

## Foreign Affairs Committee

### Oral evidence: Future of Britain's diplomatic relationship with Europe, HC 514

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Members present: Tom Tugendhat (Chair); Ian Austin; Mike Gapes; Andrew Rosindell; Nadhim Zahawi.

Questions 48-132

#### Witnesses

I: Dr Laura Chappell, University of Surrey, Dr Margriet Drent, Clingendael Institute, The Hague, and Dr Charlotte Galpin, University of Birmingham.



## Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Dr Laura Chappell, Dr Margriet Drent and Dr Charlotte Galpin.

**Chair:** Welcome, Doctors. We are now in public session. Thank you very much for joining the Foreign Affairs Committee this afternoon. We are very grateful and apologise for the slight delay, but we had a statement in the House that has delayed us very slightly. Can I ask you quickly to keep your answers as brief as possible and we will keep our questions as brief as possible? We all know who you are and I hope you do not mind if we don't ask you to introduce yourselves. I think you know who we are. Perhaps we can start straight off.

Q1 **Nadhim Zahawi:** Welcome, Doctors. To what extent does Germany now shape the direction of EU foreign security and defence policy?

**Chair:** Who would like to start us off? Dr Galpin?

**Dr Galpin:** My expertise is not really security policy. In terms of how much influence Germany has on the ground, perhaps one of the others might answer.

**Dr Drent:** I think the common security and defence policy was shaped mostly and influenced by France and Britain in the 1998 St Malo meeting between Blair and Chirac. I think that is where the groundwork was done, focusing on capabilities for European security and defence. Germany, who had the presidency of the EU right after that, helped to shape the institutions and gain support from smaller member states as well. Germany is reportedly one of the biggest proponents of the CSDP and of a European army, so I suppose Germany is very much in support of it, but because of its strategic culture, in which Germany refrains from deploying forces very readily, it does not have the strategic leadership of CSDP at the moment. That would be my assessment.

**Dr Chappell:** I think I would agree with Margriet to an extent. However, I would also say that more recently France and Germany have been working together to bring about particular bilateral papers, which have then formulated their views in respect to defence initiatives being put forward at the European Council, starting from the European Council in 2013 and going through to the present day. They are starting to act a little bit more together, none the less, I would say that France and Germany do have different perspectives on using force and slightly different perspectives on where they want the CSDP to go. For France it is about making the CSDP not just more capable, but actively engaged in operations and missions; for Germany that is less the case.

**Dr Galpin:** I would add that traditionally in Germany and in German public opinion, participating in foreign security policy at an EU level has been more difficult to legitimise publicly compared with active engagement on economic issues. There are historical reasons why Germany has an easier time engaging actively on economic questions.



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**Nadhim Zahawi:** So a good way to describe it would be as a reluctant driver who has been thrust into the driving seat.

**Dr Galpin:** Yes.

Q2 **Nadhim Zahawi:** How do you think Germany views the UK as a foreign policy player? What does it want from the UK in the future in terms of foreign policy, would you guess?

**Dr Drent:** That is a very open question, because I think Germany would like to keep the UK engaged as much as possible in foreign policy. It sees the merit of European unity; then Europe can be influential on the world stage, and with the UK it can be more influential on the world stage. I suppose Germany is looking for as much co-operation and co-ordination with the UK as possible, even beyond Brexit, but it is clear that, as Laura mentioned, the outlooks of various countries are different. Germany is much more restrained, as I said, in deploying military forces and in being a global player. In that sense France and Germany are in an interesting tandem where Germany is pulling on the brakes somewhat, but now with Macron having such a clear mandate in France, I suppose the reluctant driving seat is thrust upon Germany, whereas before that the triangle—UK, France, Germany—was keeping France in check a bit as a European power and Germany was quite happy with that. Now, Germany emerges as the leader of Europe in that sense and that means it has to formulate a global vision as well, and I am not sure whether it is used to that and ready to do that yet.

Q3 **Nadhim Zahawi:** You touched on the differences between Germany and France on foreign security policy; can you expand on that? Can you give us a bit more detail on where you see the differences appearing?

**Dr Drent:** The discussion on the permanent structured co-operation, the core groups for European defence, is very telling in that sense. France would like an effective force, mostly for deploying and intervening in the neighbourhood of Europe—the southern neighbourhood, mostly. Germany is reluctant about that, and wants to keep unity in the European Union and also wants to keep the smaller countries involved in security and defence. Germany is really transferring the outlook of its armed forces towards territorial defence, which is very comfortable for them, because it means that they do not have to answer difficult questions about having to intervene somewhere in an African conflict that much, because they are already pulling their weight in Europe in territorial defence matters.

Q4 **Nadhim Zahawi:** It is much more interested in defending the borders of Europe.

**Dr Drent:** The territory of Europe itself.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** Securing?

**Dr Drent:** Territorial defence—deterrence against the Russians, to be very blunt.

Q5 **Andrew Rosindell:** Just to ask Dr Drent, you used the word “engaged”,



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and you felt that Germany and France want to ensure that the UK is still “engaged”. What is your definition of that word? Is it meant in a bilateral way, or is it about continuing—as you have written in papers along these lines—more of an integrated way of doing things? How does this evolve, in your view?

**Dr Drent:** The engagement that was gradually forming in the European Union on foreign and security and defence policy—

**Andrew Rosindell:** So it is a continuation of what has happened?

**Dr Drent:** They are converging towards each other. Co-ordinating and co-operating in all kinds of foreign policy matters is the way to be most influential in the world.

Q6 **Andrew Rosindell:** With the UK outside the EU, how do we engage, in your view? What is this leading to? Is it us as an independent country working with neighbours, or is it a continuation of the integration process of common security and defence?

**Dr Drent:** That depends, of course, on what kind of relationship is forged after Brexit, and whether there is some model or mechanism possible to engage the UK regularly in some kind of structure with common foreign and security policy. If that is not possible, I suppose the UK outside the EU should be consulted regularly; we have very similar interests and similar security outlooks, so it is only logical to find each other on various issues in the world. However, that might be less structural than doing it in an EU+1 format.

