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# MILITARY EVOLUTION IN EUROPE. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RUSSIA

In the 20th century, the world witnessed invention of the international subject of a new, supranational quality. The European Union set up in 1957 has turned into one of the economic heavyweights since then. However, its ambitions are still not supported by the required set of tools. The European Union status as a big power centre relies more on the foreign political influence of its leading member states than its own supranational potential. Will the EU be able to acquire the real subjectivity of a global player and realize its international strategy? It's one of the main intrigues of the next decades [5].

The President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker warns that not a single country of the EU will be one of the seven biggest economies in 30 years. If according to his data, the today's share of the Union's GDP in global economy is about 23%, it will decrease down to 15-17% in 20 years. There are also demographic losses in the EU: its population may amount to only 4% of the global population by the end of the century.[2] They in European capitals point at strategic issues of integration more and more often. Thus, the United Kingdom, no matter London's aspiration to present the future position of the Kingdom in the world as rose-coloured, comprehends the growing geopolitical risks. Jeremy Hunt, serving as the British Foreign Secretary, said that China would overtake the U.S. as the world's largest economy by 2030. The Chinese and Indian economies would jointly overcome G7 GDP by 2050.[3]

With numerous crisis phenomena in the European Union's internal development as a background and the out-side world's "picture" changing not in favour of the previous world order [19], the old idea gains renewed momentum - to create one's own EU political and military potential, achieve a certain sovereignty in common foreign policy and security policy.

## Staking on hard power again

The core of the modern security and defence system of the EU is the agreement on Permanent Structured Cooperation[4] (PESCO) as an element of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)[5], created by the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1999. The PESCO principle was legally fixed by the Treaty of Lisbon entering into force in December 2009. In December, 2017, the European Council approved the program under the same name, which was joined by 25 EU countries except the United Kingdom, Malta and Denmark [8]. The signed agreement is legally binding. The basic role of PESCO in the defence union development was emphasized many times since then.

The said trends will be further developed in case of Brexit [18] and taking into account the deformation in the EU and the United States relations. The work of the EU Operations Centre for planning and undertaking overseas missions except military operations[6] outside the EU military headquarters was launched in 2012. In June 2017, its functions as a part of the Global Strategy's implementation were transferred by the decision of the European Council to the MPCC - Military Planning and Conduct Capability[7] already as a part of the military headquarters structure. The MPCC commands three non-military EU missions in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia. It was originally thought up as permanent operational headquarters but such a brave innovation was invariably blocked by London. They in Brussels count on the new structure's transformation after Britain exits the European Union in 2020 into Operational Headquarters with a possibility to conduct military operations (a prototype of the EU Ministry of Defence).

It is envisioned that in the next years the key priority of the EU defence union's concept will mean aspirations to accelerate integration of military-industrial complexes of member states, and that in its turn implies enhancement of their competitiveness in their rivalry with the U.S. military-industrial complex. Military expenditures of the Alliance

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[2] https://youtube/2R6rwAkvnwE (accessed: 15.01.2019).
[3] http://www.ukpol.co.uk/jeremy-hunt-2018-speech-at-policy-exchange (accessed: 27.12.2018)

[4] Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).
[5] European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). After the Treaty of Lisbon was signed in 2007, it was renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).
[6] The EU Operations Centre (EU OPCEN).
[7] Military Planning and Conduct Capability.

members are increased up to 2% of national GDP under pressure from Washington. But at the same time, a number of European allies would like to use at least a part of additional resources for advancing on the way of the EU strategic autonomy, to put it differently - to escape from the full military and political dependence on the United States.

The ultimate goal of the defence union idea for the most radical advocates of it is creation of a European army, i.e. a supranational EU defence and security tool. But currently we're speaking about aims that are much easier to achieve, e.g. stimulating joint R&D in the military sector for creating completely compatible technologies and equipment.[1] The total military budget of the EU-28 in 2017 was impressive - about US$ 260 billion[2] (expenditures for armaments, research and development), however, 80% of defence purchases were exclusively national expenditures.

