Global Britain Briefing Note

"Keeping the Peace" in Western Europe

Since 1945, no Western European nation has gone to war with another.
This has nothing to do with the European Union.

- Between 1945 & the mid-1990s, US, British, French & Soviet forces occupied Germany. The Russians have gone home; but US, British & French forces remain on German soil.

- *Keeping the peace in Western Europe* is a euphemism for preventing a Franco-German conflict. France became a nuclear power **before** the 1963 Franco-German *Treaty of the Elysée* which marked those countries' post-war reconciliation. France had the bomb from 1960 onwards; Germany did not. That fact alone made German military aggression unthinkable.

- From 1945 to 1989 Western Europe's defences were deployed against the overwhelming military threat from the Soviet Union. Russia may yet be a threat in future.

- NATO, founded in 1949 as a mutual defence alliance *"to keep the Russians out, the Germans down and the Americans in",* included the US, Canada, Turkey & almost all Western European nations. Most Eastern European nations have now joined as well. If anything has "kept the peace" in Europe during the last 60 years, it is NATO.

- Given the above, in the absence of the European Union, which European nation and NATO member would have attacked another ? Not Germany, still, 60 years on, under foreign military occupation. Not France, which in 1945 collectively vowed "never again" after two disastrous world wars. Not the UK, obviously. Of the smaller countries, would Italy have invaded, say, Austria? Would Holland have invaded Belgium ? The very idea of any western European nation attacking another after 1945 is preposterous, European Union or no.

- The implosion, 70 years after its foundation, of an artificially put-together multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-faith federation, Yugoslavia, **did** lead to war in Europe. In 1989 another heterogeneous federation, the 72-year old Soviet Union, collapsed. Guerrilla wars ensued in several of its former provinces. These suggest that the ongoing attempt to create an artificially put-together political federation, the European Union, carries risks for "peace in Europe".

- The creation of the American federation in 1789, then as now the most vigorous democracy in the world, was followed 71 years later by a devastating civil war: another demonstration that there is nothing intrinsically peaceful about federations – even those with a single currency, a single language and a single legal system.

Global Britain

Lord Stoddart of Swindon

(Independent Labour)

Lord Pearson of Rannoch

(United Kingdom Independence Party)

Lord Willoughby de Broke

(United Kingdom Independence Party)

Lord Harris of High Cross *(1924- 2006)*

(Cross-Bencher)

Briefing Note No 71:

"Keeping the Peace" in Western Europe

7th January 2011