Q7 **Mike Gapes:** May I ask you about the decision-making process? In France, it is very clear. There is a strong President, who basically determines the country’s foreign policy position, and the Assemblée Nationale doesn’t have any real influence, except to be supportive. In Germany, there is now a tradition of coalitions. There is also historically a quasi-pacifist position. Has Germany evolved to a harder position on defence? Or is it still as it was when I used to go to meetings 25 or 30 years ago and despair at the Germans not really taking these issues very seriously?

**Dr Chappell:** With the current Government, and certainly with the previous one, there has been a move towards making Germany a bit more militarily capable. Certainly, the current Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, has very much started a narrative in which Germany should be more competent and capable and should support France. However, that has not really materialised into German boots on the ground, shall we say. It has materialised into providing some strategic enablers for French-led EU missions, for example. In that sense, yes, there is an increasing discourse about German military engagement, but that has not really led towards active German military participation.

**Dr Galpin:** I would say the discourse in Germany is very much about co-operation at a European level and strengthening common European foreign and defence policy. It has been very difficult for Governments to



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legitimise using force in conflicts. Their participation in Afghanistan, for example, was quite controversial with the public. So there is definitely reluctance for Germany to be involved outside either peacekeeping missions or structures of the European Union.

**Q8 Mike Gapes:** Is that reflected in the parliamentary and public debate as well? I can remember—correct me if I am wrong—that it took them seven or eight months to decide to have surveillance Tornados used. Not combat Tornados, but just surveillance ones. The rest of Europe was saying “Come on, you are not going to put any people in harm’s way and you are not going to be killing anybody.” However, there was still a major problem within the Parliament.

**Dr Galpin:** At least in the public debate, in terms of media debates, I would say that is definitely the case. There is a strong reluctance among Germans.

**Q9 Mike Gapes:** It is still the same?

**Dr Galpin:** Yes. Now, it will be interesting to follow the coalition negotiations in Germany, with the Green party as a likely coalition party. Although previously in government it was involved in military operations, the party as a whole is generally pacifist and will be quite reluctant to get involved.

It will be interesting to keep an eye on which party ends up with the Foreign Minister role in the next coalition Government, which, as far as I know, has not been decided yet.

**Q10 Chair:** Could you expand slightly on the change you are seeing there?

**Dr Galpin:** In terms of changes I am seeing about the coalition?

**Chair:** Which party is going to get the Foreign Ministry?

**Dr Galpin:** That is just one discussion that will be taking place at the moment. They are in coalition negotiations between the CDU, the Green party and the FDP. The two big ministerial roles that will need to be decided are the Foreign Minister role and the Finance Minister role. That is a big topic for negotiation.

**Q11 Chair:** Do you think the Jamaica coalition is still likely?

**Dr Galpin:** It is the only option available in terms of numbers. It will be more difficult to come to an agreement because the parties are so different. They are quite diametrically opposed on a lot of issues. It is likely negotiations will take longer, but I would expect that they do reach—

**Q12 Chair:** You do not think that they will end up with another grand coalition, however?

**Dr Galpin:** No. The SPD has stated categorically that it wants to go into opposition.

**Chair:** So far.



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**Dr Galpin:** So far. I think there have been talks about CDU also wanting to talk to SPD, but I think efforts will go into the Jamaica coalition in the first instance.

- Q13 **Ian Austin:** Welcome, and thank you for coming to talk to us. To what extent do you think the French-German partnership reduces the scope for co-operation between Britain and France on foreign security and defence policy issues?

**Dr Drent:** The Lancaster House treaty between France and Britain is unprecedented in its scope and scale. So I would expect that, outside EU and NATO frameworks, the treaty would still go strong. France and Britain would still be able to find each other because they have a similar demand and outlook and are working together on similar projects, of which the nuclear one is an example.

Of course, there will be some hindrances with the UK leaving the EU, particularly in defence industrial terms because, as I understand it, on defence research, the Lancaster House treaty has stipulated that France takes some issues and projects for itself and there is a division of labour with Britain. That will be a problem if some projects are financed in one way, through the Commission initiative, the European Defence Fund. So there are some possible hindrances.

France's *revue stratégique* is very clear about achieving European autonomy. That means that France is broadening its scope of co-operation, particularly of course with Germany but also with other countries, looking for a European intervention force. Whether that will all materialise, we don't know, but it is a clear departure from earlier efforts made by France. Whether that will be outside the EU or NATO frameworks remains to be seen, but I think that France will be open to ad hoc coalition formations where Britain, of course, would be a natural partner.

- Q14 **Ian Austin:** What do you think will happen after Brexit in respect of the UN Security Council, where France will be the only EU member state with a permanent seat? What impact do you think that will have on European diplomacy? Will Germany end up leading on the economy and France on diplomacy? How do you think that will play out?

**Dr Drent:** When you look at the records of voting in the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, the EU countries are voting in the same manner most of the time. I do not expect that to change very much. Why would it? Our interests have not changed in the meantime. So I expect that not to be so different.

Germany is up for a Security Council seat, non-permanent, in 2018 to 2019, I believe. So what I expect is that foreign policy will be co-ordinated among the European countries, as it was. I mostly expect a lot of co-ordination and convergence between the EU countries—plus the UK, I suppose. In that sense, I do not see a division of labour because the European Council of Heads of States and Government is where foreign policy at a strategic level is decided. I would expect it to continue to converge.



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Q15 **Andrew Rosindell:** Dr Drent, you talk about continuing converging. Do you see Britain continuing to converge in this way? Is that what you intend? Is that what you would like to see, for Britain to continue to converge in this direction?

**Dr Drent:** As I said, I think that we have a lot of similar interests in the world. It is only 15 minutes from Rotterdam to here, so that is really not surprising.

Q16 **Andrew Rosindell:** But in a bilateral way, or more of an integrated way?

**Dr Drent:** No, in a European way, I suppose. It's geographically, but also in security, in the values that we share, in the democratic outlook that we have. There is convergence because of the external pressures that we are dealing with. The world is changing: it is become more multipolar; we cannot rely as much on the United States. The United States does not want to support us as much, they want the Europeans to be more self-reliant. So I see all kinds of external forces making that convergence happen, if we think about that pragmatically, but of course I also know about Global Britain. As I understand it, it is the intention of the UK to focus beyond the EU to other parts of the world, and to work together with other constellations. But I think that is good, and it is also part of the EU global strategy that the EU itself should also be more global, so I also do not see a contradiction there.

