

THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION

THE SECRETARIAT

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COVER NOTE

from Secretariat

to The Convention

Subject : Contribution by Mr David Heathcoat-Amory, member of the Convention:
- “The EU in Arms: An aspect of European Nationhood”

The Secretary-General of the Convention has received the contribution annexed hereto
from Mr David Heathcoat-Amory, member of the Convention.

The EU in Arms: An Aspect of European Nationhood

A submission to the Convention on the Future of Europe from

David Heathcoat-Amory, MP	<i>National Parliament Delegate (Conservative)</i>
Sir Oliver Wright	<i>Ambassador to West Germany 1975-81</i> <i>Ambassador to Washington 1982-6</i>
Sir Antony Acland	<i>Permanent Under Secretary FCO 1982-6</i> <i>Ambassador to Washington 1986-91</i>
General Sir John Akehurst	<i>DSACEUR(Deputy Supreme Commander Europe) 1987-90</i>
Admiral Sir John Woodward	<i>Senior Task Group Commander in the South Atlantic 1982</i>

Europe's states have usually spoken and acted on the international stage with many different voices. On comparatively rare occasions (for instance, the Boxer Rebellion in China), fleeting unity of purpose may emerge, but even here countries elected to demonstrate their support to greater or lesser degrees, and even over the short term.

Recent events in the Middle East and in the mountains of Central Asia merely confirm the inescapable fact of Europe's **diversity**: that the governments and peoples of Europe think differently, and that any attempt to create a common foreign policy – let alone a common defence – is unlikely to succeed. To go further and give it legal force would be more likely to result in no action rather than commonly-agreed action, and deny legality to actions by member states.

There is no common demos; there is (as Eurostat polls prove) no single European public opinion. Yet it is now proposed that important decisions about Foreign Policy and Defence shall be decided by Majority Voting, so countries could be forced to support decisions that are domestically controversial and unpopular. Nor is there any commonly-identified threat to all European nations which could justify any such alliance. And if there were, that threat would easily be presented in a manner more likely to divide the European Alliance (as it could be called) than unite it.

We should not be surprised by this difference in viewpoints. While common policies and actions are no doubt desirable, each country's history and geography lend it a particular perspective of the world around it. Some countries have unique historical involvement in certain parts of the world,

and ties of language, trade or blood. Others carry memories of the past which shape their ambitions today. Some states have developed a desire for neutrality, others participate to differing degrees in NATO, and two states in particular maintain today a global military reach and the tradition of action.

These distinctions will only increase with enlargement.

In the case of the United Kingdom, we also have a longstanding and privileged working relationship with the United States, which benefits Europe as a whole, certainly benefits the United Kingdom, and which is gravely threatened by the proposals under discussion.

Therefore, we invite the Convention to reject the draft on the table as not being in the interests of either the Governments of the European Union, or of its citizens.

They are a further step towards an hypothetical and unrealisable European Federation as an extension of the EU, which will define itself first and foremost in its competition with and opposition to the United States.

In their articles of the defence agency, these proposals set out the means by which (through the pooling of procurement) nation states will further lose their ability to arm themselves independently, could put jobs at risk, and cut certain industrial sectors adrift from their current partnership agreements with the United States – which is in many fields a generation ahead of its European competitors. At the same time, the history of politically-driven European joint procurement (Eurofighter; A400M; Horizon Frigate; METEOR BVRAAM; Multi-Role Armoured Vehicle etc) demonstrates that such projects are seldom automatically the cheapest or most efficient and are never delivered on time. The change of OCCAR from an arms management to a full procurement agency is therefore fraught with difficulty.

The new EU Foreign Minister, now proposed by the draft EU Constitution, is at the same time democratically unaccountable. Worse, the draft shows he will have immense power of initiative and implementation when backed by the Commission (of which he will be a member). All of this could be enforced by the European Court of Justice.

This new Foreign Affairs and Defence mechanism comes at a heavy cost: nation states will increasingly lose their ability for independent action, on any area where a joint policy has been established by qualified majority. The proposals will also give to the new Union the exclusive right

to negotiate internationally on areas where domestic policies (such as health, transport, and aspects of trade) overlap into the international arena. This removes from domestic control issues of vital importance to the electorate. Ordinary citizens, on the other hand, will be utterly incapable of doing anything about it – other than registering ineffectual demonstrations outside the shell of a national parliament.

This is a far remove from the Laeken Mandate which set up this Convention, which requires it to restore democracy to the EU, and bring it “closer to its citizens”.

The draft Constitution is the next step on a long road. The slow establishment of the prerequisites of a European army, begun at the Cologne Council, continues: to the Political and Security Committee (PSC), EU Military Committee (EUMC) and EU Military Staff (EUMS), has already been added nominated units for a large Rapid Reaction force. This includes aircraft carriers, submarines, Special Forces, Patriot Missile batteries, armoured brigades, NBC units, strike aircraft, assault landing vessels – making it far more than a simple peacekeeping unit. Coupled with ongoing plans for a Euro-Sandhurst, the military rationale behind the Galileo GPS system, and the proposals from the latest European Parliament (Morillon) report, the trend is obvious. Thus, Defence has already begun to slip from national parliamentary control, even before the Constitution’s proposals were revealed. The current treaties talk of a possibility of a common defence: this now becomes an objective, with the putative means to achieve it in due course.

In Defence at least, provisions for opt-outs remain, key to the sensible application of force in the national interest. Their continued and solid existence must be a precondition to any future approval of a “European Force” concept.

But overall, the draft is flawed. We therefore call upon the Convention to reject these proposals as **unworkable and undemocratic**. They are dangerous to world peace, national democracy, internal political stability, and the Atlantic Alliance – which remains today the bedrock of the safety of the West.