

European Summit and Signs of the Fragmentation of NATO

(Translated)

Al-Rayah Newspaper - Issue 600 - 20/05/2026

By: Ustadh Asaad Mansour

European leaders held their summit, the European Political Forum (EPF), on May 4, 2026, in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. They emphasized Europe's independence in defense and the strengthening of relations with Canada.

This European Political Forum is a political forum convened by European leaders twice a year. It was established at the initiative of French President Macron in 2022 following the Russian attack on Ukraine. Initially intended to counter Russia, it has now become a counterweight to the policies of the Trump administration in America. Consequently, the forum now discusses European policies and stances on global issues of concern, attempting to unify opinions and achieve common political action for Europe. The European Union has failed to function as a single political bloc with a unified political opinion and the ability to make unified policy decisions.

This is a patchwork attempt by France, which is working through Europe to make this endeavor succeed. France is striving to lead Europe intellectually and politically, in addition to its economic role, where it faces competition from Germany which has a strong presence within the European Union. Many political initiatives originate from France, the first being the idea of union and its development; from the European Coal and Steel Community to the European Common Market until it became a union. In these respects, France is the primary actor, influencing Germany, which, if it wins over to an idea, finds a way to implement it.

The recent summit was held in Armenia, a region within Russia's sphere of influence which the US is working to bring under its own. The timing of the summit was significant and not arbitrary. European Council President Antonio Costa explicitly stated this at the summit, saying on 5 May 2026, "Today, we have a new very important historic moment, the first ever summit between the European Union and Armenia. This sends a clear signal of how the EU wishes to engage with Armenia... Armenia is a key pillar in our relationship with the South Caucasus, but also to interconnect Europe through the South Caucasus to Caspian Sea, Central Asia."

The EU is working to bring Armenia into its fold to expand its sphere of influence in competition with Russia and the US. However, Russia is unlikely to remain silent. "We see that Armenia is discussing developing relations with the European Union, and we are completely calm about this," Putin said on 2 April 2026. "But it should be obvious... Being in a customs union with the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union is impossible. It's simply impossible by definition," he added.

Armenia is a member of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union, which it established in 2014 and from which Russia is the primary beneficiary. Russia markets most of its industrial products in the consumer-oriented, non-industrialized member states, such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia. The combined population of the member states, including Russia, is approximately 180 million, with a GDP exceeding \$5 trillion. This facilitates the free movement of goods and services and provides common policies in macroeconomics, transportation, industry, agriculture, energy, foreign trade, investment, customs, technology regulation, competition, and anti-monopoly measures.

For Russia, this market offers numerous advantages in these areas. It hinders any attempt by Armenia to break away from Russia, as Armenia is almost entirely dependent on Russian goods and labor. Around 70,000 Armenians work in Russia, down from approximately 100,000 in 2022. Furthermore, around two million Armenians reside in the Russian Federation, representing two-thirds of Armenia's population.

Armenia is working to distance itself from Russia by seeking closer ties with the European Union and the US. The European Union, in turn, is attempting to leverage this situation for its own benefit.

On the other hand, and more importantly, the European Union is working to build a political and military power independent of the United States. European Commission President Ursula

von der Leyen, who participated in the summit, stated previously on 17 February 2026, "Europe must become more independent – there is no other choice. Independent in every dimension that affects our security and prosperity. Defence and energy. Economy and trade. Raw materials and digital tech. (...) An independent Europe is a strong Europe." France's President Emmanuel Macron stated on 4 May 2026, "Europeans are taking their destiny into their own hands, increasing their defence and security spending, and building their own common solutions."

This conference is being held after the United States decided to reduce its forces in Germany by approximately 5,000 troops following German Chancellor Merz's criticism of the US approach in its war against Iran. This angered Trump and prompted him to make such a decision. On April 27, 2026, Merz stated, "An entire nation is being humiliated by the Iranian leadership, especially by these so-called Revolutionary Guards," referring to the humiliation of the United States, whose president, Trump, he criticized for not consulting with the Europeans. He added, "This whole thing is, at the very least, ill-considered, and I don't currently see what strategic exit the Americans are choosing." It's worth noting that Merz had previously pursued a policy of rapprochement with the United States, but it appears he has shifted towards a more European approach.

A rift has emerged between the two sides of the Atlantic alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Tensions and accusations have arisen between its two main members, the United States and the Europeans. On April 8, 2026, following a meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, Trump stated on his Truth Social platform, "NATO WASN'T THERE WHEN WE NEEDED THEM, AND THEY WON'T BE THERE IF WE NEED THEM AGAIN. REMEMBER GREENLAND, THAT BIG, POORLY RUN, PIECE OF ICE!!!" This statement implied his continued desire to acquire Greenland, angering the Europeans who hoped for his defeat in a war with Iran to prevent him from returning and claiming the island. Trump also demanded that European countries help him seize control of the Strait of Hormuz by force, but they refused, citing their lack of consultation in this conflict.

Canada, another NATO member targeted by the US, is working to strengthen its ties with Europe. This is why its Prime Minister, Mark Carney, participated in the summit, where he addressed the Europeans, saying on 4 May 2026, "We don't think that we're destined to submit to a more transactional, insular and brutal world," referring to the US, which has been tightening its grip on Canada and calling for its annexation as the 51st state. Carney described what the US is advocating as submission to a brutal world—that is, submission to a US that leads the world and knows only its own self-interest. He added, "Gatherings such as these point to a better way forward." In other words, he is finding a way out and a refuge in Europe. He wants to coordinate with Europe on defense to protect Canada, which still symbolically follows the British Crown. European countries have protected Canada from being swallowed up by the US since its founding in 1867. Britain and France worked to establish it and prevent its annexation by the US. Now, Canada is once again seeking European protection.

Thus, we see a real crack in NATO, which should not have prevailed after the fall of the Soviet Union. Founded in 1949 to counter the Soviet Union, which established the Warsaw Pact in 1955 in response, the US maintained NATO to perpetuate its dominance over Europe. If the US cannot achieve this goal, it does not want to continue with NATO! Therefore, it wants to reduce its burden by demanding that other member states increase their defense spending to 5% of their GDP. It is also trying to reduce its troop presence in Europe. Its presence is not for the defense of Europe, but instead for its dominance over it.

The collapse of NATO and its subsequent fall will rid the world of one of the causes of misery, which is the existence of international blocs that cause major wars and the intervention of many countries at once in another country, as happened when this crusader bloc, NATO, launched a sinful aggression against Afghanistan, destroying it, killing its people and displacing them for 20 years, from 2001 until it left in humiliation with its arrogant leader, America, in 2021.