

Press Release

Friday 17th June

“America should withdraw its credit card underwriting Europe’s defence within 3-4 years”

–Sarwar Kashmeri, author *NATO 2.0. Reboot or Delete?*

At a private dinner debate hosted by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in the centre of Brussels last night, respected American commentator, Sarwar Kashmeri, Senior Fellow in the International Security Programme of The Atlantic Council, Washington D.C., said that Europe needed a shock, similar to those provoked by the Suez Crisis (helping Europe towards a closer union) and the Balkan wars of the 1990s (that moved Europe towards the creation of the CSDP). Both occasions galvanised European leaders into action. ***“America should say to Europe that they will cease to underwrite the security of Europe and its periphery in just three to four years, after which America will only serve as a catastrophic security layer.”*** He stressed the dire economic climate in the US and the EU. He said that NATO continues to drop in credibility in America, especially among the young officers entering the military leadership. He spoke of the damage that the NATO military alliance is wreaking on the wider EU-US relationship, that is even more important in the 21st century.

The 20 people around the table included one of the four Director Generals of NATO, the former special advisor to Baroness Ashton and a series of European defence experts, politicians, commentators and academics specialising in security matters, many of whom appreciated or supported Kashmeri’s proposals and comments.

Many lively and differing views were expressed:

- that if American funding was withdrawn and Europe became responsible for its own defence, Germany had already proven in its attitude to the mission in Libya that it would not support military action.
- that NATO is nothing more than a service provider; the CSDP and NATO should be side by side and in some cases may need the UN. The US don’t always have to be at the table when the EU is making decisions.
- even though the EU and the US talk at many levels, there is no strategic or economic dialogue between them. You need a crisis but success depends on Germany and what it does. Most of the EU population doesn’t believe NATO has changed, therefore they believe it is not important: They believe it is an American alliance.
- the EU couldn’t even do Libya, one of the largest military missions since the 1950s. Here we are trying to operate in own backyard and yet we are paralysed.
- The UK and France would have gone in anyway if the US had said “It’s your show”. France has assumed leadership of the CSDP. The EU needs to balance this.
- The shock will come from the US *within* three years but the shock will come before that from young Germans. Is Germany going to put up with France and the UK driving foreign defence policy?
- The US went in after 9/11 because it didn’t want another campaign by committee as in Kosovo.
- “France and Great Britain have kissed to death the CSDP with their bilateral agreement [Libya]. It is not an EU effort. It is an effort of Europeans fighting for their national interests.” We need to pool capacities but what do we want to do with them?
- Germany understands that there needs to be a common European army and is prepared to contribute, but GB and France stand in the way of EU strategic thinking.
- If the US stop funding after the EU has fed so much funding into Afghanistan, it will really antagonise Europe.

Many of the participants were pleased that Kashmeri was moving the CSDP to centre stage in Europe’s defence and security debate. “Nobody talks about the CSDP here in Brussels”, said one participant. Kashmeri agreed, “NATO has a short shelf life unless it is bridged to the CSDP. NATO must accept that in the future it will no longer be the pre-eminent security player in Europe.”

NATO 2.0: Reboot or Delete? by Sarwar Kashmeri, launched in Brussels on 15th June, is published in Britain on Monday 27th June 2011 by Potomac Books, Inc., where it is distributed by Transatlantic Publishers Group Ltd, London, price £23.50 in hardback ISBN 978-1-59797-664-0.

If you would like a copy of *NATO 2.0: Reboot or Delete?* for review, if you would like to interview author Sarwar Kashmeri, or if you require any further information, please contact:

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