The most challenging aspect of the new European military potential's development is its close ties with military planning within the framework of NATO - the clearly anti-Russia focused organization. A vivid example is the "Schengen of Defence" concept. In March 2018, the European Commission approved the plan for accelerated movement of troops and equipment from the west to the east of Europe. It became one of the large-scale PESCO projects. It is focused on adapting civil transport infrastructure to military needs (special features of construction and updating transport facilities, unification of the EU member states legislation as to providing troops and armaments transit). These preparations together with the new Alliance programs evidently certify that a part of European political and military establishment is ready to review a possibility of large-scale military actions in Europe.

At the same time, Pentagon is also operating based on the European Deterrence Initiative[3] to enhance troops mobility as a part of efforts to deter "Russian aggression" and strengthening security guarantees for the allies. In 2019, Americans plan to increase expenditures for implementation of the Initiative from US$ 4.8 to 6.5 billion. The most part of this amount will be spent on updating military infrastructure for the American Air Force in East European countries with simultaneous creation of big stocks of military equipment in such states as Germany and the United Kingdom.

Further programs are approved by NATO focused on filling the Schengen of Defence with content. Thus, one of the main solutions of the NATO Summit in Brussels in June 2018 was the proposed readiness initiative, the "30-30-30-30" or "Four Thirties", closely related to the military mobility issues. The idea is to have 30 mechanized battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat vessels ready to deployment within 30 or less days by 2020. They are to get ready based on the available forces. They are rotational forces subordinated to the Alliance member states called for to perform the second-echelon function for quick movement, strengthening or replacing the rapid deployment forces (RDF).

The said and other military preparations, expanding military infrastructure certify the principally important aspect - confrontation with Russia is included in NATO military planning, with this organization trying to implement it in any possible way into the elements of the still embryonic European Defence Union. The future will show if the Alliance manages to absorb the elements of European military build-up or it will be able to stand firmly on its legs.

From the Russian interests perspective, the two following issues are of the main importance: first, in all appearances, military potential strengthening within the EU framework is an irreversible process; second, its development according to the European Defence Union (EDU) concept is much more profitable for non-Western power centres than based on the Common Security and Defence Policy thesis as the "NATO European foundation". Structural confrontation of Russia and the Alliance is guaranteed for the foreseeable future, which is far from evident in relations with the EU. NATO strengthening at the expense of Europeans is a hardly attractive option for other big subjects of world politics beyond the "collective West". The United States traditionally dominating in the Alliance are not perceived as a stabilizing force in international relations. On the contrary, the European Union has the reputation of a more predictable, peace-loving and consistent in its actions player.

### The European Union raises its voice

In the end of August, 2018, E. Macron's speech in front of French diplomatic mission heads received a wide response. He spoke about the necessity of closer European cooperation in defence as well as mentioned: "Europe can no longer trust its security to the United States only. We should guarantee our security ourselves" [36]. Politicians of a lower rank speak more and more openly. Florence Parly, French Minister of Defence, called in September 2018 to decrease military dependence on the United States. She gave the following examples to support her position: the United States blocking sale of French SCALP cruise missiles to Egypt in making which American components are used, and the requirement to ask the U.S. Congress permission to install armaments on American Reaper drones bought by Paris to fight terrorist groups. Parly referred the said difficulties both to geopolitics and commercial rivalry.[4] Later, the President of France himself said point-blank in his interview to CNN that increase of defence expenditures by Europeans did not mean that they had to buy armaments made in America.[5]

The lion share of success or failure of advanced cooperation in defence and security first of all depends on the France and Germany tandem, though deformed in recent decades because of the growth of Germany's economic and political role. Not only politicians of the biggest leading states of the integration union comprehend the world development along the unexplored route of polycentrism. This also takes place in small EU members, including those in which anti-Russian moods are rooted and pro-American moods dominate.

It should be expected from France and Germany to go on presenting some or other initiatives accompanying the idea of the defence union: some of them to promote certain measures, others, less real, to maintain the reform rates. It's possible that the suggestion to set up the EU Security Coun-

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[1] From 2010, the EU countries have been spending less then EUR 200 mln per year for joint R&D in defence industry.
[2] According to SIPRI. https://vv'vvw.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPM-Milex-data-1949-2017.xlsx (accessed: 05.01.2019).
[3] European Deterrence Initiative.

