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THE AGENCE EUROPE BULLETIN ON CSDP AND NATO

NATO/ASSEMBLY: ALLIED PARLIAMENTARIANS CALL ON NATO TO STRENGTHEN CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

Tirana, 30/05/2016 (EDD) – During its spring plenary session in Tirana (Albania) on Monday 30 May, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly unanimously adopted a statement on the priorities for action to steer the Warsaw summit. While avoiding tackling a number of issues on which the Atlantic Alliance is currently divided, the Assembly above all sought to call the allies to unity, solidarity and the strengthening of “conventional and nuclear deterrence”, given the threat on the eastern and southern flanks.

Drafting of the statement, entitled the “*United and Resolute Agenda for NATO at the Warsaw Summit*”, was entrusted to two rapporteurs representing allies that do not face the same strategic challenges. French Deputy *Nicole Ameline* (Les Républicains), who was co-author of the statement with the Latvian deputy, *Ojars Kalnins* (Vienotība), told EDD that a search for “balance” and “unity” therefore lay at the heart of the drafting work. This approach is underlined in the preamble: “*The Warsaw Summit must clearly show that the Alliance is an indivisible whole and that it is ready and able to fully meet all challenges to our security with a 360° vision*”.

The 17 points of the statement reflect this search for balance by granting one and the same importance to challenges from the eastern and southern flanks, for which the Alliance is called upon to have adequate action capability in a spirit of solidarity. The statement covers, however, essentially what has already gained consensus within the Alliance, thus avoiding having to tackle controversial issues (see EDD 891), such as the exact form that reinforcement of the eastern flank should take, the kind of action that NATO should undertake in Libya, or the future of nuclear deterrence.

Thus, for the eastern flank, the Assembly backs the principle of a “*robust forward presence*” assured by rotations and strengthened, where necessary, by a very high readiness joint task force (VJTF). They call on the Alliance to increase the frequency and the size of exercises while improving its response to hybrid warfare and by “*developing its capacity to operate in environments that are subject to denied access and area denial*”.

Such environments, which cause the Alliance military authorities concern (see EDD 830), have mainly been created quite recently by the Russian army in Kaliningrad and Syria. This poses a challenge not only in strategic but also capability terms in cases when allied forces are called upon to strengthen part of the eastern flank or in the Black Sea, stressed NATO Deputy Secretary General *Alexander Vershbow*, speaking in Tirana. The security situation in the Baltic Sea should push allies to step up their cooperation with Sweden and Finland, they state.

With regards the southern flank, the allies are mainly called upon by the Assembly to “*develop a global strategy to support stability in the Alliance’s southern neighbourhood*”. They should increase cooperation with the partner countries and organisations in North Africa and the Middle East, possibly by supporting strengthened defence capabilities, especially in Libya.

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The Assembly is in favour of NATO providing further support to the EU on managing migration flows, by developing an agreement with the Frontex Agency for the central Mediterranean “similar” to that for the Aegean Sea. NATO should also step up its support for the international coalition which is combating Da’esh in Iraq and Syria. The Assembly is, however, avoiding talk of arrangements.

Finally, the statement briefly reviews a number of different points that should appear on the summit agenda. It is a matter of recalling what the defence spending objectives are, providing support for commitment in Afghanistan (without extending to a withdrawal timetable), encouraging the Alliance to develop its partnership with the European Union, underlining the importance of support to Ukraine and Georgia, and reiterating “NATO’s strong commitment for Euro-Atlantic integration”, especially by welcoming the signing of the Montenegro accession protocol. During the plenary session, the prime minister of Montenegro, Milo Djukanovic, said he hoped his country would formally become a member of the Alliance during 2017 and, on the basis of the latest survey, he estimated that 55% of Montenegrins would vote in favour of accession and 45% against, if a referendum were called.

Relations with the Russian Federation, which are to be reviewed in Warsaw, were the subject of special treatment in the statement, especially in the preamble. Even if the Assembly evokes the need to calm tensions by welcoming the recent attempts at dialogue at the NATO-Russia Council level, the terms used are relatively strong, as Nicole Ameline observed. Russia is indeed involved in acts of “intimidation”, “dangerous” behaviour, “provocation” and “violation of international standards”, which must, at the end of the day, mean that NATO will “consider the possibility of aggressive action by Russia against a member of the Alliance as a potential threat”.

The Assembly does not, however, escape the debate familiar to the Alliance regarding whether, or not, it is relevant to resume contacts with the Kremlin. Some parliamentarians, especially within the French and Luxembourg delegations, are increasingly pressing for official contacts to be resumed, whereas, since April 2014, the Assembly has suspended participation by Duma representatives at its meetings. Assembly President Michael Turner (USA, Republican) is fiercely opposed to this and can count on the support of many parliamentarians, especially British. Nicole Ameline, who confirmed to EDD that she was candidate to the post of Assembly president at the elections this autumn, was cautious on this matter. In her view, the debate deserves to be held but it is difficult to imagine resuming contact until the Minsk agreements have been fully complied with.

