



Former BIS Officials Argue, To Stop NATO from Having Us Sleepwalk into War, France Should Leave NATO and Bolster P5

In an op-ed published on Feb. 11, 2022, by the French “souverainist” weekly *Marianne*, Peter Dittus and Hervé Hannoun, argue in favor of a French exit from the integrated command of NATO. The German economist Peter Dittus is the former secretary general of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), while Frenchman Hannoun is its deputy director general. We reprint it here in full:

“Faced with the Ukrainian Crisis, France’s NATO-EXIT Is an Absolute Emergency”

Breaking with the policy of non-alignment followed by de Gaulle, Giscard and Mitterrand for 43 years, France once again became a member of the integrated military command of NATO in 2009, without the French people having been consulted by referendum. The current Ukrainian crisis reveals the serious perils to which France is exposed by being attached to a defensive collective security organization under the command of the United States that has become expansionist.

Since November 2021, the French, like other peoples of the West, have been subjected to an unprecedented mental conditioning conducted by the United States and NATO on the theme of the “imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine,” which may go down in history as an episode of disinformation along the lines of the fabricated intelligence on Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction in 2003.

What is the reality? Millions of Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the two self-proclaimed Donbas people’s republics live under sporadic firing and shelling by the Ukrainian army against separatist forces. The concentration of Russian troops on Ukraine’s borders is obviously aimed at dissuading Kiev from attempting to regain direct control of the enclaves of Donetsk and Luhansk by force. NATO’s successful disinformation on Ukraine has consisted in presenting Putin’s moral obligation to defend these Russian-speaking populations—which Ukraine wants to progressively deprive of the right to speak their language—as a prelude to the total annexation of Ukraine by Russia.

The Myth of an ‘Imminent Russian Invasion’

NATO manages to pass off a concentration of Russian troops ready to come to the rescue of Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the Donbas as an “imminent Russian invasion” of the whole of Ukraine, including Odessa, Kharkiv and Kiev. An insane invasion that in reality Russia completely rules out ... unless it is pushed into it by a possible prior Ukrainian attack on the Donbas.

The only war that NATO seems to be winning is the one of information. We show in our book [OTANexit: Urgence Absolue, Peter Dittus and Hervé Hannoun, Jan. 16, 2022] the striking German propaganda map in the weekly *Bild* of December 4, 2021, giving an imaginary detailed plan of the “imminent

Russian invasion.” The role of propaganda is terrifying, because of the charge of hatred generated by the lies on both sides. On the NATO side, the aggressive and bellicose discourse of Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is irresistibly reminiscent of the famous Orwellian inversion: “Peace Is War.”

And If France Had the Solution?

Paris must avoid the military spiral into which the United States and NATO want to drag it. In the coming weeks, it must not allow itself to be involved in a war in Eastern Europe that is not its own. France has already agreed to deploy hundreds of men in a NATO battle group in Estonia. On January 1, it took the lead in the NATO Rapid Response Force, which includes at least 7,700 French soldiers. President Macron has just announced the possible dispatch of 1,000 French troops to Romania under the NATO banner on the “Eastern flank,” in the Black Sea region. The military escalation is dangerous. For the security of the French people, it is necessary to exclude committing the French army under the banner of NATO in a war in Ukraine or Belarus.

On the other hand, France has a diplomatic weapon to resolve the serious crisis between NATO and Russia. The detonator of this crisis was the stubbornness of Jens Stoltenberg and the Americans to pursue since 2018 a creeping process of accession of Ukraine to NATO, called “open door policy,” seen by Russia as a threat to its security. To put an end to the current confrontation, President Macron should simply declare solemnly in the name of France that his country will oppose any request from Ukraine to join NATO.

As decisions on membership of the Alliance require unanimity, France can exercise a veto. In doing so, the President would be in line with the commitments he made during his 2017 presidential campaign not to support NATO’s expansion to Ukraine. It would be an elegant way out of the crisis. Alas, the French President, during his visit to Moscow and then to Kiev on February 7 and 8, 2022, did not consider this simple solution because French diplomacy did not oppose in the NATO bodies the mad “open door policy” to the membership of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO. On the other hand, France supports NATO and the G7 in their demand for the return of Crimea to Ukraine, knowing full well that it cannot be done without a war, possibly nuclear.

