

*EU Security and Defense Washington Symposium 2018: Reinforcing a Critical Partnership  
Between the United States and the European Union*

On June 13, 2018, CSIS and the Delegation of the European Union to the United States co-hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Security and Defense Washington Symposium. This annual conference focuses on the key defense and security challenges facing Europe, the United States, and the world at large – and how the United States and the European Union can strengthen their cooperation in countering modern threats, in conjunction with NATO and other security actors. Efforts by the European Union to strengthen Europe’s defense capabilities, including through the EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defense Fund, have the potential to contribute to transatlantic defense burdensharing. The European Union’s external engagement also focuses on strengthening cooperation with other multilateral organization including the United Nations and the African Union, but most importantly with NATO – with which it shares twenty-two member states.

*EU and U.S. Defense Strategies*

The transatlantic community faces difficult conventional and hybrid challenges, in response to which it is essential that the European Union and NATO enhance cooperation. Both the [EU Global Strategy](#) and [U.S. National Defense Strategy](#) prioritize strengthening the transatlantic partnership in the interest of maintaining a strong and free Europe as well as a secure United States. The transatlantic partnership must build defense capabilities and bolster deterrence.

*Strengthening NATO-EU Cooperation*

The United States maintains its commitment to the defense of Europe primarily through the NATO Article 5 collective security obligation, but all allies must meet their Article 3 commitment to build their own capabilities to resist attack. Both the United States and its European allies must reestablish a culture of readiness as well as solve the continual challenge of military mobility, a necessary long-term investment, especially during peace time. While the EU does not intend to become a collective security organization, the EU can help develop a more cohesive pool of forces in Europe, which will help limit the overlap of resources and capabilities. In addition to improving military mobility and combat readiness, the EU and NATO can better cooperate on understanding and countering a range of cyber and civilian threats to member states of both organizations.

*Security in the Sahel and North Africa*

Instability across North Africa and the Sahel directly threatens Europe’s security and there are a variety of ways the United States can cooperate with the EU. Not only can the United States and European Union (and member states) continue to develop counterterrorism planning and

operational cooperation, but coordination in development assistance is critical to strengthening the capacities of specific countries and militaries in the region. U.S.-EU financial support of the G5 Sahel states is crucial, but there must be continued cooperation in technical assistance and training missions so countries can enhance their own capacities to tackle these challenges individually or cooperatively. The end goal for the United States and European Union is to provide African nations the tools to determine their own futures.



*From left to right: United States Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA); Heather A. Conley, Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia, and the Arctic; Director, Europe Program, CSIS; and Ambassador David O’Sullivan, Ambassador of the European Union to the United States*