NATO/ASSEMBLY: DETERRENCE NEEDS INVESTMENT TO BE CREDIBLE

Tirana, 30/05/2016 (EDD) – The NATO Parliamentary Assembly’s call, during the Warsaw summit, is for NATO deterrence to be reinforced with a rise in investment in equipment and infrastructure in Europe. This is imperative in order, especially, to be able to effectively defend the Baltic States in the event of aggression by the Russian Federation, PA members say.

In the various debates held during the Assembly meeting in Tirana (Albania), from Saturday 28 May to 30 May, the question of defence spending was tackled on several occasions. It is, moreover, the focus of the considerations set out in two draft reports, one by Senator Joseph Day (Canada’s Liberal Party) on the “*new defence imperatives: implementation of commitments taken at the summit in Wales and the prospects for Warsaw*”, and the other by French Senator Jean-Marie Bockel (*Union des democrates et indépendants*) on “*the budgetary impact of new challenges to transatlantic security*”. The final versions of these two texts will be put to the vote during the next session in Istanbul, this autumn.

The importance of attaining the goal of devoting 2% of GDP to defence was underlined many times but it is the structure of spending that was the true focus of discussion. The two rapporteurs shared the opinion expressed during plenary session on Monday by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow that it is the aim of 20% devoted to investment in defence spending that is perhaps the most crucial today.

Bockel’s draft report, presented to the committee on economy and security on Saturday, analyses these challenges from the angle of political and cultural constraints. He mainly points at the harm done by the “*phenomenon consisting of giving preference to national products even when they cost more*” and the failure of “*pooling and sharing*” projects on both NATO and EU sides. In his view, the allies must take a serious look at how they invest on defence. One concrete example cited by Bockel is the idea of forming new battlegroups in Europe, built on the framework nation principle, which would be the point of departure for closer cooperation when it comes to acquisitions.

The credibility of NATO deterrence is brought into question by the insufficient level of investment, according to Joseph Day’s draft report, discussed on Sunday at the defence and security committee. Although he considers as not very credible the possibility that Russian will invade the Baltic

States, the Canadian senator nonetheless believes that the changes engaged at the Newport summit to strengthen the eastern flank are not sufficient, as the current deterrence posture is a problem. It is necessary to ensure capabilities can counter the Kaliningrad area and access denial (A2/AD), as the Kremlin should not even begin simulation of the cost/benefit ratio of intervention in the Baltic States, he stressed during the debate.

However, in addition to the capability challenge, many parliamentarians, especially Estonian and American, insisted on the ageing infrastructure that is ill-adapted to current logistic needs. The United States has recently announced its wish to devote, in 2017, part of the budget for its re-engagement of the European continent to the modernisation of infrastructure, but several parliamentarians said this will not be enough. Bockel felt it is mainly the European Union that has adequate capacity to act in this field.

EU/RUSSIA: TRICKY EXTENSION OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

Brussels, 30/05/2016 (EDD) – Although German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier considers that reaching an agreement for extending European economic sanctions against Russia after 31 July 2016 will be more complicated than previously, several European sources say the sanctions should indeed be extended.

“We are aware that resistance in the EU concerning the extension of sanctions against Russia has increased”, explained Steinmeier on 26 May, cited by the Lithuanian press agency BNS. *“It will be more difficult than last year to find a common position on the matter”*, he warned. A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry also warned, on 27 May, that Berlin would support the gradual lifting of sanctions against Russia if progress is made in implementing the Minsk agreements.

According to several European sources, the sanctions will indeed be extended. *“I believe they will be extended”*, said one EU diplomat, albeit confirming that several member states wanted to re-examine the sanctions. *“My assessment is that the Minsk agreements are currently not fully implemented and my estimated prediction is that they will not be so before the end of June. Hence, the logical decision is for them to be extended”*, he explained. It is his view that extension will be for six months, which is the *“usual format”*.

The G7 in which four member states (France, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy) and the EU are associated, underlined on 27 May that *“the duration of sanctions is clearly linked to complete implementation of the Minsk agreements and to respect of Ukraine’s sovereignty by Russia”*. Although, according to a European source, this statement will facilitate the European decision, another source believes *“this will not be as simple”* given the statements made by the various leaders. In some member states, political decision-makers openly call for the lifting of or at least the easing of sanctions.