American Subordination

At the time of the (Maastricht) 1992 referendum on the EU treaty, no one could have imagined that this great project of Mitterrand and Kohl for peace would be deviated from, from 1998 onward, by the American geopolitical project to take de facto control of the European common defense and security policy. This was due to the simultaneous enlargement of the

EU and NATO to ten Eastern European countries between 1991 and 2007, and also to President Sarkozy's decision, with far-reaching consequences, to abandon in 2008 the Gaullist strategic position of refusing to participate in NATO's integrated military command.

From the moment that 21 of the 27 EU countries, including France, became full members of NATO, the initial spirit of Maastricht was betrayed, because "Europe for peace" was inevitably going to be thwarted by the interference of the United States, with its own geopolitical objectives, in the common European defense and security policy. In reality, there can be no independent French or European defense within the current framework of participation in the integrated military command of NATO by France and 21 other European Union states. The concept of "European strategic autonomy" within NATO is an illusion, given the control of the United States over this Alliance. The EU seeks to hide this fundamental flaw behind a vague concept: the "strategic compass."

The fundamental incompatibility between the U.S.-controlled NATO and an independent French or European defense does not prevent our leaders from defending the thesis of complementarity between the EU and NATO in terms of defense, as summarized on December 11, 2021 by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs: "We are keen for the EU and NATO to complement and reinforce each other in order to contribute to strengthening security and defense in Europe. This is the meaning of the strategic compass that will be adopted during the French Presidency of the EU Council."

Defense: The Impasse of 'At the Same Time'

The EU's "strategic compass" is above all an effort to provide a conceptual framework for the false idea that "European strategic autonomy" in relation to the United States is compatible with the NATO membership of the vast majority of EU member states. This complementarity between NATO and the EU, the "at the same time" applied to defense, is an illusion. The fussy logic of national independence has given way to the vague and misleading concept of strategic autonomy and the search for interdependence and interoperability with our "allies."

Beyond the immediate crisis surrounding Ukraine, the [French] presidential elections of April 10 and 24 must allow for a decision on the question of NATO. All those who reject NATO's march towards the war that is brewing on the Eastern borders of the EU have a unique opportunity, with the presidential election of 2022, to send a simple and clear message of peace to the leaders of our country, in one word: NATO-EXIT (Otanexit). It is a question of ensuring that a candidate for peace is elected President, who is committed to putting an end to France's alignment with NATO.

One can think that the outgoing President will want to avoid a debate in the presidential campaign on the question of our military alliances in NATO: alliance with the adventurism of the Anglo-Saxons, whose arrogance was revealed by the Australian submarine affair, unnatural alliance with Islamist Turkey, alliance with Polish nationalism, and tomorrow perhaps, alliance with a Germany that could use NATO as a springboard for its remilitarization, or even alliance with Kosovo against Serbia. This list alone allows us to measure the risks of a collective security system comprising 30 heterogeneous nations, and dominated by one of them.

An Unconstitutional 'Defense Union'

On January 7, 2022, in a joint press conference with President Macron in Paris, the President of the European Commission allowed herself a federalist statement that exceeded her prerogatives: "We agree that we need a real defense union." In the presence of President Macron, she spoke of adding a "Defense Union" to the Economic and Monetary Union in the future, without taking into account the fact that this statement is contrary to the French Constitution, which is based on national independence, national sovereignty and national defense. It is necessary to oppose the stealthy European federalism that is currently being practiced, which cannot replace a federalism that is democratically accepted—or rejected—by referendum, according to the procedure followed in 1992 by François Mitterrand for the transfer of monetary sovereignty provided for in the Maastricht Treaty. The French people must reject the concept of defense union under the banner of NATO that Ursula von der Leyen wants to impose on them.

France's current alignment with NATO, through its participation in the integrated military command under American leadership, is a strategic dead end for a country with a universal vocation like France. Today, this country has a historic role to play in stopping the march towards war in Europe initiated by the NATO sleepwalkers. France's exit from NATO, which will mark the end of the alignment of France's foreign security policy with the United States, will have an immense impact on the world.

It will signal Europe's independence from American exceptionalism, the renewal of multilateralism, the emergence of a multipolar world and the rapid demise of the obsolete NATO framework. France will then rediscover its universal vocation, contributing to the global balance for peace, and playing, thanks to its rediscovered impartiality, a role of synthesis within the P5, the concert of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, and France), a P5 whose composition must be maintained and whose role as regulator of world peace must be enhanced.

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