raising Britain's standing in Europe; maintaining NATO's primacy in defence matters; working to improve military interoperability; improving the European military capability; establishing NATO/EU relationships;[149] maintaining a strong US relationship and, preventing misunderstanding between the US and European partners.[150] These British defence interests are used to examine why the British government led the European effort, in 1998, to form an autonomous military capability.

The St Malo announcement indicated a dramatic change in Britain's attitude towards the formation of a European Union military capability. Traditionally, Britain had

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[147] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 315.
[148] Jack Straw, Lord Mayor's Lecture, London, 13 November 2002.
[149] UK, Ministry of Defence, *The Future Strategic Context for Defence* (London: Director General Corporate Communication, 2001), 17.
[150] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy 2001*, available from http://www.mod.uk/issues/policy2001/context.html; Internet; accessed 13 November 2002.

been opposed to such ideas but this announcement declared that EU member states should modernise their armed forces to be able to "tackle the most demanding crisis management tasks, in operations up to corps level…together with appropriate air and naval elements."[151] Furthermore, these forces were to be militarily self-sustaining for at least a year. The St Malo initiative was not a whim of a government that had been in-office for only one year. This essay demonstrates that it was, in fact, a carefully calculated political decision that has advanced the declared British defence interests.

An EU Military Capability Benefits Britain

As has been mentioned, the EU's CFSP was being developed but little had been achieved by the time the St Malo initiative was announced in 1998. At the same time though, the role of the EU in international relations had become a reality since it was the world's largest trade organisation and one of the largest providers of funds for developing countries.[152] Thus, the EU had become a significant actor on the world stage and its political will and momentum could be used to generate increased European security. Moreover, by 1998, the EU had already been actively involved in crises through economic sanctions, diplomatic measures and humanitarian aid, but it lacked the tool of last resort; the threat and use of military force.

In the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, the British government acknowledged the importance of both an independent EU military capability and improved European national military capabilities for the first time, although the previous section has shown that in 1998, the improvements themselves were still awaited. Through its conceptual framework, the Strategic Defence Review also laid the foundation to changes in British

[151] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Statement on Defence Estimates, 1999*, available from http://www.mod.uk/policy/wp99; Internet: accessed 27 January 2003.

defence strategy.[153] Therefore, many of its ideas were to emerge in subsequent defence policies. The 2001 Defence Policy matured some of the original findings of the SDR and asserted that the "UK's national security and defence depend fundamentally on the security of Europe as a whole. Most of our more important economic and other wider interests also depend on European stability."[154] This is, in part, because the government had come to recognise that defence only forms one section of the security mosaic. The two words are not synonymous and, again according to Defence Policy 2001, it is:

> clear that many international security problems can only be tackled effectively by a long term approach harmonizing the full range of civilian (including non-governmental) and military instruments. Much more attention will need to be devoted to the management of conflict, notably efforts to prevent it occurring in the first place, to reduce the impact of conflict and to develop post-intervention strategies to resolve the underlying causes of tension.[155]

The EU comprises all the relevant spheres of influence, such as political and economic strength, and is better placed to address security issues than a purely military organisation.[156] In order to improve European and hence British security, it became necessary to make the EU a more complete and effective organisation. Adding a military capability was, therefore, a natural progression as long as it could be achieved without undermining NATO. This aspect is analysed later, and although NATO remained the cornerstone of security, Britain "would be failing if we did not make full use of the mechanisms offered by the European Union."[157] Ensuring that a military capability is available to the EU, therefore, increases European security in this wider context. The St

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[152] EU website, 'Common Foreign and Security Policy.'
[153] Geoffrey Hoon, *Introduction to Defence Policy 2001* (London: Director General Corporate Communication, 2001).
[154] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy 2001…*, 4.
[155] *Ibid,* 5.
[156] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation"…, 58.
[157] Geoffrey Hoon, *Statement to the House on European Defence Cooperation*, 22 November 2000 available from http://news.mod.uk/news/press; Internet; accessed 20 January 2003.

Malo initiative enabled the European Security and Defence Policy to develop at "revolutionary" speed in "terms of political commitments and policy guidelines."[158] Thus, it provided the foundations for improving European security by developing a European military capability. Notwithstanding this, the ability of the EU to act militarily is only relevant if it is underpinned by *effective* military capabilities.

