RAF Tornado GR1 aircraft armed with ALARM anti-radar missiles which form the primary SEAD weapon in UK service

Preparing the Way for Cooperation in European Air Power

By Flt Lt David Tucker

"Dealing with the enemy is a simple matter when contrasted with securing the close co-operation of an ally."
(Major General Fox Connor, 1918.[1])

In the St Malo declaration of 1999 Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac, the British and French political leaders, set forth their vision of European Defence cooperation that would undoubtedly lead to closer working relationships between Europe's armed forces. This was true regardless of whether one subscribed to the French view of a European Defence that would eventually supersede NATO in its role of collective defence for Europe, or the British view of a strengthened European pillar within NATO that would reinforce the Atlantic Alliance.

Following the decision by Europe's two leading military powers to increase defence cooperation the MoD began, slowly, to look at ways in which cooperation could be effected. An example was the proposal by British Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon that the RAF and German Luftwaffe (Lw) cooperate more closely in the SEAD role, a decisive area

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where Europe lacked (and still lacks) a credible capability, but where the UK and Germany had more capability than many other European forces.

Those idealistic days with announcements of cooperative exercises and the creation of frameworks for joint exercises now seem far off indeed. The war against Iraq in the spring of 2003 drove a rift between the most powerful military nations in Europe. Much has been made of the divisions between the USA and Europe over policy on Iraq, but in truth there were deep divisions within Europe. For any meaningful European Defence and Security Policy (ESDP) to succeed, the UK and France must work as partners for it. Additionally, Germany and Italy must be on board, as the other major military powers within the EU. Yet during the war on Iraq, the UK and Italy were America's strongest supporters. The voices against the war were led by France, with Germany playing a leading supporting role.

This essay does not cover in detail the political reasons behind the various states' reasons for choosing the sides that they did. Suffice it to say that various national agenda had an influence on the decisions taken. However, it is timely to examine what effect these rifts, among other factors, have had on ESDP, and particularly in the field of air power cooperation. Furthermore, European defence cooperation and integration is about more than air power; land and sea cooperation are also important. However, for reasons that will be discussed later, air power does have a stronger tradition of international cooperation, with more interface between air forces than other services. Air power thus lends itself well to a study for integration.

The argument for closer European cooperation

As recently as 2001, Wing Commander Kevin Baldwin argued that too much emphasis by the European states on developing their own organic airpower could lead to a greater US isolationism[2]. However, he could not have foreseen the terrorist attacks on the USA in September of that year which hastened changes in policy that were to be expected from the new Bush administration. In the mid 1990s, neo-conservatives in the USA had been urging for a more unilateralist policy from the USA. It is a matter of history that their influence with the administration has brought about this effect. The corollary is that the USA is now more committed worldwide than it was three years ago, and is feeling the effects of overstretch. This, when the US Senate had been reluctant to commit forces to Bosnia in the mid-1990s because they were already feeling overstretched as the 'world's policeman' despite far lower operational commitments than today. Thus, if another crisis like the Balkans were to occur, in Europe's backyard so to speak, while the US is so committed elsewhere, the Americans may well be less inclined to step in and assist the Europeans. Thus, they would be *de facto* more isolationist, and Europe may per force need to sort out its own problems.

KFOR troops enter Kosovo

The 1990s saw western military forces deployed on a greater variety of diverse operations than at any time during the Cold War

The rift caused by differences of opinion over policy towards Iraq has already been mentioned, and is well documented elsewhere. Strong feelings

emerged and some perhaps rather injudicious language was used between the supporters and opponents of US policy. Some commentators predicted the demise of NATO over the affair; it certainly seemed to herald problems for European defence cooperation. However, in the midst of all this, Tony Blair met Jacques Chirac at Le Touquet, and the two leaders agreed further progress towards an ESDP. The fact was that Europe's problems with respect to defence and the reasons behind moves towards an ESDP in the first place were still there. Some form of defence reform was and still is required in Europe.