Q17 **Andrew Rosindell:** Do you think the United Kingdom should be part of what's being discussed now, which is a permanent structured co-operation between the UK and the European Union? Do you see Britain as part of that? Is that your wish? That is a question for all three of you.

**Dr Drent:** My wish? Well, permanent structured co-operation is basically a eurozone for defence—

Q18 **Andrew Rosindell:** But this is happening; this is now on the agenda. So, are you suggesting that the United Kingdom should be part of that structure as well?

**Dr Drent:** If it were a member of the EU, I would hope that it would also be interested in permanent structured co-operation, but you can only be part of it if you're a member of the EU.

Q19 **Chair:** Which we won't be.

**Dr Drent:** Exactly, so I think—

**Andrew Rosindell:** So we can't be part of it?

**Dr Drent:** I would wish that there was some modality in which that core group of defence, where, by European law, you are held to the promises that you made on defence, capabilities and operational targets, I would hope that the UK would want to align itself with that.

Q20 **Andrew Rosindell:** I am not saying we want to be part of it, but the EU is going to look pretty weak without the United Kingdom there, isn't it? Pretty weak in terms of security, defence and foreign policy approaches





to things. Without the UK, what is the EU?

**Dr Chappell:** But then what are you measuring that on? What are you basing that assumption on? I mean, diplomatically, yes, there is a point there, that the UK is a weighty player in the international global security defence environment, but if you are looking at the UK's participation in the common security and defence policy, the UK has not played a major role for a number of years now. Many of the initiatives now coming forward are from France, from Germany or, of course, from the European Commission in respect of the European Defence Fund.

So, if we look at UK participation, we have European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta. The UK has the operational headquarters there, and they participate in one or two projects under pooling and sharing in the European Defence Agency, of course. Yes, there is a sort of diplomatic weight issue, but—

Q21 **Andrew Rosindell:** Can I make one point quickly, just to be clear about what I am saying? I do not think anyone has an issue with co-operation, but if the EU insists that it is an integrated process and that sovereignty is still lost, then how can you possibly expect the United Kingdom to want to be part of these things, if the EU is insisting that we are still transferring sovereignty and there is an integration process continuing, despite the wishes of the British people in not wanting to be part of that kind of thing?

**Dr Chappell:** I am not suggesting that the UK should be part of permanent structured co-operation in defence. I mean, as Margriet has said, that is not feasible unless the UK is a member of the European Union. There is a political underpinning to PESCO which is not there in respect to, say, pooling and sharing. From that perspective, no, the UK cannot participate. Whether or not I would desire it to participate is neither here nor there. In terms of PESCO, that is simply not going to be the case.

The other thing to note with PESCO is that it is not compulsory for all of what will be 27 member states to participate in PESCO. That is up to each member state to decide. Currently, the discussions are ongoing as to what sort of criteria member states should fulfil, as to whether PESCO should be something more inclusive or exclusive. Of course member states will have differing opinions on that, depending on their perspective on defence and how far they want to participate.

Q22 **Mike Gapes:** Can I take you to the essence of the issue? If we leave the EU, we cannot automatically be members of the Political and Security Committee. However, we could have a relationship to it. Can you clarify for me how important the Political and Security Committee is? How does that compare in the sense of being in the room, which we have discussed in previous evidence sessions? Would that compare to informal, ad hoc or bilateral meetings or contacts?

**Dr Drent:** No, I do not think so.





Q23 **Mike Gapes:** You do not think what?

**Dr Drent:** I do not think that having an ambassador in the room as a member of the Political and Security Committee, which prepares the Foreign Affairs Council decisions, compares to having bilateral or an informal relationship to the PSC. I do not think so. To be clear, the real decisions in CSDP recently—in security and defence and foreign policy—are increasingly taking place at the stage of the European Council, so with the Heads of State and Government.

Q24 **Mike Gapes:** The Foreign Affairs Council?

**Dr Drent:** No, actually at the Prime Ministers' and Presidents' level—more there. Then it is reverted to the Foreign Affairs Council and that meeting is more technically fleshed out by the PSC. In that sense, the real influencing on the large frames of foreign policy is taking place in the European Council.

Q25 **Mike Gapes:** So to continue to have an influence we would need to be in some kind of ongoing structured relationship, having perhaps a formal observer status of the UK, even if we leave the EU, remaining in the room as an observer and, therefore, having an input into those discussions.

**Dr Drent:** Yes, I would say so.

Q26 **Mike Gapes:** Would that be just in the Political and Security Committee or also the Foreign Affairs Council?

**Dr Drent:** Yes, I would think that having some kind of structured relationship with the EU would be at all levels, because that is what you need if you want to be aligned and consulted. If you want to have influence then you would have representatives in some fashion or form at the various Politico-Military Group, the PSC, the Foreign Affairs Council, the Defence Council and the European Council.

Q27 **Chair:** May I press you on that slightly? I understand what Dr Chappell was saying about the lead being taken very much by the French and Germans in terms of CSDP, certainly the bureaucratic machinery behind it. Would it not still be the case that the backbone of many of these military operations, whether they be Atalanta, Mali or various others, is very strongly British, whether you look at the NATO Command structure in southern Italy and the fact that the Royal Navy leads very heavily on it, or whether you look at the air bridge to Mali and the fact that it is very much Royal Air Force jets that maintain it? No other air force in Europe has the lift capability to do it.

You look at Atalanta and the capabilities of Her Majesty's warships and the range that they have in comparison with some other fleets, and the command and control that you see. Are we not fundamentally talking about a relationship that has to go both ways?

Therefore, if there is to be a future relationship, which I think many of us would like to see, of co-operating forces, the desire needs to be not only for Britain to co-operate with the EU but for the EU to co-operate with



Britain.

When one looks particularly at the relationship between France and the United Kingdom, who, let's be frank, are the two serious expeditionary forces in Europe—nobody else maintains an expeditionary capability even close to the French and British levels—would it not be fair to say that what we are really talking about here is an increase in the St Malo accord, which is a bilateral agreement, with support by other parties, as we have had from Estonia, Denmark and the Netherlands, through integrated command structures in various ways, not just in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan but around the world, which is not actually an EU structure but a further embedding of the bilateralism and multilateralism through NATO? Is that not a better way to look at it?

