

A European “intergovernmental” Defence? Italy, Germany, and the European policy approach to armaments cooperation

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At the end of 2004, the European Defence Agency was born. This “intergovernmental” Agency was quoted in three bilateral declarations on European defence: the Franco-German one in November 2002, the Franco-British one, and the Anglo-Italian one in February 2003, and also in April 2003 during the quadrilateral meeting (Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg). The project of Treaty (articles 40 and 212) foresaw EDA, and European Commission supported its realization because it had to coordinate a «EU Defence Equipment Framework» in order to «overcome the existing fragmentation and to develop actual European Defence systems». In particular, European Councils in Brussels (March 2003) and Thessalonica (June 2003) launched the proposition for a «European Armament Agency» by remembering that it was quoted in the Western European Declaration attached to Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaty. At the eve of Italian Presidency of EU, Istituto Affari Internazionali published a paper on Italian doubts about performing European armaments procurement. German government supported the initiative for a European Agency although it seemed to be in contradiction with OCCAR (Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en matière d’Armements), an “intergovernmental” organization for managing common programs constituted in 1996 by Franco-German *couple*, and afterwards enlarged to other members of EU. In November 2003, 25 Ministers of Defence and of Foreign Affairs decided to activate the Agency following up a report by an *ad hoc* team created in September by member States and Commission representatives. They charged an Agency Establishment Team to start its activities before December 2004. This team consisted of ten members coming from France, Germany, UK, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Poland, and Czech Republic. The AET Chairman, and the future first Director of EDA was the British representative.

By their *AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe*, industrialists backed up EDA as a “European” initiative. As sustained the manager for management of international programs of ASD, an Italian woman, the Agency was a real turning point on the «long way towards a military Europe». French entrepreneurs too believed that it was a fundamental step towards a European «restructuration» of common armaments production as well as the German Association.

At the same time, in August 2004, Eurocorps, the historical European multinational unity, created by Franco-German *couple* in October 1991, had taken command of NATO ISAF VI (*International Security Assistance Force*) in Afghanistan. The Germans assumed command of ISAF III before this was a NATO operation. The Italians had to take control of ISAF VIII only after finishing the preparation of their NATO Rapid Deployable Corps-IT, near Milan, developed under British supervision. Then, inside NATO framework, Rome and Berlin seemed to confirm their traditional policy for Europe defence: more “European” for Federal Republic, decidedly Atlantic for Italy. They confirmed only apparently... in fact, after the end of the mission of its liaison officer at Eurocorps in June 2006, Rome decided not to enter in Strasbourg unity, and not to dispatch some officers in Eurocorps HQ, as other European countries made, like for instance Austria in February 2003. Rome wanted to organise its own Multi-National Corps for NATO. Besides, Paris and Berlin had the same policy. Particularly, the Federal Republic was structuring its Multi-National Corps North-East, launched in 1999 in cooperation with Denmark and Poland, the new entry in NATO, and later on enlarged to three Baltic republics, and to Slovakia, with some US and Check officers dispatched to. The European image of a Defence of Europe as a traditional axis of Franco-German *couple* seemed to decline in favour of a more Atlantic Defence of the enlarged continent.

Our paper attempts to make out Italian and German approach to European Defence in front of the development of European Community, and then European Union framework. We will proceed by a long period analysis of an actual, an operational field of European Defence, rather than

of the official declarations of politicians. This “actual” field could be the creation and the development of European multi-national unities, like Eurocorps but also NATO Multi-National Corps of Italy or Germany. Indeed, European armaments cooperation experience is not so recent. It started before the 1960s. Then, its long period analysis allows to point out two main guidelines for a “European” Defence of Europe that emerged since the second half of the 1960s: in one hand, NATO as an irreplaceable framework, and particularly the “special relationship” with the USA that any member State of EEC believed to hold, in the other hand, and first of all, the intergovernmental, and not the “communitarian” character of any Defence initiative inside EEC, and EU. This character has been institutionalized today by the «coopération renforcée» that the European Defence Agency represents very well. Apparently from different positions, Italy and Federal Republic followed these guidelines.

We have to consider two factors along our paper: the structural, economic and financial interconnection between military production and the civil one; because of the relevant application of high technologies in aeronautical, and then aerospace cooperation, this represents the most significant field for our analysis.

Besides published sources particularly since the 1980s, our paper is based on public and private archives in France, UK, USA, Italy, Spain and Belgium, and on EU institutions Archives, as well as on the series of published German diplomatic documents.