The 1990s saw western military forces deployed on a greater variety of diverse operations than at any time during the Cold War.[3] Defence policy now meant defence and security policy, particularly with regard to terrorist threats. Thus, the "problems of energy, resources, environment, population, the issues of space and the seas now rank with the questions of military security, ideology and territorial rivalry which have traditionally made up the diplomatic agenda."[4] This also raises the question of asymmetric threats to national security, and this is an area in which European security cooperation is imperative. Terrorists do not respect national boundaries. Further, it has been suggested that this is an area that would respond well to 'soft security', one of Europe's areas of relative strength.

Some effort was expended in deciding whether an extant organization should assume responsibility for European defence, be it NATO, the OSCE or the Western European Union (WEU). Although it is not strictly true to say that the WEU has been completely subsumed by the EU, all its roles important to the context of this essay have been taken over by the latter. To that end, for the purposes of this work the WEU will be regarded as subordinate to the EU; additionally, it was decided that the EU should assume a role in the defence and security of Europe, whether in partnership with or independent from NATO.

The French vision of a future European defence capability is of a pure European organism, outside NATO. The British however, insist on any developments strengthening NATO's role, with ESDP separable, but not separate, from NATO. There are sound reasons for this: the first major post-Cold war conflict, which was also a noted success, "the Gulf War, while not a NATO operation, was conducted by an *ad hoc* coalition drawn for the most part from NATO members. It was conducted using NATO procedures with forces drawn from NATO nations."[5]

It is also easy to understand the French position. Their semi-detached relationship with NATO led to a number of interoperability problems during the conflict, which reduced their overall effectiveness. This in turn led to greater cooperation between France and the rest of NATO during the mid 1990s. Indeed, many commentators hoped to see France's return to NATO's integrated military structure. However, this new closeness did not bring the increase in political influence within NATO that France's political leadership had hoped for, and France has returned very much to a cool relationship with the alliance.

The USA, of course, has an interest in the way any future European defence capability develops. It would prefer to see a stronger European contribution to NATO, with a Europe broadly supportive of US policy. However, the USA would be reluctant to give up its pre-eminent role in the alliance, and therein lies the rub. Many European contributors to the Atlantic alliance would demand a greater influence as a *quid pro quo* for a greater contribution. The question is, how much would each side be prepared to compromise to reach an arrangement? In sum, the "US appears to want to encourage the development of a European subordinate, while many EU countries, such as France, desire Europe to become an equal partner."[6]

A very interesting factor in influencing which developmental path European defence integration will take will be Germany's attitude. While Britain and France are unquestionably the leading actors in European defence, and the absence of either from an ESDP would destroy its credibility, the position of Germany is also important. Germany has the largest economy in Europe, and since the end of the Cold War has slowly but steadily begun to exercise political influence more proportional to this. Germany has begun to rediscover a 'National

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Interest', which for so long she buried in European Interest. She also has large, well-trained armed forces, albeit still retaining too much of a Cold War posture.

Throughout the Cold War Germany was one of NATO's staunchest members. The conditions of re-armament that led to the formation of the *Bundeswehr* (Bw) in 1955 meant that Germany's armed forces were more integrated into the NATO command structure than any others. The culture within the Bw still places value upon NATO membership; NATO appointments are still held in high regard by the German military. However, since the end of the Cold War, Germany has shown a new self-confidence in foreign affairs. Perhaps the first indicator of this was Helmut Kohl's insistence upon recognising Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, effectively forcing the rest of the EU to follow suit. During the run-up to the recent war with Iraq, Germany sided unequivocally with France in opposition to military action. This was a source of some chagrin to the USA; George Bush Senior had spoken of Germany as a strategic partner to the USA, yet here was Germany firmly in the 'axis of weasels'.

