

GILES CHICHESTER MEP

for the South West and Gibraltar

PRESS LETTER

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To the Editor, Letters

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Dear Editor

Here we go again! A few years ago, we successfully fought an EU proposal that our merchant ships should fly a Red Ensign flag emblazoned with the EU circle of stars. Now it is proposed the EU flag should be flown over British military bases and naval vessels and our soldiers and sailors should wear an EU circle of stars arm badge. It is yet another attempt to force an EU Federal State identity on Member States.

The issue of the flag is, however, only the tip of the iceberg. Currently, the European Parliament Subcommittee on Security and Defence is discussing proposals which, they claim, will benefit Member States by placing their overseas military installations and maritime forces within the framework of a European Policy. In essence, what is eventually suggested is an integrated EU command structure with a single EU military and naval force which will replace all European national forces. I am totally opposed to this idea for I believe with NATO we have an effective military organisation which has served us well for decades. Furthermore, our military alliances with Commonwealth countries enable us to act together in overseas regions where we have a common defence interest. We have no need for an EU military structure.

I find these EU defence proposals alarming when linked to the progress made towards an EU constitution. The foundations are being laid for the European Union to become a federal state which will result in considerable controls over our social, economic and political life. I remain firmly opposed to all EU federalist proposals for I believe that Britain should continue its membership of the EU as an independent sovereign state. Lib Dem and Labour MEPs do not, however, share this view. They welcome the signing by Gordon Brown of the Lisbon 'constitution' Treaty and will adopt any federalist-inspired measure which would ensure that Britain is absorbed into a United States of Europe.



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Conservatives in the European Parliament