**Dr Drent:** Yes. The way I see it is that most operations take place outside of the frameworks of the EU and NATO. Countries with aligning interests find each other outside these institutions. The militarily capable countries—the coalition of the willing and able—find each other. You see a pattern in Libya and Mali, etc. Later on, the institutions are brought in because of legitimacy, obviously, but also because of the more comprehensive policies that the EU brings, the command structure that NATO brings and the American involvement.

I think that you have to look at this pragmatically and say, "We have coordinating institutions—the EU, NATO—but it is the member states of these institutions that bring forces and capabilities to the table." We have to be very pragmatic about what form that takes. If we want to do something in northern Africa and all EU countries agree to it, at the moment we do not have the command structure for that. We lack the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, the lift capabilities and the helicopters. We need to be pragmatic and see who is going to take charge of that operation, under which hat it will happen and how we can combine capabilities so that we can all tackle the conflict and the problem that we see. You do not have to think in only EU or NATO terms. Mostly it is about the coalitions of the willing and able.

**Q28 Mike Gapes:** To talk about influence on foreign security policy from countries in NATO but outside the EU, what is your assessment of how much influence Norway has, or even the United States or Canada, over how the EU develops its security and defence arrangements and decision making?

**Dr Drent:** On a larger scale, I think that the United States has a lot of influence, because of its pressure on European countries to do more for its own security. In a broader sense, that has given an impetus to the European Union to want to be more mature in its security and defence efforts. When you look at Norway, for instance, Norway has carved out a very specific relationship for itself where it is consulted at almost every turn taken. It does not take part in the decision making itself, but it is consulted and involved.

**Q29 Mike Gapes:** How is it consulted?



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**Dr Drent:** It is consulted in the sense that they have EU-Norway meetings with Mogherini, with the External Action Service and with the PSC. This is all on an informal—

Q30 **Mike Gapes:** Is this done by the Norwegian ambassador in Brussels?

**Dr Drent:** I am not sure who does it, exactly; I am sorry. I would think so, but I am guessing. I do not know.

Norway is a very interesting case study in this sense. An enormous amount of meetings take place where Norway is asked to join a decision, but only after the decision has been taken.

Q31 **Mike Gapes:** The EU makes a decision, and then the Swedes and the Finns say, “We ought to get Norway in as well”?

**Dr Drent:** No, I think it is more of a practice that has evolved. Norway is also very active in the European Defence Agency, for instance, and takes part in a lot of projects there.

Q32 **Mike Gapes:** But you have to be a member of the EU to be a member of the European Defence Agency, don't you? You have to have an association agreement.

**Dr Drent:** They do. They have an association agreement with EDA. That means that they are not on the steering board of EDA and they do not have representation there, but they do pay into the EDA budget and take part in projects.

Q33 **Mike Gapes:** So the UK, having driven setting up the European Defence Agency and provided its first general secretary, could perhaps continue to have an association, but by paying to be in the European Defence Agency?

**Dr Drent:** Yes, and by signing an association agreement.

Q34 **Mike Gapes:** Like Norway has, and, I understand, Serbia, Israel—

**Dr Drent:** And Switzerland.

Q35 **Andrew Rosindell:** That is all very interesting. To get to the nub of this, during the referendum, of concern were the increasing EU ambitions for an EU military. There was even talk of our armed forces eventually being merged into some military structure with EU command. Clearly, that is not something the British people support. In your view, and I ask this question to all three of you, do you believe that defence and the control of military—command and control and defence—is a state preserve, whereby the nation state decides these things, or do you see it as becoming more of an EU command and control structure that countries within the EU, and possibly those that are not, should be part of? Can we be honest about where we stand on that, so we know where we are?

**Dr Chappell:** What do you mean by that? If you are talking about—

**Andrew Rosindell:** Be clear—let's put our cards on the table. Where is this leading?



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**Dr Chappell:** If you are talking about the EU creating a permanent operational headquarters in the same way that NATO has SHAPE, that will certainly be under discussion in the next few years. It already has a permanent headquarters in respect of non-executive military operations. Those are training missions, but training missions only. Whether that will develop further once the UK leaves is obviously a discussion point. In respect of whether we will see some form of Euro army—let's use that term—I think that is highly unlikely. First, France will want to retain its own independent military armed force, because it does not just deploy force in the context of the European Union.

Q36 **Andrew Rosindell:** So it is still a state preserve then.

**Dr Chappell:** Yes, of course. It should be.

Q37 **Andrew Rosindell:** So presumably, Dr Chappell, you disagree with Angus Lapsley, who recently said, "Commission needed if we are to respond to modern threats to Europe. But reminder that defence no longer member state preserve".

**Dr Chappell:** I would say that for military capability and military deployment, all member states have only one set of armed forces. Those armed forces have to be utilised for EU-NATO unilateral operations and therefore you are not going to see European countries deciding to forgo their own national defence and military armed forces and to be integrated into one thing called a Euro army standing ready to be deployed. That is not going to be—

Q38 **Andrew Rosindell:** It is a straightforward question. Is it a state preserve—

**Dr Chappell:** Let me finish, please. That is not going to be the case. For a start, you have countries such as central and eastern European countries—like Poland—who are very much focused on ensuring that CSDP remains intergovernmental. They do not want to see this merger of defence, and in a way, they align with the UK view on that.

Q39 **Andrew Rosindell:** Dr Drent, do you think it is a state preserve?

**Dr Drent:** I am not aware of an EU country that would be interested in an EU army at the moment. That is a big misunderstanding.

Q40 **Andrew Rosindell:** Are you sure about that?

**Dr Drent:** I am.

Q41 **Andrew Rosindell:** So you disagree with Mr Lapsley as well, do you?

**Dr Drent:** I do.

Q42 **Andrew Rosindell:** Even though you liked his comment on Twitter.

**Dr Drent:** Did I?

**Andrew Rosindell:** When he made that comment, you liked it, which rather revealed your point of view.



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**Dr Drent:** I have no clue—

**Andrew Rosindell:** I have a copy here.

**Dr Drent:** Oh, that is highly interesting.

Q43 **Andrew Rosindell:** This is fundamental to everything. People fear that this is leading to a centralised control of our defences. That has almost no support among the British people.