But it would be wrong to assume that Germany has irreversibly chosen to side with France over ESDP. Germany has more interest in a widening of the European Union than France and has been a consistent supporter of NATO, despite French efforts at various times to tempt her out of the Integrated Command Structure. The reasons for German opposition to war in Iraq are political and populist, and are beyond the scope of this essay. However, since the end of hostilities in Iraq Germany has shown numerous signs of wishing to mend fences. Germany has been instrumental in the wake of the recent meetings with France, Belgium and Luxembourg, aimed at developing an independent ESDP (France's vision), in ensuring that ensuing declarations were written so as not to offend Britain and America and to avoid irrevocably damaging Germany's relationship with NATO. This has coincided with the resumption of

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NATO E-3 Sentry

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American Air Power, US F/A-18 Super Hornets

high-level contacts between Berlin and Washington.[7] It is widely predicted that Germany will increasingly set the European agenda in the coming years; with the largest population in the EU and with the centre of political gravity moving Eastwards (with the Eastern expansion of both NATO and the EU) placing Germany more and more at the heart of Europe, this remains a likely scenario.[8] It seems reasonable to assume that, as often before, Germany has kept her options open on ESDP. If Germany decides to throw in her lot with France, it will probably spell the end for NATO as an effective alliance, splitting the European and Atlanticist camps. If she throws her Strategic weight behind Britain's vision of a strengthened European arm of NATO, the Alliance will be strengthened, and it will likely lead to France once again coming on board with this vision. The signs are that the politicians of Europe's three main players have some delicate work to do in their relationships with each other.

As Baldwin notes, the UK and France are the only military actors in Europe to have maintained anything approaching a full spectrum of Air Power capabilities.[9] Thus, it would be foolish to suggest that any cooperative European Air Power enterprise could credibly proceed without the full participation of these states. This means that the RAF ought to be involved at all levels from the beginning. This is the only way to ensure that it develops to our liking, that it gives an out-of-area capability that we perceive as necessary, that doctrinally it fits with our doctrine; in short that it provides an alliance that we should be happy to go to war with. If we do not take every opportunity to be involved, there is a danger that it will be developed without us and future political decisions could force us into an institution that we do not like. "It would be a tragic mistake — repeating mistakes of British European policy over the past few decades — if Britain opted out of the debate on European defence and left the field to others. This is a debate that we must shape and influence from the start, because our vital strategic interests are affected by it."[10]

At the same time, the UK needs to adjust its attitude. Yes, we do have a special relationship with the US. Yes, we have a habit of working closely with the USAF. But interests are diverging. The time may come when we have to work with other EU states in defence and security of Europe. We *are* EU's most effective military nation but this does not excuse what seems to be an all-too-prevalent attitude that we have nothing to learn from other European forces. This is *wrong*, particularly in areas where they have specialized: the UK does not hold a monopoly on good military ideas. Furthermore, our position of primacy is not a given. Without adequate funding, sensible structuring, sufficient training and perceptive planning, Britain's armed forces cannot remain the paragon they are. However, by remaining engaged in the European defence debate we can steer developments in the right direction.

As to concerns voiced by some that an increase in Europe's own capability would distance us from the US and reduce the US commitment in Europe,

that will rather depend on the nature of that capability. There was a marked increase in approval in Washington for such a scheme after the UK became a leading proponent with the Blair-Chirac St Malo declaration. It is therefore likely to receive greater support if the UK, the most naturally atlanticist nation in Europe, remains closely involved.

As for concerns about reduced US commitment to Europe, this is a *fait accompli* with the US focus elsewhere in the World. With their ongoing operations, and less in Europe, they cannot be as committed in absolute terms to European security as before; therefore the Europeans must be prepared to take on more of that burden. Europe has been shown to be good at politically supporting alliance campaigns but to have little meaningful to contribute to an offensive air campaign.[11]

So what does this mean when, as in the most recent Gulf Conflict, the political support is not even cast iron? It probably means an increased American willingness to go it alone and therefore reluctance to support operations that it sees as a European problem such as the next Balkans-type conflict, and therefore a need for a greater European ability to work together without relying quite so heavily on US support.

Much has been made of the capabilities gap that exists between the US and the European air forces within NATO. This was highlighted in operation ENDURING FREEDOM and the USA's desire to go it alone in Afghanistan. Many consider that NATO was snubbed by America after September 11th.[12] Whatever the truth, it remains a likely scenario that European forces may have to operate together in future at best with a semi-detached relationship with the USA in operations where their capabilities have become incompatible, even if European states do raise their defence spending sufficiently to close the capabilities gap somewhat.