Improved Military Capabilities

Current British Defence Policy states that "[t]here is likely to be a growing emphasis on multinational approaches to developing improved capabilities, especially in relation to filling capability gaps and sharing the collective expense burden of defence."[159] The rising cost of sustaining a credible military force has resulted in some nations seeking ways to reduce the financial burden, while also seeking to be a meaningful coalition nation. Even European nations that once had large, all-round forces can no longer afford to sustain all military capabilities.[160] Therefore, the ability to pass information between national armed forces has become increasingly important since the Cold War because most modern crisis management operations are multi-national and the UK does not have the military forces to conduct these operations alone.[161] By 1998, the US was already becoming the only state capable of such operations independently and the growing technology gap could serve to enhance any unilateralist tendencies.

The development of the military pillar in the EU served to expose the inadequacy of European nations' military capability and add pressure on nations to rectify the technology gap with the US; this was a "key purpose in the European defence enterprise"

[158] Maartje Rutten, Paper No 47...
[159] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy 2001*…, 3.
[160] His Excellency Frank de Grave, "European Security and Defence Policy as a framework for defence cooperation," *RUSI Journal* 147, no 1 (February 2002), 13.

and a British defence interest was to improve military interoperability.[162] Through the St Malo initiative, the UK sought to mobilise peer pressure and compel European countries to face up to responsibilities by using

Alliance, while increasing the interoperability of their forces through increased interaction. Thus the British defence objectives of improving interoperability and developing a European military capability are advanced. Nevertheless, it has also been argued that the military pillar of the European Union has allowed France to exert its influence towards the development of a military capability that is independent of the US.[168]

The French Factor

The defeat of France by Germany in the Second World War was a calamitous experience during which, and subsequently, it "suffered eclipse by the interim conqueror and by eventual victors."[169] France sought refuge in the North Atlantic Alliance although, according to Charles Marshall, the Alliance "provided a measure of security but no balm for a sore spirit."[170] France's main problem was not how to gain security, but how to regain a lost significance and it "brooded" over its deflated position in international politics.[171] By the mid-1960s, France was again seeking to become a politically dominant European power. Therefore, President Charles de Gaulle proposed a "three-cornered directorate of the Alliance whereby world policies of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France would be under a consortium, and whereby France would gain a veto power over the United State's nuclear capabilities."[172] However, this proposal was not acceptable to the other two nations because they each wanted to retain an independent nuclear capability. The other Alliance members would also have been

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[167] His Excellency Frank de Grave, *European Security*…, 13.
[168] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation"…, 55.
[169] Charles Marshall, Foreword to *NATO Without France – A strategic appraisal* by Carl H Amme Jr, (Stanford: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967), ix.
[170] *Ibid*, ix.
[171] *Ibid*, ix.
[172] *Ibid,* ix.

angered by this arrangement. In reaction to the rejection of his proposal, in 1966 de Gaulle announced France's intention to remove itself from the integrated military structure of NATO. France now thought of itself as a competitor to the US and by withdrawing its cooperation from NATO, France hoped to force adaptations of Alliance strategy to suit its own purposes.[173] This situation has persisted and led Sir Michael Quinlan to comment, in 2001, that "in defence matters, France is most truly and proudly herself when she is disagreeing with the United States and distancing herself from NATO as being an unhealthily US-dominated organization."[174]

In the immediate post-Cold War period, France was enjoying challenging the might and influence of Britain and the US, and maintaining its own defence spending while British governments saw an opportunity to reduce military budgets in what was expected to be a more peaceful and stable period.[175] In 1994, Edouard Balladur, the French Prime Minister declared that "France has a calling to be a great world power" and he called it "*l'example francais*."[176] This was translated to mean the "modern version of the creed proclaimed by the late Charles de Gaulle, according to which there is a pact between the grandeur of France and the freedom of the world."[177] France has also long sought a route to a strong and independent European military capability because de Gaulle believed that the US would eventually leave Europe. He had wanted a credible European defence and the early EU initiatives were an opportunity to drive the policies the "French way."[178] To Britain, this brought with it the risk that "alongside France's strengths, there might be

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[173] *Ibid*, ix.
[174] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation"…, 56.
[175] Dr C Coker and J Sherr, *Arms for Oblivion* (London: Alliance Publishers Ltd, 1994), 8.
[176] Edouard Balladur, Prime Minister of France, quoted in Dr C Coker and J Sherr, *Arms for Oblivion…, 8.*
[177] Dr C Coker and J Sherr, *Arms for Oblivion*…, 9.
[178] Anton La Guardia, "French stir up dispute over NATO links to EU," *The Telegraph*, 20 November 2002.