**Dr Drent:** And no support around the EU.

Q44 **Andrew Rosindell:** And if the EU wants to work with Britain, it has to be on a bilateral basis and not giving away sovereignty or integration, which we voted to reject. Do you accept that?

**Dr Drent:** Yes. My country has the same opinion. Eventually it is up to the national sovereignty to decide whether to deploy and put in harm's way soldiers and military people. That is a prerogative of a sovereign nation. There is not going to be an entity above that.

Q45 **Andrew Rosindell:** So PESCO does not imply a loss of sovereignty, in your view.

**Dr Drent:** No; it implies close and deep co-operation.

Q46 **Andrew Rosindell:** Co-operation, but not a loss of sovereignty.

**Dr Drent:** No. I have argued in papers—maybe you could have looked that up—that sovereignty can be enlarged by pooling sovereignty.

Q47 **Andrew Rosindell:** That would be a loss of sovereignty. If you pool sovereignty, you lose it.

**Dr Drent:** Sovereignty is the ability to perform internationally and to safeguard your interests. If that is not well taken care of, so if you are alone and not working together with others, then you need to work together with others, and that means you need to combine your strengths. In that sense, that is what I think PESCO is about.

**Dr Galpin:** I would echo that. I think we are talking about where the UK often differs from other European countries, and that is in its conception of sovereignty, and precisely this point: is sovereignty something we exercise alone, or can we share sovereignty in order to increase our voice in the world? In countries such as Germany that is one view of sovereignty; that Europeans are stronger in a situation where they share sovereignty.

Q48 **Andrew Rosindell:** But you all agree that defence is a state preserve and there is no intention of a European centrally commanded armed forces?

**Dr Drent:** No.

**Dr Chappell:** No.

**Andrew Rosindell:** Thank you.

Q49 **Chair:** Andrew is following a passionate line, but can I perhaps go back to



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bilateral questions? Dr Galpin, you have written a lot about this. If the UK wishes to influence Germany after Brexit, should it do so in Berlin or in Brussels?

**Dr Galpin:** I am not sure that I am able to say exactly where it is best to do that. I would say that it is important for the UK to understand Germany and how Germany works, and perhaps it is important to have some people in Berlin to keep an eye on German domestic politics.

Q50 **Chair:** And the Lander?

**Dr Galpin:** I'm sorry?

**Chair:** Or is the best way through the Lander, to the German federal level?

**Dr Galpin:** More awareness of how the German system works and the interests of the respective Lander would be valuable. What the respective weight of our resources are, I would not be able to say. In terms of how the debate is understood in Germany, one thing that has come out of my research is that there seems to be an asymmetry in respective understanding between Germany and the UK. In the German media there is a very clear awareness of British history and culture, and British politics is reported on a regular basis, but I am not sure that applies in the UK, so I would argue that there is a need to improve that.

Q51 **Chair:** I am sure that you have Sir Paul Lever's book.

**Dr Galpin:** I have not read it yet, actually. He was at an event that we organised recently and that is on my list.

**Chair:** May I break the neutrality of the Committee and recommend that you read it? It is a very good book, in which he talks about Germany's position in the European Union as being an extension of the German model to merely a separate stage, and therefore in some ways seeing the Lander and the federal Government as superimposing on to the Commission and the Council. He is very clear, I think, that Germany has been very honest with its ambitions in a national sense through the European Union. Do you think there is any suggestion that Germany's national ambition, which is very much more European land-based, as Dr Drent said, would afford the same comparative as the British currently offer the European Union? Therefore, do you think that the German Government would see bilateral interest, not just multilateral interest, and would therefore be willing to think about how a CFSP or a CSDP could be co-ordinated with the UK post-Brexit?

**Dr Galpin:** I think there is definitely an interest in continuing a bilateral relationship with the UK. For example, an Anglo-German relationship is something that all parties have expressed a commitment to, hoping that we will have a positive relationship in the future. Whether they would be in favour of a bilateral relationship in CSDP—

Q52 **Chair:** I am suggesting adapting it to enable that. The current format clearly does not allow it—there is no question about that.





**Dr Galpin:** One thing that is important to understand about Germany's approach to the European Union is that the EU is very much understood as a community of law. This is a rules-based community. One thing that the UK is struggling to communicate with Germany, or that Germany struggles to understand, is that Germany is committed to the fact that we have treaties, a set of institutions and a set of rules that guide those institutions. Justifying working outside that framework is quite difficult in the German context. There might be a willingness in Germany to work outside those structures, but that is at least the political situation and the public debate in Germany—that there is a commitment to the EU framework.

Q53 **Chair:** Dr Drent and Dr Chappell, can I ask about how the Netherlands and Poland view the UK in that way? They have very different perspectives, particularly Poland, with its rather more—how can I put it?—affectionate neighbours.

**Dr Chappell:** Poland is in a particular security situation geopolitically. Russia has always been part of Polish threat perceptions and that has not dissipated in the way that it certainly had in much of western and southern Europe. That has underpinned Poland's approach to security and defence, including its Atlanticism, and in that respect it shares with the UK the approach of a close relationship with the US and the desire to see the CSDP evolve in a way that is complementary to NATO. In that respect, I think these two areas certainly converge.

However, Poland is currently having a rather conflictual relationship with the European Union. That has occurred with the Government elected in 2015—the Law and Justice Party—who are Eurosceptic and relatively anti-German. Although Polish security and defence policy does not fluctuate particularly drastically in its core components, the way that Poland expresses its interests tends to shift.

Under Civic Platform, the previous Government, we had a situation where Poland was more proactive in the European Union, particularly in respect of common security and defence policy. In their presidency of the European Council in 2011, they put CSDP as one of the items on the agenda and they got certain parts of it moving to an extent. The current Government have tended to back away from CSDP somewhat. They have also run into conflict in respect to certain elements of the situation in Poland, particularly with laws related to undermining an independent judiciary and in respect to the refugee crisis, as Poland has refused to take in refugees from the MENA region.

Q54 **Chair:** Can I take you back to the UK aspect?