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To that end, while we in Britain may rightly desire to retain our prized interoperability with US forces as far as possible it is also incumbent upon us to increase our interoperability with our European allies. More importantly, they must improve their interoperability with US forces that will improve their interoperability with us by default. However unlikely, it is not inconceivable that European forces may have to go into action without US support in the future. With US forces already so heavily committed worldwide, there may be a scenario in which the military instrument may need to be used, perhaps for example, in Africa

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where it is deemed necessary for the European allies to conduct an operation themselves.

The weaknesses in NATO's European arm were highlighted by the war in Kosovo. The Anglo-Italian declaration of July 1999 drew the lesson from those experiences that there was a need for a more effective European role in NATO.[13] Speaking at a recent meeting of NATO defence ministers, Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, outgoing NATO Secretary General, highlighted the need for NATO governments to "transform their armies into modern, rapid-reaction forces or face oblivion".[14]

But it is not merely a question of amount spent on defence. One of the problems for Europe, whether defined as European NATO or the EU is that we do not achieve the same order of military effectiveness from our defence budgets as do the Americans. Despite the new emphasis on expeditionary warfare, European states still field too many standing forces with a territorial defence posture. Given the economic problems that beset most of continental Europe at this time we are unlikely to see the increase in defence expenditure that would be required to push European capabilities towards America's.

This means that European forces must restructure to get a greater return for the money invested in them. Over the past 5 years The USA has spent 3-4% of its GDP on defence. The European average has been 2-3%. Since the GDPs in this period have been comparable (taking the EU GDP as a whole), Europe is not so far behind the USA. But its capability in all military fields lags badly. This is as a result of too much emphasis on maintaining large standing armies and Cold War structures. Change has begun and this is a step in the right direction, but the only answer to get better value from European defence expenditure is to restructure, reduce duplication and improve integration to ensure that money is better spent. Commentators in the USA have observed that the level of European spending and size of European forces is not, in and of itself, the problem. It is how the money is spent and the structure of those forces — two related subjects — that leads to the European reduced capability.

Dr David Gates touches upon the problems raised by the capabilities gap. "Without the active participation of the USAF and other American units, operations of the scale and complexity of Instant Thunder, Deliberate Force and Allied Force would have been utterly impracticable . . . As a result even some NATO air forces might yet conclude that role specialisation constitutes the only way out of the dilemma of trying to keep abreast of their putative partners."[15] The problems with niche roles and role specialisation are manifest. Certainly, from a British point of view, it would be undesirable to give up a capability in case the putative ally with that capability elected not to take part in a conflict to which we were committed.[16] Once a national capability is lost it is difficult to restore.

This does not alter the fact that when an allied nation does elect to join a conflict it may well be desirable politically as well as in terms of burden sharing to hand over to them a particular role in which they have specialisation. However, too much pooling of resources and role specialisation would inevitably lead to a greater loss of national sovereignty than would currently be acceptable to most European states.

As Dr Christina Goulter has it, "in an uncertain world, which is increasingly dangerous, flexibility comes from having a full spectrum of capabilities, unless you are very certain of your alliance partners and their ability to assist you".[17] This is supported by the preparatory work for the UK's SDR. In considering the nature of the UK's air power structure with regard to potential threats, the "SDR concludes that a balanced force, similar to the present forces structure, is required to meet these contingencies".[18] However, there remains the possibility of making savings by pooling of aircraft into a multinational force. Garden states that, in the near term, "it would be much more productive to look for opportunities to rationalise forces in being which can be operated more efficiently on a multilateral or EU-wide basis".[19] Baldwin also strongly supports a high level of 'pooling of forces' and argues that, at a national level, this could lead to efficiency savings and reduced overstretch for the RAF.[20]

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Clearly, to improve the European capability without an increase in defence budget it will be necessary to cooperate more closely and reduce duplication, thus improving the value obtained. In the EU Summit in Helsinki in 1999 the EU member states reaffirmed their commitment to meeting the headline goal of fulfilling the full range of Petersberg tasks set out in the Amsterdam Treaty. [21] This would include cooperating in EU led operations up to Corps level. This will lead to some level of role specialisation, and will require close coordination at a European level, something which, at the moment, could prove politically difficult to achieve. But such an aim was identified in the *Supporting Essays of the UK's Strategic Defence Review*: "Britain will usually be working as part of a NATO, UN or Western European Union (WEU) force, or an ad hoc 'coalition of the willing'. This means that we [the UK] do not need to hold sufficient national (*their emphasis*) capabilities for every eventuality".[22]