Discussions on sanctions have not yet begun at European level, several sources told EDD. Those discussions could take place directly at the level of the ambassadors representing the member states within COREPER. The latter are expected to discuss not only the follow-up to be given to the sanctions (extension, easing, suspension) but also the procedure to be followed, where necessary making provision for discussion at the level of heads of state and government during the European Council on 28 and 29 June.

EU/MALI: 30/05/2016 (EDD) – The spokesperson for the EU High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy denounced, on Monday 30 May, the terrorist attack against a MINUSMA (United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Mission in Mali) convoy, in the region of Mopti (Mali), which cost the lives of five peacekeepers from the Togolese contingent, the previous day. Another attack killed five Malian soldiers in the region of Menaka, on 27 May. *“These targeted acts of violence against the forces responsible for securing Mali and facilitating the implementation of the peace agreement cannot be accepted”*, the spokesperson states in a press release. She goes on to add that the perpetrators of such acts should account for their actions before justice. Underlining the EU’s full solidarity with Mali, MINUSMA and all the parties to the *“goodwill”* peace agreement, the spokeswoman recalled that the European Union remained *“engaged alongside Mali and the other countries of the Sahel in their fight against terrorism and for development of the region in peace and stability”*. MINUSMA is composed of a little over 10,000 military and police.

EU/DEFENCE: 30/05/2016 (EDD) – Lieutenant General Esa Ilmari Pulkkinen of Finland officially took over from General Wolfgang Wosolsobe of Austria as Director General of the EU Military Staff at a ceremony in the inner courtyard of the building housing the European External Action Service in Brussels, on Thursday 26 May. General Pulkkinen is familiar with the European institutions and especially the Military Staff, as he previously headed the planning division from December 2000 to July 2003 and was director of operations from September 2008 to December 2010.

Carte blanche

Letter to my English friends

By Frédéric Mauro (Lawyer at the Paris Bar, established in Brussels as adviser on defence matters)

On 23 June, the people of Britain will be deciding whether or not to stay in the European Union. I hereby appeal to all my friends from the other side of the Channel – of which I have many – to please, I beg of you, do us a favour. Leave!

I do not know whether we shall be able to build Europe without you. But there is one thing I am quite certain of and that is that, right now, we shall not be able to do so with you. Nothing rock-hard has been built with you. Everything productive has been put in place without you. You are neither in the euro, nor in Schengen and you refuse all notions of European defence. Whatever the outcome of the referendum, it is very unlikely that there will one day be an England with a majority in favour of building the United States of Europe. And that is indeed the objective, as Churchill had suggested in Zurich in 1946. For good reason – if any method has failed to work from the SDN to the UN, it is unanimity and the right to veto. The Union cannot succeed on an intergovernmental base either, one that empowers each State to block collective breakthroughs. If proof of this is needed, by way of demonstration one only has to look at the repeated crises that the Union is traversing. The European project is falling apart, our being incapable of crossing the federal step.

No-one speaks of federalism any more. Silence – voting is in progress! We must not say anything that might frighten you – although Boris Johnson can, with complete impunity, liken the European Union to Adolf Hitler! That is really going too far. There is a limit to demagoguery. The Union is not perfect, that is quite true. But we shall not improve it by spitting on it.

Your politicians act as if they are only just discovering the words “*ever closer union*” that have always been written at the heart of the European treaties. What a joke! And European leaders act as if they believe them. How shameful! Your politicians jeered at and called the European Union names. How can they now be credible by telling you to stay in? There is also a limit to cynicism. And as for our leaders – they do not hesitate to undermine the law in order to “*help David*”, going as far as to assume authority to amend treaties without ratifying the result of their talks by the parliaments or by referendum. That is not Hitler; that is Chamberlain!

You might think the European Union is not sufficiently democratic. And yet, the European Parliament is elected by universal suffrage and the president of the Commission is now appointed taking the result of those elections into account. This is very much like the Westminster system. Not democratic enough? Right then, let’s elect a president of the European Union by direct universal suffrage.

The European Union is too bureaucratic for your taste? And yet there are fewer officials in Brussels to manage the Union than there are to manage the city of London. You find public money is not being spent as it should be? What can one say, then, when your MPs use European money for their agricultural land or allowances for buying food for their cats? You are well aware, as you are the ones who invented it, that “*democracy is the worst system – after all the others*”.

You find that the countries of the Union are not doing enough for their defence and that, outside NATO, there is nothing. But who has always blocked the emergence of a European defence? Who, over the past six years, has been opposed to any increase in the small European Defence Agency budget? And who makes the sign of the cross at the very mention of “*permanent structured cooperation*” which is no more than a budgetary and capability commitment by European states to do more for their defence?

With the forthcoming referendum, your leaders have wrecked the idea of a Europe working and living together. They have shown that caprice and blackmail pay off and have opened the road to other demagogues, to other populists. They exalt the past when we should be looking towards the future.