[4] TASS, September 6, 2018. The Head of the French Ministry of Defence spoke in favour of decrease of dependence on the United States in arm components.
[5] https://edition.cnn.com/videos/politics/2017/09/19/intv-macron-complete-amanpour.cnn (accessed: 20.11.2018).

cil (EUSC), presented by E. Macron and A. Merkel at the bilateral inter-governmental consultations on July 19,2018 [38], is referred to the latter category. Later, in October, the Chancellor confirmed her position when she spoke in the Bavarian city of Ottobeuren [30]. They were speaking about the organ, the name of which does not accidentally sound like the UN Security Council. It follows from various comments that it could include permanent members (surely, first of all France and Germany) and form on the rotation basis from non-permanent members. In that case, the consensus issue could be solved in the spirit of "multi-speed Europe" when taking foreign political decisions in the EU, i.e. no country from the latter category will be able to block its decisions as it happens now.

In terms of the Russian interests, dismantling the consensus rule that is used today when voting in the European Council on Foreign Relations, is ambiguous. Consensus means that any country may, for example, veto prolongation of anti-Russian sanctions; but if it is cancelled, political will of several states will be required for such a decision. And sure, in case the EU Security Council is set up, a whole number of managerial issues for the whole organization will have to be solved, for example, the new structure's coordination with the European Council on Foreign Relations. It will become clear in 2019 if the EUSC idea is to be developed. But now, the leading authorities of the integration union, taking the initiative into account, speak carefully about its prospects. Thus, it is said in the European Parliament resolution of December 12,2018 that taking into account the offer by several member states of the EU Security Council, they think that this concept should be cleared before assessing its added value [13].

Soon E. Macron went even further in the broadcast of Europe 1 radio station where he said on November 6, 2018 that the EU needed its own armed forces.[1] And what is more, he named countries to defend from - China, Russia and... the United States. Inclusion of the latter in this list was unprecedented for the leader of one of the EU and NATO members, especially such a big member. Answering this statement on Twitter, D. Trump was full of indignation (he called Macron's words very insulting). There was a fairly heated discussion in Europe, and what is demonstrative, only referring to the President's of France words about the European army. A. Merkel demonstrated solidarity with Macron and called for working at the idea to create "a real European army"[2] one day.

The European Parliament is a vigorous player in building up political and military capabilities of the EU, with the majority of deputies supporting the concept of common defence policy. There is a number of renewed ideas developed in it. Thus, the report on the four times increase of the EU military units[3] was presented to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of this supranational body in September, 2018. 14 battalion groups, with 1,500 men each, are to be reorganized into the same number of army brigades. These offers were included in the official documents for working

out the European Parliament's report on the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy [12] and are presented more concisely in its resolution on the report (item 27) [13].

### Conclusions

If the "Russian threat" has again become the main motive for NATO consolidation and attaching importance to it, the reasons for creation of the European Defence Union are of a completely different nature. Two geopolitical shocks experienced by the EU have become the main stimuli here: the first one is Brexit, the second are serious changes in relations with the United States. Exactly these two factors made strategic autonomy advocates not only think another time in the integration history about the union's military dimension but also launch certain activities (and to a certain extent freed their hands). No matter the number of statements that London will stay a reliable ally of Brussels after Brexit as well, the continental neighbours' trust in the British was undermined. No matter how much the United States and their European allies assure each other of loyalty and unfaltering Article 5 of the NATO Charter, comprehension of inevitable principal and long-term disagreements with America on a whole number issues on the regional and global agenda is becoming broader and broader in the European Union. As for the EU relations with Russia, there are not only enough disagreements in them but also common topics for restoration of a serious and long-term dialogue [9].

Surely, finding fault with the relations with the United States by a part of Europeans and the wish to get bigger independence in foreign politics as well as military and political sector, not always make them less perceptive of the narrative about the "threat from the East". The changes in priorities introduced into the National Security Strategy of the United States of America of 2017 were readily taken up in many EU countries. Renewal of geopolitical rivalry between states was announced the main threat to the United States in this document, with Beijing and Moscow being in the first line of opponents. It is said in this document that China and Russia are challenging the power of the United States, theii influence and interests, trying to undermine American security and flourishing [25, p. 2].