Examining the campaign in Kosovo as a model for a possible future European military engagement, Sir Timothy Garden argues that Europe needs to field a 50% increase in all-weather capable bombing aircraft, with a commensurate reduction in air defence aircraft. With the widespread introduction of Typhoon in Europe it is questionable whether the European air forces are moving in the right direction. Germany, in particular, plans to replace most of its all-weather capable Tornado IDS force with the Typhoon, leaving the Tornado occupying only the specialist roles of tactical reconnaissance and SEAD.

Of course, a major obstacle to the integration of any military power in Europe is the question of efficacy. As the allied operations in the Balkans have amply demonstrated, the threat and use of the military instrument is only effective if clear leadership is demonstrated, in this case by the USA. If the USA is absent and an EU-led operation is to be embarked upon, the question will inevitably arise as to who will lead it. Once integration has been achieved, the institutions will presumably exist to provide this leadership. But there is a suspicion that it will be uphill struggle persuading the leading military powers in NATO of the value of integration until they are convinced that the operational efficiency of such an integrated force will be at least as successful — with no questions over leadership or command and control — as their own national effort or *ad hoc* coalitions may be. However, it will be well nigh impossible to guarantee the effectiveness of any leadership function within the EU or even European NATO as long as both bodies rely on consensus or consensus minus-1 politics, giving every member a potential veto for every decision. Yet the prospect of the adoption of even qualified majority voting for foreign policy and defence related matters looks as distant as ever. As Cottey states, "the reality is that European states' views often diverge, and rarely is any single European state powerful enough to provide strong policy leadership alone".[23]

With the impending increase in membership of both the EU and NATO, and the USA's increased worldwide commitments, not only does the like lihood of an EU-led operation increase, but so does the need for an increase both in European military capabilities and institutional capabilities to provide a leadership function. All of this will be unachievable without some progress towards integration, particularly in C3 functions. A possible paradigm for the cooperation of European states in the projection of air power is provided by NATO's Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept. The C2 aspects of the CJTF certainly offer a starting model for command and control of air assets in a future European-led air campaign. And, as Booth states, "military capabilities, doctrines and postures should be so organized as to maximise mutual rather than unilateral security".[24]

Another frequently rehearsed argument against any integration of European forces is that of the possibility of some member states choosing not to participate in an operation. Just because the whole of the EU cannot be guaranteed to participate in a future operation is no reason not to form an integrated command capability. The widely acknowledged successful cooperation in the Gulf War in 1991 was largely due to the principle coalition members' experiences as NATO partners. Although the 1991 Gulf War was not itself a NATO operation, NATO procedures were used, and the NATO partners had well-established ways of working together.

France found difficulties in operating with coalition forces largely due to its semi-detached relationship with NATO.[25] Baldwin touches upon the dangers of spreading assets too thinly[26] and of assigning assets to an alliance commitment but using them for national purposes. By increasing the effectiveness of the European arm of the alliance, we can have more confidence in our partners, yet by maintaining the vital core roles defined in national policy we achieve the symbiosis of a better national capability, as discussed at the beginning of the next section.

With the growing US security concerns outside Europe, "some US analysts suggested that . . . the US would gradually withdraw from Europe, where its interests were less direct".[27] Similarly, with a combined EU economy close to, or larger than, America's in the near future, it would be surprising if calls from Capitol Hill for the Europeans to take more responsibility for security in their own area did not increase in frequency and volume.

The European States probably lack the political will at present to form a coherent Europe wide defence, but this is not to say this will never happen. Monetary Union was supposed to take place in 1980; in reality it happened in 2002. We must prepare for all eventualities so that should the political will for a European defence be forthcoming, we are ready to exploit it in air power terms. There is no period of grace in defence and security.