imported the virus of that Gaullist attitude."[179] Indeed, the French President Jacques Chirac, wanted an EU "capacity for action in the area of defence" that was totally independent of the US and NATO.[180] This view ran counter to British wishes of a strengthened NATO with an integrated EU military capability. In particular, Britain did not want to politically distance the US through the generation of a European capability.[181] On the other hand, an engaged France with its military assets was a decided benefit. Sir Michael Quinlan concluded that "European defence would be gravely – indeed almost hopelessly – stunted without the full-hearted commitment of France."[182] This was equally true of British involvement in the security of Europe. In French eyes, the St Malo initiative demonstrated a new British attitude to European defence and it "embraced the British emphasis on capabilities, while underscoring the role of the alliance."[183] Thus, the St Malo initiative was the "best route towards getting something substantial achieved in the collective defence field; it was not a strategic switch to accepting the Euro-aspirations of Gaullism."[184] In their acceptance of the St Malo initiative, Blair had managed to "beat back" the French Gaullist goals of an EU military capability that was independent of the US and NATO.[185] Therefore, the British defence objectives of developing a European military capability and maintaining a strong US relationship had been advanced. Furthermore, acceptance by the French of a NATO framework to an EU capability maintained NATO's primacy in defence matters. The French view of a more

[179] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation"…, 56.
[180] Jacques Chirac quoted in House of Lords debate 15 November 2001, available from http://www.publications.parliament accessed 12 November 2002.
[181] Geoff Hoon, speech to the Inter-Allied Confederation of Reserve Officers, 13 February 2001 available from http://news.mod.uk/news/press; Internet; accessed 20 January 2003.
[182] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation"…, 56.
[183] Francois Heisbourg, "European Defence Takes a Leap Forward"…, 8.
[184] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation"…, 56.
[185] *Ibid,* 57.

European leaning British government would also assist in improving British influence in Europe.

British Influence in Europe

> "Every time that the continental countries want to deepen their union, the British hold back and predict failure; and later, when they see the venture working, they grudgingly join and accept rules written by others."[186]

By 1998, the argument for whether Britain should remain part of the EU no longer existed in serious parliamentary discussions and members of parliament did not expect the UK to extract itself from the Union; according to Menzies Campbell, a leading Member of Parliament, "one foot in [Europe] and one foot out does not make political, economic or cultural sense."[187] Instead, parliamentary discussions were based on how Britain could make the most of its relationships with European countries through the EU.[188] Nevertheless, there was still some public wariness of the EU and, to some extent, this is the reason why the British Prime Minister put off a decision on joining the EMU.[189] The fact that Britain was not a part of the EMU ensured that it could not play a significant role in economic decisions and, furthermore, it has been claimed that "politically, Britain cannot become one of the leading countries in the EU so long as it remains outside the euro."[190] Prime Minister Blair's goal in 1998, was that the UK

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[186] Charles Grant, "Britain in Europe," available from http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/n-8-2.html; Internet; accessed 19 December 2002.
[187] Menzies Campbell QC MP, speech titled *The Future of Britain's Relationship with Europe*, available from http://www.eurolib.org/docs/2002-staff-0580-en.htm; Internet; accessed 19 December 2002.
[188] *Ibid*.
[189] Anatole Kaletsky, "Shotgun Marriage to the Euro Cannot Last," *Times*, available from http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,725-152370,00.html; accessed 29 March 2003.
[190] Charles Grant, "Why Britain Should Join The Euro," available from http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/euro-views.html; Internet; accessed 19 December 2002.

"should lead in Europe," but in order for Britain to be a dominant nation in the EU, it had to do so in areas other than economics.[191]

The St Malo defence initiative was a "conscious effort to show leadership in Europe, to guide a policy in a direction that we [Britain] favoured."[192] The best way to influence policy is to drive it from a position of strength inside an organisation rather than to react to decisions with little authority or ability to influence them. Importantly, the British government realised that "relations with European partners will become more important" and the EU military capability was one way of becoming more influential in Europe.[193] Moreover, in the debate on European defence in a new strategic context, Britain was able to take the lead because it was able to draw on the "success of its own Defence Review."[194] Thus, it was in a strong position to lead a defence initiative in Europe and to take it in a direction that was suitable to Britain. In fact, the Prime Minister and his government were so successful in demonstrating their leadership and commitment to Europe, that in 2001, it was reported that Gerhard Schroder and Jacques Chirac had offered Tony Blair the presidency of the European Commission, "if he should ever decide to ascend from parochial British politics to the international stage."[195] With reports such as these, there can be little doubt that the St Malo initiative played a part in raising Britain's standing in Europe.

