

## **Statement of Plans for Greater Alignment with EU Common Security and Defence Policy**

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The current UK Government has followed a track previous forged by David Cameron who had wasted no time since returning to public office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Development. Cameron clearly outlined his intentions for closer alignment with the EU. While the language is carefully veiled, referring to 'international cooperation,' a Tweet from the EU EEAS Secretary General during a visit to his FCO counterpart, Sir Phillip Barton, inadvertently revealed that ongoing cooperation is focused on the continuous development of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Commission President Ursula Von Der Layen has publicly stated that the goal of CSDP is the unification of EU Member States' defence capabilities, including industrial capability and capacity. This declaration also confirms that political and operational control of mission planning and deployment will be centralised in Brussels under EU political direction.

It is evident that the Foreign Office has long been planning to leverage the United Kingdom's substantial defence capability in broader negotiations with the EU to secure concessions in other areas of the relationship. The appointment of David Cameron was a significant boost to the efforts of senior civil servants who now have political cover to advance their plans. Though there has been a change of Government since then, there has been no change in approach. Though this is foolish in essence, worse is that no substantial concessions are on offer.

CSDP does not imply the creation of an EU army. Such language can be dismissed as alarmist and fanciful, and rightly so. However, both the EU and FCO know there is no need for such a creation. The unification of command and control will achieve precisely the same effect and will be described using more subtle, less emotive treaty language. Nevertheless, voters should be under no illusion; the political and operational impact will be the same, constituting a significant transfer of sovereignty, including the political authorisation to commit and command British service personnel in operations, potentially in situations not in the national interest or to which the British people do not consent.

If Brexit was about anything, it was about preventing precisely this.