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The air power context

Why integration in air power? Air forces are already better harmonised and have more experience of operating in combined forces than most land or maritime forces.[28] Air power is inherently joint, combined and multinational in nature.[29] In addition, English as the *lingua franca* of the air makes communication between air power partners inherently easy. Thus, air power is already at an advantage when it comes to combined or multinational operations.

At a tactical level, some RAF units have taken advantage of this for valuable training. Returning to the example of SEAD cooperation, the ALARM-equipped Tornado GR1/4 squadrons organised their own joint exercises with the Lw Tornado ECR wing at Lechfeld. More recently, the newly conceived (E)F-3s Have carried out valuable training in the same location. The F3 crews were new to the SEAD role and the training was particularly useful in providing an increase in their corporate knowledge. Thus, value was added for individual air forces as well as improvements for cooperation.

In addition, there are definite synergistic effects to be had by combining the different capabilities of European air forces in specialist roles.[30] "Training and exercises can help expose comparative strengths and weaknesses and allow air planners to build a realistic database for potential coalition partners".[31] With financial pressures, it is likely to become necessary to integrate EU air power capabilities in some areas, particularly the more expensive, more specialized roles, such as EW.

Programmes such as the NATO Tactical Leadership Programme (TLP), TACEVAL and NATO exchange programmes have assumed a new importance with respect to the building of this corporate knowledge. With the closure of RAF Brüggen there is no longer an operational RAF presence in continental Europe. There is a very real danger of us forgetting valuable lessons previously learned with the concomitant reduction in operating with European air forces. When the RAF had an operational presence in continental Europe there was a number of joint exercises with other air forces, some set up on an *ad hoc* basis, others more formalized.

An example of the latter was Exercise GARLIC LEMON, which allowed Brüggen-based Tornadoes to carry out regular fighter affiliation with French Air Force Mirages in France. This long-running exercise led to Brüggen aircraft being invited to participate in other exercises, such as the French Voltac series. Other opportunities for interaction with European Air Forces occurred during regular detachments to venues such as Decimomannu and Goose Bay. Unfortunately these opportunities have slowly diminished and with them our chances to work with other European Air Forces.

Nor should we underestimate the value of the professional contacts made between Air Force Officers in these multinational environments. In a number of recent coalition air operations, relationships forged between senior commanders during such contacts have been cited as being of great assistance in the smooth running of campaign planning for such operations.[32]

The reduction in interaction with other air forces can seem insidious. The experience of the Canadian Air Forces bears examination. During the Cold War, the Canadian Air Force maintained an operational presence in Germany at Baden Sollingen. With the end of the Cold War, Canada withdrew its forces from Europe maintaining only a few staff posts in NATO headquarters and exchange officers. According to a senior Canadian Air Force Officer this has led to a loss of some capability by Canadian fighter pilots. The valuable experience of operating in other airspace and an unfamiliar environment was so sorely missed that Canadian Squadrons have begun, at a squadron level, to organize participation in European-based exercises, such as 416 Squadron's participation in 2003's Exercise Central Enterprise. Beside the value of taking part in the exercise itself, the process of deploying the aircraft and personnel to Europe was invaluable in relation to today's expeditionary warfare.[33]

As air forces, we are good at organizing things at a tactical level: however, more needs to be done at the operational level. Many of the most valuable combined training opportunities have been organised by individual wings or squadrons. While such initiatives are to be prized and encouraged, it would be of use for such exercises to be organized more 'top down' by higher formations. This would also give the higher formations valuable experience of working with other European air force command structures. Institutions such as the European Air Group are all well and good, but

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we see little output from them at a squadron level. Perhaps too few operators are aware of the existence of such formations: these structures should be used to aid European air force interoperability.