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[191] Simon Duke, *The elusive quest…*, 308.
[192] Emyr Jones Parry, "My Job: Steering European Foreign Policy at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office," *RUSI Journal* 146, No 3 (June 2001), 15.
[193] UK, Ministry of Defence, *The Future Strategic Context for Defence* (London: Director General Corporate Communication, 2001), 13.
[194] Menzies Campbell QC MP, speech titled *The Future of Britain's Relationship with Europe*, available from http://www.eurolib.org/docs/2002-staff-0580-en.htm; Internet; accessed 19 December 2002.

Britain and NATO

In 1998, when the SDR and the St Malo initiative were announced, the British Armed Forces were considerably different from those of the Cold War. The 1998 defence budget had already been cut by 29 percent in real terms since the 1985 figure.[196] This was a fall in the percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) devoted to defence, from 5.4 percent in 1985, to 2.7 percent in 1998 and was the "lowest proportion of GDP spent on defence since the 1930s."[197] Despite this, the world had proven itself to be not a safer and more stable environment, but a highly unstable arena where small but deadly outbreaks of violence seemed to erupt regularly. European countries contributed three times as much as the US to Third World aid and twice as much to the UN, but relied on the military commitment of the US to NATO, to provide the bulk of defence.[198]

According to the British government, the most effective and efficient means to achieve a credible military pillar in the EU was to use NATO assets. One reason for this was that many of the members of the EU are also members of NATO. Another reason included the fact that NATO already had the structure and the expertise to plan and command the operations envisaged in the Petersberg Tasks. For Britain, therefore, the natural progression for an EU military capability was to use the NATO framework for planning and command of operations. This arrangement would prevent duplication and also allow the US visibility of EU operations. At the very least, this arrangement would reduce the costs in infrastructure and manpower. This view has endured and the British Secretary of State for Defence, Geoffrey Hoon, recently reiterated that there "can be no

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[195] Anatole Kaletsky, *Shotgun Marriage*.
[196] Ken Alred *et al*, *The Strategic Defence Review…*, 3.
[197] *Ibid,* 3.

question of undermining NATO or attempting to duplicate the capabilities and structures that we have developed within it over the last fifty years."[199] However, as has been identified, France did not favour such an arrangement and Britain chose to act in a leadership role in order to ensure its interests were protected. In being a central part of the formulation of the St Malo initiative, it managed to achieve this and, in addition to NATO staff carrying out the EU military planning, operations will be commanded by the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe – a British officer.[200]

By the late 1990s, British defence policy and NATO had "new and more diverse risks, security challenges and opportunities" despite there being no direct military threat to the UK.[201] In addition, a priority in British defence policy was, and continues to be, to "play a leading role in modernising and adapting the Alliance."[202] The British government recognised that NATO forces must be capable and credible, and the structure should exist to support effective command and control of those forces. NATO structure and the armed forces apportioned to it, had to be drawn away from Cold War concepts towards a force that was capable of reacting to modern crises in theatres potentially outside its traditional boundaries. This was partly because the Alliance was growing in number to include former Soviet Bloc countries. Furthermore, it was because political instability in areas close to its borders, such as Yugoslavia, could influence and threaten nations within the Alliance. Thus, a strong and improved NATO continues to be perceived to be in British interests. However, like the UK, most European countries were

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[198] EU website, "Common Foreign and Security Policy," available from http://ue.eu.int/pesc/pres; Internet; accessed 22 January 2003.
[199] Geoff Hoon, speech to the Inter-Allied Confederation of Reserve Officers.
[200] *NATO Handbook*..., 101.
[201] UK Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy 2001*..., 3.
[202] *Ibid*, 4.

cutting funding to their armed forces throughout the 1990s.[203] Therefore, in order to meet the new challenges, a more capable and cost effective framework was needed.

