

The Road to Saint Malo: Germany and EU-NATO Relations after the Cold War

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The Franco-British declaration of Saint Malo, signed on 4 December 1998, had a rather mixed echo in Germany despite its promise of showing a way out of the institutional battle between NATO and EU over their respective defense structures. Germany’s new red-green government was about to participate in the NATO-led war against Serbia under the banner of what came to be called (in April 1999) the Blair doctrine of humanitarian warfare. The Germans feared that NATO would drag them into a whole series of wars.

After reunification most Germans were unwilling even to consider the need for an interventionist defense policy, either under NATO or under the umbrella of the EU. While the EU held out the promise of making Europe less dependent on the generally bellicose Americans, the defense policies of Britain and France did not please them either. They had no desire to become a junior partner to either of those two, given their history of “out of area” interventions as well as their status as nuclear powers and as UNSC veto-powers. Seeing Paris and London united at Saint Malo gave the Germans little hope that their cherished abstinence from military intervention would remain a viable option, given the EU’s desire to expand geographically and to become a significant provider of military security on a global scale.