The RAF should exploit every opportunity to be involved in TLP (described as a "particular nugget for the subsequent development of NATO tactical concepts"[34]), Central Enterprise, ELITE and so forth. "TLP is a success story and has greatly assisted a wider understanding of the true meaning of interoperability leading to the development of credible and achievable NATO COMAO[35] procedures".[36]

The future for military aviators in Europe

The European air forces desperately need to invest more in precision attack munitions, communications and deployability. But within this, interoperability must remain a key theme. At present, the signs of this are less than encouraging. The Tornado forces in Europe are diverging. The software technology used by the Tornadoes of Britain, Germany and Italy are now very different from one another. They are, in fact, incompatible, to the extent that a British aircraft, say, operating from a Lw base could no longer use the host nation mission planning aids, as was the case just five years ago.

Tactics have evolved differently as well. These changes were partly the cause of, but have been exacerbated by, the closure of the Tri-national Tornado Training Establishment — the very type of pooling of assets and combined training advocated by Garden. It is also likely that the Typhoons purchased around Europe will have differing capabilities. Indeed, the capabilities of the German Eurofighters will likely be very different to those of the RAF, with different role equipment and, potentially, different armaments.

Garden proposes a pooling of some aspects of Typhoon operations[37] yet the opposite seems to be the current trend. From its beginnings as a joint venture, differences have appeared in the designs of the various Typhoons to be adopted by the European nations, as discussed, to the point where interoperability becomes increasingly challenging. But the story is not entirely bleak. In fact, the RAF could take a European lead in developing interoperability. With the various UK joint doctrine publications already extant, the UK "is in a strong position to influence NATO partners and others".[38]

Political decisions will drive the moves to closer European military cooperation more than military ones. The whole European project has been propelled primarily by politics. This means that political calls for closer cooperation may come at a time less than optimum militarily. Nevertheless, as servants of our political masters we military men must give them our best advice, but must ultimately bend to their will. It is therefore incumbent upon us to work to make any such venture a success. The tightening of ties between the European militaries is inevitability. The only question is when. It would be therefore wise to prepare for it now. Professor Michael Clarke's assertion that "political commitment is more volatile in the present era"[39] remains valid.

In sum, we must be prepared for likely and unlikely scenarios. To quote an RAF front-line squadron commander: "Interoperability is not a problem — we can do that. The problem is getting the politicians to define a strategic goal so that we can shape our forces. We can do that nationally, but the question is, can we do it in a European context?" Whatever the politics, we in the military should prepare for closer cooperation in the future. This means training together, planning together and developing working relationships with those whom we may be called upon to support or who may be supporting us. This is the only way to find out about whom you are working with and to have an idea about their capabilities. Specialization nationally can improve European capabilities, but exercising together can improve individual capabilities, as the F-3s will have found in their visit to Lechfeld. Learning in a multinational environment has symbiotic benefits.

Not to prepare for the eventuality of conducting operations under the auspices of a European force without major US support would, in the present circumstances, be foolhardy. It should not be forgotten that it was in the late 1980s that the UK armed forces disposed of large quantities of desert uniforms, boots and equipment on the grounds

that 'we will never fight another war in the desert'. It should not be assumed that we shall never fight a war without US leadership. One of the most important ingredients in developing a truly interoperable capability between coalition forces is trust between partners. This is most effectively built up through mutual familiarity and understanding, in turn built up by working together.

Western air forces have shown themselves to be remarkably good at coordination at a tactical level. This should be encouraged and indeed nurtured. The next challenge for European air forces is improvement in cooperation at the operational and political levels. This is particularly pertinent with the withdrawal of most of the UK's air power from continental Europe. Despite extensive rhe toric from European political leaders in support of ESDP, they are more reluctant to provide the resources needed to make this a reality. It would appear that the impetus for effective cooperative and integrated operations European air forces continues to be driven bottom-up.