**Dr Chappell:** With respect to Poland-UK relations, because the current Government are relatively anti-German, they have tried to strengthen relations with the United Kingdom. However, with respect to the evolution of CSDP, there are differences of opinion, particularly about such things as the development of the defence industry and ensuring the competitiveness of that industry. Poland is increasing its defence budget as a percentage of





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GDP from 2% to 2.1% in 2021 and to 2.5% by 2030. However, Poland wants to utilise its own national defence industry as far as possible to try to create some of that military capability. Certainly, the modernisation of the Polish armed forces has been ongoing since about 2014, under the previous Government.

But in respect of UK-Polish relations, the UK is backing Poland up particularly in the NATO context by putting forth British forces within Poland as a standing military component. The UK is very much supporting Poland and the Baltic states in respect of insurance and deterrence measures against what we consider to be a resurgent Russia in the context of Ukraine. In the matter of influencing CSDP, I think it would be quite difficult for the UK to utilise Poland as a way of influencing CSDP, simply because Poland has backed away from CSDP. It used to be one of the countries that was relatively involved and supportive of particular initiatives, but that is less the case now. So the UK would be better looking towards France and secondly Germany.

Q55 **Chair:** Moving on to a separate area, what is the intention of the EU's global strategy?

**Dr Chappell:** Oh goodness. There are a number of intentions. First of all, the EU global strategy is not just about CSDP. It is about the EU's role generally in the world. There are a number of elements to it: first of all it is about securing the continent of Europe and ensuring that there is peace and security within Europe. Secondly, it is about this idea of resilience, in particular within neighbouring countries. It is about providing crisis management where applicable. A few underlying components include the idea of strategic autonomy: that the EU should be capable of acting without US capabilities. There are only two militarily capable countries, as has already been noted in this Committee: the UK and France are primarily the most militarily capable countries. Those military capability gaps have been there for a number of years, but now we are starting to see momentum towards trying to fill some of these capability gaps. Whether or not that materialises is another question. So strategic autonomy is one thing.

Another issue relates to the comprehensive approach to security: this idea that the EU should use the full spectrum of its instruments, both civil and military, towards the same end and that the EU should speak with the same voice, bearing in mind that it is not just the European External Action Service but also the Commission that is responsible for certain parts of EU external relations more broadly. These cover trade, aid and the European neighbourhood policy. These are all instruments of the Commission, not of the EEAS. So it is about joining up instruments.

We also have the idea of effective multilateralism. Generically, that means working with partners—the UN—underpinned by international law. NATO is also particularly important in the CSDP context, and it has provided some momentum coming out of this. We are starting to see new ideas, though they are not new of course. We have already spoken about PESCO, which came out of the Lisbon treaty. It was originally sidelined because they



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could not agree on the political criteria for PESCO and so we end up with pooling and sharing, which is about creating capability or training programmes on a case-by-case basis amongst member states who want to go forward with those projects.

We also have the idea of some kind of permanent standing military headquarters, but only currently for non-executive missions, as I have said. There is the idea of streamlining or synchronising member states' planning cycles. Again, that is only for those member states that want to participate in that. Nothing in the CSDP defence element is compulsory. This is an inter-governmental area, and it is for member states to decide what it is they want to co-operate on, or not.

**Q56 Chair:** Can I ask how realistic is the EU's ambition for strategic autonomy?

**Dr Drent:** As an academic would say, that depends on the definition of strategic autonomy. That is indeed the case. There are certainly a lot of shortfalls that are very well known in the European Union and that have already been there for almost 20 years. Whether those shortfalls are going to be solved in the coming years—there are indeed a number of initiatives now to co-ordinate and co-operate better in getting those lacking capabilities, but it takes a number of years for that to happen. There are some NATO and United States assets that are crucial to large-scale, high-end operations, which are not available at the moment to the European Union. That is going to take a while.

**Q57 Mike Gapes:** You mentioned NATO assets. If the UK leaves the EU, 80% of total NATO spend will be by non-EU countries. Currently, it is over 70% or 75% US and the UK is a major contributor to the European component. Isn't that going to make it very difficult for the EU to have an effective global strategy? Don't we blow a big hole by leaving?

**Dr Drent:** There is no denying that the UK brings with it a lot of assets: about 20% of the military expenditure in the EU is done by the UK. It is a nuclear power, it sits on the UN Security Council, it has a global outlook and it has a Foreign and Commonwealth Office that is also oriented in that way. So yes, it is a major loss for the European Union and it is going to be a lot more difficult, absolutely. It was not, as you know, the choice of the European Union for the referendum to end as it ended. So yes, that will be a problem and you also see that France and Germany are trying to step up to the challenge and also take more leadership. But, materially, there is no denying—

**Q58 Mike Gapes:** Isn't there also a loss in terms of a willingness to do the difficult, hard defence? France can do it, as we have seen in Mali, but doesn't it change the mindset and shift the balance to the more cuddly rather than hard wing of defence and foreign policy?

**Dr Drent:** I suppose it does, but to be honest I don't think the UK has made that much of a difference in the EU in the last years. It was France that took the initiative, did the heavy lifting and the interventions and had an assertive foreign policy, and I do not see that from the UK so much.



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Q59 **Mike Gapes:** You are saying within the EU. I suppose you would not count Libya as being within the EU, because the Germans were against it and it was therefore a UK-French—

**Dr Drent:** I was talking about France, actually.

**Mike Gapes:** Yes, but Libya was France and the UK.

**Dr Chappell:** Under NATO.

Q60 **Mike Gapes:** And with NATO support, with the US leading from behind, if I remember President Obama's phrase.

**Dr Drent:** Certainly. That is true. The point is that the UK, together with France, is the best military force in the EU, but it has not put that military force to the use of the EU so much. You could also say, as the Prime Minister said, that the UK is not leaving Europe, so it is not that the military force of the UK is not European anymore and not at our disposal. It is also a European country in NATO.

Q61 **Andrew Rosindell:** Dr Galpin, how does Germany view its place in the world, in your view, and where does the EU sit with that?

**Dr Galpin:** Germany very much sees itself as a European country, and the EU is central to that. Germany only really wants to have a voice as part of the EU, as a European country.

Q62 **Andrew Rosindell:** It only wants to have a voice as part of the EU, not on its own?

**Dr Galpin:** German national identity is very much a European identity. When Germans are talking about Germany's place in the world, that necessarily involves being a European country. So I would not say there was some kind of German place in the world that is articulated.

Q63 **Andrew Rosindell:** Do you feel the EU is like a vehicle for Germany to have a strong voice shrouded in a European identity rather than its own German identity?