Despite all this, I would very much like you to take part in the federation of the European peoples - of which you are part whether you like it or not - only not if Europe must die because of it. But what would be the point of your staying in, if the European project were to come to a halt? The European project is a union of free peoples. And it is your absolute right not to be part of it. Unlike the prophets of doom, I believe that nothing truly catastrophic will happen if you leave. We shall still be friends and our children will continue to learn English in your country, as much as you will continue to come to our land for your holidays and I shall continue to listen to the BBC.

However, although you do have the right to leave, you do not have the right to take our dreams as hostage purely in order to gain three votes more in the House of Commons. Perhaps you do not like Europe – whereas I love it with a passion as it brings with it peace, prosperity and freedom. Perhaps you believe you can be more successful alone than within the Union? Well, then, go ahead! And stop using the European Union for purposes of internal politics! Or you could show us that you are worth more than your leaders! State an open and massive “*yes*” to Europe and let us build, together, the institutions that we need. And that is my most heartfelt wish.

EU/NORTH KOREA: FURTHER SANCTIONS AGAINST PYONGYANG

Brussels, 30/05/2016 (EDD) – On Friday 27 May, the EU Council of Ministers adopted further restrictive measures against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in response to that country’s nuclear test conducted on 6 January 2016 and the launch using ballistic missile technology of 7 February. The restrictive measures target trade, financial services, investment and transport. The legal acts were published in the EU Official Journal on Saturday 28 May.

In the financial sector, transfers of funds to and from the DPRK are prohibited except for predefined purposes and authorised in advance such as, according to a European source, humanitarian and health assistance or the despatch of personal funds above €15,000. All North Korean investment in the EU is prohibited. The same is true for European investment in the DPRK in mining, chemicals and oil refining and in any entity involved in illegal North Korean programmes. Finally, no aircraft used by a DPRK carrier can now land, take off from or fly over EU territory. Vessels owned, operated or crewed by the DPRK can no longer enter European ports. These additional measures complete and strengthen the sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council resolutions, transposed by the EU on 5 and 31 March 2016. On 19 May, the EU also increased to 66 the number of people subject to autonomous restrictive measures imposed by the EU, and to 42 the number of entities subject to sanctions because of their links with the DPRK nuclear programme.

EU/SYRIA: SANCTIONS AGAINST DAMASCUS REGIME ARE EXTENDED

Brussels, 30/05/2016 (EDD) – After written procedure ending on Friday 27 May, the EU Council of Ministers extended EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime and those that support it for one year – until 1 June 2017.

“*This decision is in line with the Council conclusions of December 2014 which affirmed that the EU would continue imposing and enforcing sanctions targeting the regime and its supporters as long as repression continues*”, a press release states. With the decision – for which the legal acts were published in the EU Official Journal on Saturday 28 May – the EU extends its oil embargo for one year, as well as its restrictions on certain investments, its freeze of the assets of the Syrian central bank within the EU, and export restrictions on equipment and technology that might be used for internal repression, as well as on equipment and technology for monitoring or interception of internet or telephone communications. This means that there is an extension of restrictive measures until 1 June 2017 on over 200 individuals and 70 entities subject to a visa ban and assets freeze due to “*the violent repression against the civilian population in Syria*”.

EU/COLOMBIA: EU MAKES €575 MILLION AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT PEACE EFFORTS IN COLOMBIA

Brussels, 30/05/2016 (EDD) – On Friday 27 May, on the occasion of a trip by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini to Colombia, the European Commission announced that €575 million is being made available to support the peace effort there.

The trust fund will provide €90 million from the general budget and from ten member states for socio-economic projects in the areas hardest hit by the Colombian civil war. In addition EIB loans will amount to up to €400 million. Projects will also be helped along with up to €67 million via bilateral cooperation over the period 2014-2017. Finally, €18 million will come from the instrument contributing to peace and stability in support of the Colombian rapid response plan.

In Bogota, Mogherini spoke of the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas with President Juan Manuel Santos and Foreign Minister Maria Angela Holguin. “*Colombia needs to find peace, to put an end to a conflict that has cost so much to all its citizens. (...) The world needs peace in Colombia (in order to show that) a conflict that has lasted so long can finish through negotiations and in peace*”, she said on Thursday 26 May, promising the EU’s unwavering support. Mogherini also expressed the EU’s concern regarding the kidnapping of three journalists, including Spanish national Salud Hernandez-Mora, by the National Liberation Army (ELN), the second largest rebel group after the FARC and with which the Colombian government have also been negotiating a peace agreement. In order to illustrate the close relations between the EU and Colombia, Mogherini said that nearly 50,000 Colombians had entered the EU in four months since the short stay visa obligation was lifted.