But still the EU is already a political union built over . the economic one in many aspects. Can it be supported by the political and military potential of states not included in it? It's evident that it can't. It's difficult to imagine Europeans feeling pressure and even humiliation on the part of the United States, for example, in trade or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's Nuclear Program, and at the same time go on as if nothing is happening, with traditional subordination in the military sector. In this case, striving to reduce one's dependence on military capabilities of such a partner is inevitable, using relations of allies where it is profitable and acting independently in other cases.

In the past, it was usual to take it as given that the United States guarantee military security of Europe in fact altruistically. Now, such guarantees are brought about by fairly pragmatic considerations. The new reality pushes the owners of the biggest common market on the globe to acquiring their own strategic autonomy even taking into account that the total American and British contribution to NATO budget amounts to about 32% (22 and 10% respectively).

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilggBgh8Lhw.

[2] TASS, November 13, 2018. Merkel praised efforts to create a European military force. https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/5788160 (accessed: 10.12.2018).

[3] Military units and formations were established as a part of the Headline Goal 2010 approved in 2004 at the EU Summit. Their immediate readiness was officially announced in 2007; after that they were not once engaged in any operations though there were joint exercises.

If the "Russian threat" is taken out of the brackets, there are not so many challenges left, with which the EU can't deal basing on its own political and military potential. The common aspect in deliberations about its dependence on the United States is the history of wars in Yugoslavia and intervention in Belgrade, in which Americans played the dominant role. But those events ended 20 years ago; their consequences were first of all in the geopolitical interests of Washington, and contradictions in the decisions taken then are acknowledged by many people even in the West. Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were also generated exclusively by American foreign policy and to a large extent were against the interests of Europe. The only case when Europeans initiated big military actions was French and British intervention into Libya under the false cover of the well-known resolution by the UN Security Council. But this is an evident negative example, which is usually considered improper to remember in Paris and London and especially to use as an argument in favour of conserving Europe's dependence on the United States in security.

Europeans are fairly capable to manage themselves where the EU is really interested in using the "hard power", e.g. to fight internal extremism, international terrorism, protection of outside borders, operations in the Sahel Region, etc. The logic of E. Macron's "European project" is totally directed to that, including the "European initiative on intervention" [15, p. 30-39]. It's hardly probable that it will be vital for the EU to undertake some big expeditionary warfare in the near future, making it once again dependent on the United States military potential. The habit of military dependence on the United States was harmful for European security and not once. So, had Paris and London counted exclusively on their own efforts and strength and not sure of the United States and NATO supporting them if necessary, most likely, they would not have engaged in the adventure in Libya. Had the United Kingdom not been guided by the distorted interpretation of solidarity with America, possibly, it would not have plunged into the Iraqi drama.

Building the European Defence Union is not a head-on collision with the Alliance's activities going on, at least in the near future. On the contrary, Europeans will move in this direction very carefully, and the most pro-American part of them, in view of Britain's exiting the EU, will try to take upon itself the restraining function as to political and military potential's development of the organization. Emphasis on close interlinking of new European political and military initiatives and NATO activities will be consistent. Achievement of real strategic autonomy will require a long period of time. Reverse movement is not excluded in case the interest of Berlin and Paris in energetic PESCO and other programs' launch is reduced.

Though skepticism in relation of the EDU future is fully grounded, formation of the "two-nuclei" West, the core of which breaks up into the United States and the EU, makes evident the need of the "hard power" potential of its both centres. If there is a political will and the level of contradictions between Washington and the leading European capitals decreases, these centres can still coexist for a long time fairly harmoniously, dividing the responsibility fields and functions within the framework of the "collective West".

For example, concentrating more and more political and military opportunities in their hands, Paris and Berlin will hardly challenge the East European direction of providing security as the Alliance's area. This focal area, though for various reasons, plays an important role in the foreign and home policy of the United States and a number of East European countries that are still united in their anti-Russian moods. The aspiration to spread the European Defence Union's prerogatives to this area will only bring about allies' irritation not required by the French and Germans. And Paris and Berlin have enough various problems with them as it is.

The EDU concept does not make provisions for duplicating American programs in military building in the near future, to say nothing about rivalry with the United States in the Asian Region. However, in case united Europe is unable in the next years to support its global economic interests by autonomous political and military potential, the European Union will not be able to make Washington and later China take its strategic ambitions into account.

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