In addition to Britain being a lead in the development of the St Malo defence initiative for reasons of influence, it also sought to develop defence capabilities which could be available to NATO and to develop a European defence identity in a NATO-friendly direction.[204] By 2001, British defence policy clearly stated that two "key strategic objectives" were ensuring "NATO and the defence dimension of the EU are mutually reinforcing and to improve European military capabilities available to both organizations."[205] Indeed, the 2001 Future Strategic Context for Defence declared that it was "essential that the two organizations develop a close relationship."[206] In so doing, the benefits of synergy could be harnessed; if momentum towards an effective European Union defence capability could be gathered, then it would also benefit NATO. The St Malo initiative strives to provide European members of NATO with a more effective military force and it did impart a new impetus to achieving this.[207] In addition, it was successful in demonstrating to the US, the European nations' commitment to military operations and their willingness to assume a greater share of the security burden.[208]

The effort to developing better European capabilities is beginning to have an effect. For example, the Secretary of State for Defence, Geoff Hoon, announced in a speech in 2001 that "for years, defence budgets around Europe have been falling. Next year…defence spending will rise in real terms in 11 of the 16 European states of

[203] Menzies Campbell QC MP, *The Future of Britain's Relationship with Europe*.
[204] Emyr Jones Parry, *My Job*…, 15.
[205] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy 2001*..., 4.
[206] UK, Ministry of Defence, *The Future Strategic Context for Defence*..., 13.
[207] Sir Michael Quinlan, "European Defence Cooperation"…, 55.
[208] UK, Ministry of Defence, *The Future Strategic Context for Defence*..., 13.

NATO."[209] Another British politician, Menzies Campbell, reiterated that this is in the interests of Britain since "a militarily weak Europe which relies heavily on US protection will not only undermine its own ambitions in other areas but will also undermine NATO itself. NATO must be an alliance, not a security blanket. Thus we have to come to the table with something to offer."[210] The attempt to strengthen both the EU and NATO, and in so doing further British interests, was valid, but it also ran the risk of alienating Britain from the US.

Britain and the US

In the immediate post-Second World War period, the relationship between the US and Britain was considered the *conditio sine qua non* of "any successful military policy in peace and war."[211] The special relationship, a continuance of the wartime relationship, was considered a requirement in order to defeat the forces of communism.[212] The respective militaries considered the relationship so important that military plans and agreements were often ahead of political agreements.[213] In addition to the security that the bi-lateral agreements provided, British politicians hoped that the relationship would also allow Britain to become the leading political member of NATO. This was, in part, due to a rather arrogant attitude that Britain's greater experience in international affairs would allow it to out-manoeuvre the US and other nations.[214] A long-term priority for

[209] Geoffrey Hoon, *Statement to the House on European Defence Cooperation*, 22 November 2000 available from http://news.mod.uk/news/press accessed 20 January 2003.
[210] Menzies Campbell QC MP, *The Future of Britain's Relationship with Europe*.
[211] Julian Lider, *British Military Thought…*, 424.
[212] *Ibid,* 424.
[213] *Ibid,* 424.
[214] *Ibid,* 424.

Britain has, therefore, been to continue US engagement in Europe and this was also true in the late 1990s.[215]

In 1998, Britain had managed to retain its special relationship with the US, which put it in a strong position of political influence with both America and other nations. However, Britain had also been concerned about the "more general political impact of the growing gap in strategic vision with America [and] some believe that US unilateralism in international affairs will only be reinforced if Washington believes that it cannot rely on its friends and allies."[216] Importantly, Britain saw itself as an ambassador for Europe in the US and *vice versa*. For Britain to continue to influence important decisions it had to "identify its interests with those of its ally," but in the late 1990s and at the beginning of the new millennium, America was not necessarily focusing on Europe.[217]

According to the British House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, the UK's most important international relationship is that with the US because the US is the "United Kingdom's foremost political and military ally, its single greatest trading partner, its largest source of investment, its largest recipient of investment, and the world's sole remaining superpower."[218] Tony Blair had shared a close personal relationship with Bill Clinton to the extent that some in the US referred to him as 'Tony Blinton,' but by the end of 1998, President Clinton had less than one year remaining in office.[219] At the time, no one would have known what the outcome of the Presidential elections would be. However, it is likely that various contingencies and forecasts would have been presented

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[215] UK, Ministry of Defence, *Defence Policy 2001…*, 4.
[216] Ben Lombardi, *European Security and Defence Policy…*
[217] UK, Foreign Affairs Committee Second Report, *British – US Relations*, available from http://www.publications.parliament; Internet; accessed 12 November 2002, 5.
[218] *Ibid*, 2.
[219] Ellen Hale, "President Blair in his finest hour; British Leader's support of US wins acclaim in USA," *Today*, 5 October 2001.