Notes

[1] Quoted in Peach, S. 'Coalition Air Operations' in: *Perspectives on Air Power.* London: MOD/HMSO 1998. p55.
[2] Baldwin, K J. 'Can Europe Project Air Power without the Support of the United States?' in: *Air Power Review* Vol 4 No1. Spring 2001. p60.
[3] For a fuller discussion of Western post-Cold War operations see Garden, T. 'European Air Power in: Gray, P (Ed) *Air Power 21: Challenges for the New Century.* London: The Stationary Office, 2000. p99ff.
[4] Kissinger, H. 'A New National Partnership' in *Department of State Bulletin* 17 Feb 1975 p199.
[5] Garden, T. Op Cit. p99
[6] Flockhart, T and Wyn Rees, G. 'A core Europe? The EU and the WEU' in: Park,W and Wynn Rees G(Eds). *Rethinking Security in Post-Cold War Europe*. London: Longman 1998. p75.
[7] For fuller discussion and explanation of this dynamic, see Maddox, B. 'How Old Europe's Gang of Four ambushed Nato'in *The Times* London 30 April 2003 , 'Cocorico? Or the chickens come home to roost?' in *The Economist* London 19 April 2003 and Fischer, J. 'Beziehungen zu Amerika ausgezeichnet' in *Frankfurter Allgemeine* Frankfurt 17 July 2003.
[8] See, inter alia, Park,W and Wynn Rees G(Eds). *Rethinking Security in Post-Cold War Europe*. London: Longman 1998 and Wyllie, J H. *European Security in The New Political Environment*. London: Longman 1997.
[9] Baldwin, K J. Op Cit. p61.
[10] Defence White Paper, London , December 1999, Cm 4446
[11] Garden, T. Op Cit. p101.
[12] 'A lull between the storms' in: *The Economist* London, 27 September 2003 p39.
[13] Garden, T. Op Cit. p109.
[14] Evans, M. 'Rapid response vital to Nato's future' in: *The Times* London 9 October 2003 p19.
[15] Gates, D. 'Air Power – The Instrument of Choice' in: Gray, P (Ed) *Air Power 21: Challenges for the New Century.* London: The Stationary Office, 2000. pp27-28.
[16] For a fuller discussion of the disadvantages of national role specialisation see Gates, D Op Cit.
[17] Goulter, C. 'Air power and Expeditionary Warfare' in: Gray, P (Ed) *Air Power 21: Challenges for the New Century.* London: The Stationary Office, 2000. p207.
[18] *House of Commons Research Paper 98/91.* London: House of Commons Library 1998. Quoted in Bremer, G. 'Future Cost-Effective Combat Air Power for the United Kingdom' in: *Air Power Review* Vol 4 No1. Spring 2001. p86.
[19] Garden, T. Op Cit. p116.
[20] Baldwin, K J. Op Cit. Pp76-77
[21] Presidency conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10-11 December 1999.
[22] *The Strategic Defence Review Supporting Essay.* London: The Stationary Office 1998. p6-4. Quoted in Baldwin, K J. Op Cit. p63.
[23] Cottey, A. 'NATO transformed: the Atlantic Alliance in a new era in: Park,W and Wynn Rees G(Eds). *Rethinking Security in Post-Cold War Europe*. London: Longman 1998. p58
[24] Booth, K. *New Thinking about Strategy and International Security*. London: Harper Collins. 1991. p344
[25] For more detail on French interoperability problems during Op DESERT STORM see: Salmon, T and Shepherd, A. *Toward A European Army: A Military power in the Making.* 2003 Boulder: Lynn-Rienner.
[26] Baldwin, K J. Op Cit. p61.
[27] Ibid. p55.
[28] For a fuller discussion of why air forces seem to be better harmonised than land or naval forces see Garden, T. Op Cit. p115.
[29] AP 3000. London: MOD/HMSO 1999. p1.2.2
[30] An example of synergistic effects of this type may be found in Andrew, D. 'Suppression of Enemy Air defences' in: *Air Power Review* Vol 3 No3. Autumn 2000.
[31] Peach, S. Op Cit. p75.
[32] For an example of the value of personal relations during coalition operations see Peach, S. Op Cit. p66.
[33] Major J Knapik, Executive Officer 416 Sqn CAF, interviewed 20 Sep 2003.
[34] Peach, S. Op Cit. p53.
[35] Composite Air Operation.
[36] Peach, S. Op Cit. p75.
[37] Garden, T. Op Cit. p120.
[38] Peach, S. Op Cit p55.
[39] Clarke, M. 'Air Power and Military Intervention: The Political Limitations' in: Gray, P (Ed) *Air Power 21: Challenges for the New Century.* London: The Stationary Office, 2000. p9.