**Dr Galpin:** Yes. I would not necessarily say it is a vehicle, but Germany sees co-operation and multilateral relations as central, and key at the moment is a renewed commitment to the Franco-German relationship.

This is quite present in German public debate—in the light of the global situation: security, the election of Donald Trump, and Brexit—there needs to be a reinvigoration of the Franco-German relationship. I would argue that Germany very much sees its role in the world as part of that.

Q64 **Andrew Rosindell:** How is the UK viewed in Europe in terms of being a foreign policy player globally, and for defence and security as well, compared to Germany? That is a question to all of you.

**Dr Galpin:** I do not know if I can answer specifically how it is viewed as a foreign policy actor. In terms of my project on Brexit and how the UK is viewed in Germany, I would say that there has been quite a shift in the image of the UK in Germany since the referendum.



Q65 **Andrew Rosindell:** In what way? How has our image shifted?

**Dr Galpin:** Germans have always seen the UK as a very pragmatic, sensible country. Brexit is seen as a fundamentally irrational decision in the German context. It does not really make sense considering—

Q66 **Andrew Rosindell:** If you are not part of the EU, that is irrational in the view of Germany?

**Dr Galpin:** No. Brexit is seen as Britain stepping away from the world. As I say, Germany is very committed to working with other European countries as part of the EU, and it is very difficult to translate the British decision to the German context.

Germany sees Britain's history as a global trading nation and views this as a kind of step away from its historical role in the world. That is how I would say that it is largely being seen in Germany since the referendum.

Q67 **Andrew Rosindell:** I am interested in views from the other panellists.

**Dr Drent:** I think that a lot of what has just been said also applies to the Netherlands. I do not speak for the Government of the Netherlands, of course.

I know that the Netherlands is very disappointed with the decision of the United Kingdom, because it sees the United Kingdom as some kind of a counterweight to the continental powers of France and Germany, and the Netherlands has a lot in common with the United Kingdom in terms of its trade, services and economy, and its more Anglo-Saxon transatlantic outlook. The Netherlands feels that it now has to deal with the French and German tandem on its own, more or less.

Therefore, you see also in the Netherlands the thinking: how can we compensate for that in Europe, and how can we find other coalitions to make sure that it is not only France and Germany that pull the weight in the European Union? So, in that sense, the rationality of the decision is, indeed, also wondered about in the Netherlands, I suppose. On the other hand it is seen, as I mentioned, as a great loss to the global outlook of the EU and—

Q68 **Andrew Rosindell:** It is seen as a great loss. Does anyone see it as if Britain has broken the rule of European law by breaking away from the EU? Does anyone feel that that could be said—that we are doing something a bit like Catalonia trying to leave Spain? Is it seen by anybody as a bit like that, to some extent?

**Dr Drent:** No, I don't think so. It was a provision negotiated in the Lisbon treaty that a country could leave the EU. That is respected as a decision, but it is not understood, in the sense that it is difficult to find the objective rationale for doing something like that. The Netherlands is a trading nation, it finds an enormous amount of its economy in the European Union and sees it as a peace project. It sees it as an economic vehicle, which it has benefited from a lot. Of course there was also some backlash from



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populist parties who are Eurosceptic. That has not received major support in the Netherlands.

Q69 **Andrew Rosindell:** I assume Dr Chappell agrees with that—that it is respected. It is not like breaking out of the rule of law of Europe: you don't see that.

**Dr Chappell:** No, I don't think so. In fact, certainly in public opinion polls in many European countries it has had the opposite effect and people have become more pro-European—at least more supportive of the EU than they were before. I do not think there is this sense that the UK has broken the rules, because as Margriet said, there was provision for this scenario within the Lisbon treaty; so it has a legal basis.

Q70 **Andrew Rosindell:** Presumably you disagree, therefore, with Jocelyn Mawdsley, who called for a CSDP rule of law mission to help fix broken Britain following the Brexit referendum. You disagree with that, do you? Because you work with Jocelyn Mawdsley.

**Dr Chappell:** I do work with Dr Mawdsley—closely, in fact.

Q71 **Andrew Rosindell:** So you would not suggest a EULEX type of solution, then?

**Dr Chappell:** You are taking her comment out of context. The question is about how the referendum was run, and this is not the point of this Committee, to go back over the referendum and the problems—

Q72 **Andrew Rosindell:** You cannot envisage the EU using any type of military or security forces to impose its will. So a EULEX type situation: you would never support that kind of—

**Dr Chappell:** Well neither does Jocelyn Mawdsley, so—

Q73 **Andrew Rosindell:** Not according to the tweets that I have got in front of me.

**Dr Chappell:** We are allowed a sense of humour, as well, as academics.

Q74 **Andrew Rosindell:** Okay; thank you for confirming that it was a joke, but it is very sensitive, in the UK—the idea that the EU would ever impose its will on the British people. So you can see that a joke along those lines is perhaps not the best way to approach things.

**Dr Chappell:** Not really, no. I do not see that, I am afraid.

Q75 **Chair:** Shall we move on? How have the Government's proposals for a deep and special foreign policy partnership and a security treaty been received in Europe?

**Dr Drent:** As positive, because it has put some minds at peace about the leverage that the UK first seemed to put forward in the negotiations on security issues; so the paper was clear on that—that it indeed had common interests with the EU, and wanted to work positively together, preferably in a deep and special relationship. That was received in the



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sense of “Okay, what does that mean?” It lacked some specificity on what it means. That is I suppose how it was received.

- Q76 **Chair:** Could I then perhaps follow up? Last week, you may remember, the Foreign Secretary came to our Committee and made an unconditional commitment to European security. How has the UK benefited from this pledge in its relations with the European Union and with our European partners?

**Dr Drent:** Sorry? How can—?

**Chair:** How has Britain benefited from the pledge to make an unconditional commitment to European security? Has this been a net positive? Has this pushed forward the negotiations and the feeling of good will, perhaps?

**Dr Drent:** To be honest, it’s stalled for the moment, on the backburner of the negotiations, as the EU has the opinion that some other matters should be settled first. So, in that sense it has created a bit more of a positive atmosphere, I’m sure, but it does not have any material effects on the negotiations.