to Blair. It was very clear that the Bush camp had selected its electoral focus as continental US issues rather than international affairs[220] and when "George W Bush became President, academics and policymakers alike fretted that his election signaled a 'return to isolationism.'"[221] Blair could, therefore, have recognised a potential threat of isolationist policies to NATO, the Atlanticist European nations and, of course, to Britain. With this in mind, the British Prime Minister might well have had one eye on the future in his decision to support the European defence capability because it pre-empted the US wishes to see increased sharing of the defence burden and improved military capability by the European nations. The St Malo initiative provided the foundations for this.

In order to safeguard the US-UK relationship and the US' involvement in Europe, the St Malo initiative had to be integrated into a NATO structure while also providing sufficient European commitment to please the US administration. According to Charles Grant, a founder member of the Centre for European Reform and writer for the Economist:

> The French have always emphasized that the EU must be capable of running 'autonomous' military missions, even when NATO does not offer support, and that autonomous missions require an EU intelligence capability. The British accept the logic of the French position without much enthusiasm. So the St Malo declaration said that when NATO as a whole was not engaged, 'the Union must be given appropriate structures and a capacity for analysis of situations, sources of intelligence and a capability for relevant strategic planning, without unnecessary duplication.'[222]

Three alternatives were proposed for the US reaction to the St Malo declaration. Firstly, if a weak European military capability continued, it was expected that alienation would

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[220] Colin Powell, speech given on 17 January 2001 quoted in *Foreign Policy*, "Brave Old World," (Washington, 2001), 14.
[221] Mackubin Owens, 'Oh what a…small war,' *National Review*, vol 54 issue 9 (May 2002), 47.
[222] Charles Grant, *Intimate relations*, available from http://www.parrhesia.com/cryptome/uk-us-abed.html; Internet; accessed 19 December 2002.

grow between the European Union and the US. This would lead to a unilateralist approach by the US and a continued strategic imbalance of capabilities and burden. Secondly, a strong and autonomous European military capability could lead to doubling, discrimination and decoupling.[223] Thirdly, the ideal scenario as far as the UK was concerned, would be a strong European capability embedded in the framework of NATO. This had the potential to redefine the distribution of work within NATO and secure cooperation both inside and outside the Alliance.[224] The US, therefore, officially supported the initiative as long as it was "separable but not separate from the Alliance."[225]

By putting itself at the very centre of proposals and decision-making, Britain managed to ensure that the US was content with advances advocated in the St Malo initiative. This is demonstrated by the fact that later, in 2001, Prime Minister Blair and President Bush committed Britain to coordinating further improvements that had been initiated by the declaration at St Malo. Specifically, the US and Britain wanted to develop EU capabilities "in a manner that is fully coordinated, compatible and transparent with NATO."[226] By 2002, the Foreign Affairs Committee reported that Britain's "status as a leading mej12 0 0 12 239.344460.55e 12 0Tm Tm26

Thus, British strategic interests had been preserved and the US recognised that the St Malo efforts were "beneficial to US global security interests."[228]

Nevertheless, as Britain trod a careful line between demonstrating European commitment to burden sharing and military capability improvement, it was still risking the loss of US intelligence sharing.[229] The special relationship between the US and the UK has allowed the sharing of high-level intelligence and the UK receives much intelligence that cannot be passed to other European nations. Emyr Jones Parry, a senior official at the Foreign Office in 2001, felt that when:

> push comes to shove the United States and the United Kingdom are condemned to work together. We continue to share similar views on many areas of foreign policy. It is not an exclusive relationship; we are obviously a leading part of the European Union. US administrations always seem to conclude that this relationship actually counts. I am sure we all find it beneficial.[230]

However, this condemning of a mutual relationship could not be guaranteed in 1998, especially if America were to adopt an isolationist policy. Neither could the future sharing of intelligence be guaranteed. The UK contributes to US intelligence gathering processes in places like Cyprus but gains more from the relationship and, therefore, wishes to preserve it. Both the US and UK governments also use intelligence for foreign policy guidance more than other European nations. This intelligence is "at the very heart of the British system of government" because the Joint Intelligence Committee is "the body in the Cabinet Office which sets goals for the UK agencies; sifts and evaluates their output; and presents summaries to the Prime Minister."[231] In the 1990s, although the US still did not want some European nations to have access to its intelligence, the French