- Q77 **Mike Gapes:** On the future relationship between the EU and NATO, I am interested in your assessment of whether, in fact, if the UK leaves, we are in a position where other countries will then come out, who were hiding behind the UK, and will actually be as problematic within the EU as we were seen to be in resisting this closer relationship between the EU and NATO.

**Dr Drent:** I think you are absolutely right. A lot of countries were very comfortable behind the broad back of the UK, not only its veto power in the CSDP but in the EU-NATO constellation. I suppose a number of countries will have to show their cards now—I am thinking, of course, of Turkey, Greece, Cyprus and perhaps even France—in how the EU-NATO relationship will evolve.

- Q78 **Mike Gapes:** What about Poland and some of the Baltic states? Are they in a similar position?

**Dr Chappell:** Poland wants to ensure that, as I said before, the EU and NATO develop in a complementary way. Poland is an Atlanticist and as such it prioritises its relationship with the US; the US is the guarantor of Polish security, in reality. So there would be that concern, but there is no concern in Poland about the EU and NATO co-operating.

- Q79 **Mike Gapes:** But unnecessary duplication? I mean, we used to be against having an EU military headquarters, and all of that stuff, but we are not in the room any more to stop that—

**Dr Chappell:** But, also, what you mean by “unnecessary duplication” for the UK is not necessarily the same as for other countries in the room, and certainly there is more support for a permanent operational headquarters among European countries. Poland actually introduced that proposal in 2011, under its presidency of the European Council, which, of course, was





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essentially vetoed by the UK. Whether they are still supportive of that, I do not know. With the change in Government, there has certainly been a shift—

**Q80 Mike Gapes:** Was that when Mr Sikorski was the Foreign Minister?

**Dr Chappell:** Yes. Times have changed to a degree, such that Poland, as I said, has become far more Eurosceptic and certainly is trying to gain assurances for its own territorial security, which it is doing through two things. The first is through NATO, and ensuring that there is a permanent NATO presence on Polish soil; and the second is development of its own military capability.

**Q81 Andrew Rosindell:** I have a final question, to end on a really positive note. Britain has a lot to contribute to global security, defence, foreign policy—we have been doing it for hundreds and hundreds of years, as you know. Can you perhaps look at how there could be something different, so that Britain's positive contribution to all the things we have been discussing today can still be there, while at the same time steadfastly guarding the desire of the British people and the British Government not to be sucked into an integration process, so that the co-operation is there without a feeling that we are gradually being compelled into another type of process that we are now trying to extricate ourselves from? Do you see where I am coming from, and do you think you may perhaps pivot in that direction and work on something on which we could perhaps all continue to co-operate and work together, without the loss of sovereignty over these areas that people fear?

**Dr Drent:** Absolutely. Security and defence and foreign policy is an intergovernmental part of the European Union. It would be very logical indeed to continue to work together with Britain, considering what it brings to the table, in terms of potential influence and power and military proficiency. There has to be a formula in which the EU and the UK can work together, because of our common interests.

**Q82 Andrew Rosindell:** Or perhaps create something completely new, out of EU structures, that involves a wider group of countries for defence and security and foreign policy discussions, without everything being under EU structures. Is that acceptable? Could that be considered?

**Dr Drent:** I am not so sure whether another institution on security in Europe, or broader than that, would be the right thing to do. I see that, on various issues, it would be very logical to sit together and co-ordinate and co-operate on various policy issues.

I also see a possibility of a loose relationship with the UK, outside all structures; to have an EU+1 format. I suppose that could be accommodated in some way, but then the UK has to accept that it will not have any influence on the EU's decision making itself, and that it will really be an outsider that, after the EU discusses things internally, will also be included and involved. It is difficult to conceive how that can be any different.





**Q83 Andrew Rosindell:** So an EU structure is the only way you feel this can be done? It cannot be done outside an EU structure, in your view?

**Dr Drent:** Yes. Of course there are all kinds of ad hoc possibilities on issues, as we have seen on the Iran issue and all kinds of issues where the format is of larger countries coming together with the available high representative there as well. Because it is intergovernmental, it is up to the EU and the UK to decide what is most effective.

However, I think that the progress that has been made on foreign and security and defence policy in the EU as a group—a united group that has more influence when it is united—should also remain at the core of what the EU countries would want to do.

**Dr Galpin:** I agree that there is a willingness to develop a positive relationship with the UK after Brexit, and an acceptance that this is a decision that the UK has made. With respect to Germany, my impression from the German public debate is that what we are actually seeing is quite the opposite—that Britain's decision to leave is strengthening the resolve further to integrate the European Union and to make sure that the European Union remains stable.

There is a perception that Germany needs to ensure that the EU stays together, so I am not sure, at least in the German context, how many options are seen in the public debate, in terms of this kind of extra-EU decision making.

**Dr Chappell:** First of all, we do still have NATO. We have to remember that that is one way we can co-operate with our European partners and also, of course, with the US, Canada, Turkey and other countries. We cannot just forget that route.

The second thing with respect to CSDP more specifically is that yes, the UK could—along with the EU, of course—decide to create an agreement under which the UK could participate in EU operations and missions if the UK decided that that was within its interests. For example, an anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden is clearly linked to the UK interest in respect of protecting its trade routes. You could get an agreement for the UK to participate in, say, the Battlegroup concept if it wished—although that has never been deployed, of course—or an agreement with the European Defence Agency so that the UK can participate in whatever projects it is interested in participating in. There are ways of doing that, and we have already spoken a bit about whether the UK could have some kind of observer status in the different institutional elements of the EU. All that is feasible.

I do not see why we would need yet another institutional organisation for security and defence. In addition to NATO, we also have—

**Q84 Andrew Rosindell:** So it could all be done through NATO. Is that what you are saying?

**Dr Chappell:** We have the OSCE as well, don't forget.



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Q85 **Andrew Rosindell:** So we do not need the EU to do it at all. NATO could replace the CSDP.

**Dr Chappell:** We have the OSCE, we have NATO and then we have the EU. The UK can engage with the EU if it chooses to do so and that is within the UK's interests. That is obviously something which our Government will negotiate on in the context of the Brexit negotiations.

**Chair:** I thank all three of you very much for your time this afternoon. You have certainly enlightened us—I think Andrew would agree—and we are very grateful to you for making the time.