[228] Charles Wolf, "Europeans are unilateralists too," *Wall Street Journal*, 17 May 2002.
[229] Charles Grant, *Intimate relations…*
[230] Emyr Jones Parry, *My Job*, 18.
[231] Charles Grant, *Intimate relations…*

argued that Britain could not play a leading role in the EU unless it jettisoned the special intelligence links to the US: "Britain must choose Europe or betray it."[232] There has been no evidence, so far though, that the St Malo initiative has damaged the intelligence links between Britain and the US. Moreover, it can be argued that they have been developed to a greater extent although this is probably due more to anti-terrorist efforts after 11 September 2001 and the subsequent war in Iraq than the EU's defence policies. Nevertheless, the threat of losing US intelligence has been averted while the benefits of attempts to improve European military capabilities have been accrued by Britain.

[232] *Ibid*.

CONCLUSION

After the Second World War, Britain wanted to retain its status as a world power and it had formally retained its pre-war territories and responsibilities. However, the British economy was exhausted and a relative economic decline against the US was unavoidable. In addition, the USSR was perceived to have become the new threat to Western Europe and the signature of the Brussels Treaty in 1948 marked the determination of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to develop a common defence system. Other nations, including America, recognised this European commitment to defence and NATO was formed in 1949. Nevertheless, in the 1950s, Britain's defence burdens remained as onerous as before and the failure of operations in the Suez persuaded the British government to switch its main emphasis of defence policy away from conventional forces and towards nuclear deterrence. This switch in emphasis, in 1957, was expected to produce savings in the military budget through force reductions, but the savings did not materialise. In 1964, when a Labour government assumed office for the first time in 13 years, it recognised that Britain's defence commitments could not be continued without increasing the defence budget. The government chose instead to withdraw its commitments from east of Suez in 1968. This led Britain to concentrate on NATO commitments in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s while retaining its independent nuclear capability. By the 1987 general election, nuclear disarmament had become a significant differentiator between the political parties. The Conservative Party won the election and, thus, the main British defence roles remained the provision of nuclear forces and support for NATO in a relatively stable strategic environment.

The Cold War provided a foundation for defence policy until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The change in defence strategic context meant that the Cold War concept of defence was outdated and, in the first half of the 1990s, the British government restructured its Armed Forces several times under the guise of making them more effective. However, the restructuring processes were primarily cost-cutting exercises and the British government's continued commitment to an independent nuclear capability forced defence expenditure reductions to fall on conventional forces. These cutbacks left Britain with poorly equipped forces that were over-stretched in terms of overseas deployments. In 1997, a newly elected Labour government conducted a strategic defence and security review. The Strategic Defence Review (SDR), published in July 1998, was foreign policy led and re-assessed essential security and defence needs. In the policy framework of SDR, NATO was designated as the basis for defence but it also asserted that Britain was a leading member of the European Union. This was an indication of a far more dramatic event to follow; the joint British-French announcement at St Malo, in December 1998, of both countries' commitment to develop an autonomous EU military capability. This concept had been rejected by every British government in the previous 40 years but it would now advance British defence interests. These defence interests are defined by the British government in its annual defence policy documents. Since the SDR, British interests have included: maintaining NATO's primacy in defence related matters; raising Britain's standing in Europe; improving military interoperability; improving the European military capability; improving NATO-EU relationships; and, maintaining a strong US-UK relationship and preventing misunderstanding between the US and European partners.

By 1998, when the SDR was published, the EU had evolved to become a significant economic and political force in the world and it had already been involved in a number of crises. However, it still lacked the ability to undertake military operations and it was, therefore, an organisation that did not possess all the 'tools' needed to manage modern crises. The SDR postulated that a credible EU military capability would make the organisation more effective and result in increased European security. Moreover, the SDR recognised that security encompassed more aspects than military defence: modern crises required civilian and military responses to aid resolution and the EU was well placed to harmonise them. The St Malo initiative enabled the EU's CFSP to progress at revolutionary speed and, thus, developed the foundation for improving the European military capability. However, in order to truly improve European security, the policy also needed to be supported by effective military capabilities.

Many, if not all, actions to resolve modern conflicts have been undertaken by multi-national armed forces. This is partly because most individual states cannot afford the full range of military capabilities. The UK is one such country and its armed forces need to be able to operate as part of a coalition through improved interoperability. One of the first steps in the development of the EU military capability was an assessment of the ability of member-nations to wage modern warfare without the support and capabilities offered by the US. The St Malo initiative started this process and it also led to the more integrated involvement of nations outwith NATO. This had the double benefit of increasing the contact between the various national militaries, therefore, improving their interoperability, and also of harnessing the substantial experience of these nations in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, the burden of European defence

could now also be shared by the four nations not in NATO. This had the potential to reduce the burden on the other nations. These factors advanced the British defence interests of improving interoperability and developing a European military capability. To make a European military capability truly credible though, both France and Britain needed to be committed to the concept.

France suffered from political eclipse after the Second World War and, until the mid-1960s, it attempted to reassert itself in NATO. When this failed, in 1966, France removed itself from the integrated military structure of NATO. From thereon, France seemed to enjoy disagreeing with the US and it sought to increase French political influence, and perhaps its own security, by pursuing attempts to create a European military capability that was independent of NATO and the US. France also maintained its defence expenditure in the post-Cold War period, when nations such as Britain were reducing theirs. Notwithstanding this, both France and Britain had to be committed to an EU capability before it could become truly credible and effective. The St Malo initiative did persuade France to commit itself to the formation of an EU military capability that was not entirely separate from NATO. Thus, the St Malo initiative advanced British interests by improving the European military capability and improving NATO-EU relations. It also committed Britain for the first time in half a century to a European-centric concept.

By 1998, the political debate in Britain no longer revolved around whether Britain should remain a member of the EU so much as just how 'European' Britain should become. The British public was still sceptical about joining the EMU and Britain could not, therefore, lead EU economic policies; in order to assert itself in the forum of the EU,

Britain had to find another route. The creation of a credible European military capability was just such a route and the experience that Britain had gained from its own SDR meant that it was ideally placed to lead an EU defence initiative. In addition, it demonstrated a 'new' British commitment to Europe. The other European nations took this shift in British policy seriously which allowed the British government and Prime Minister Blair to take a more central role in Europe. Thus, Britain's standing in Europe was raised by the St Malo initiative.

Although the UK undertook to lead the development of a European military capability, it did not wish to see NATO weakened. Instead, Britain wanted the military pillar of the EU to be synergistic with NATO because many nations in the EU were also signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty and because NATO already had the experience and infrastructure to undertake such work. As has been mentioned, France was not in favour of this but Britain's central role in the St Malo initiative ensured that the EU military capability grew in a direction that Britain wanted. Moreover, any improvements in national military capabilities generated by the EU could also lead to improvements in NATO's military capabilities since, more often than not, the same countries are members of both organisations. British defence policy included the task of modernising the Alliance and, because the St Malo initiative was aimed at improving European capabilities, the two could be married. Therefore, NATO, as the cornerstone of British defence, could be strengthened by the development of a European capability. On the other hand, there was a risk that the US might not welcome the development of a European military capability. This had to be carefully managed because Britain wanted

the US to remain engaged in Europe and it wanted to retain the relationship between the two countries.

The relationship between Britain and the US has generally been so strong that it has become known as the 'special relationship'. The military ties have been even stronger than the political ties and, in the late 1940s and 1950s, military plans were often agreed ahead of political agreements. Britain was able to adopt a role as ambassador for the US in Europe and vice versa, but in the late 1990s the US was on the verge of adopting isolationist policies. Britain recognised that in order to keep the US engaged in Europe, the European nations would need to improve their military capabilities and accept more of the defence burden. The St Malo initiative aimed to achieve this and assisted in raising the level of many European nations' defence spending. In addition, by taking a central role in the European initiative, Britain maintained its strong political relationship with the US. However, a peril in this strategy was the potential of the US intelligence agencies becoming unwilling to share sensitive information with a more 'European' Britain. The US and British intelligence systems are very similar and much information has been passed between the two nations that has not been available to other European countries. France argued that a European military capability would require its own intelligence system and the sharing of all information but this did not suit Britain. To date, there has been no evidence of reduced intelligence sharing between the UK and the US which indicates that the St Malo initiative achieved the British goal of keeping the US in Europe while not losing its special intelligence sharing relationship.

It can be seen that there have been many developments in European security and European organisations over the past decade. Relationships, responsibilities, military

structures and even the *raison d'etre* for security organisations have been challenged by a new defence strategic context. For many years, the Soviet Bloc was the only perceived threat to European security but the themes of US presence, burden sharing, political equality and

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