Western European Defense Spending and Force Structure - To What Ends?

Robert J. Bird Jr.
St. John Fisher College

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Western European Defense Spending and Force Structure- To What Ends?

Abstract

Western Europeans in the post-Cold War era enjoy unprecedented security at home, and undertake very little strategic action abroad. The object of this paper is to explain why they nonetheless maintain large military forces, mostly in Europe, configured and armed primarily for territorial defense. Three general factors contribute to Western European force structure. First, despite supranational integration and other encroachments on its authority, the state retains control over defense policy and substantial armed forces because these -- and not international institutions -- remain the ultimate guarantors of its independence and sovereignty. Second, in contemporary conditions, Western Europeans face increased risk of strategic abandonment by their superpower Ally, the United States. To avoid encouraging a U.S. withdrawal from Europe, and to prepare for the consequences of such an eventuality, the European Allies must maintain capabilities for self-defense and for regional strategic action. Third, manpower-intensive territorial defense forces apply military spending disproportionately to pay and personnel benefits, and are therefore compatible (in a way that expeditionary militaries would not be) with the primary welfare role of the European state.

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Western European Defense Spending and Force Structure – To What Ends?

A Master’s Thesis submitted to

The Faculty of the Master of Science in International Studies Program

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Science in International Studies

by

Robert J. Bird, Jr.

Dr. David MacGregor, Advisor

Dr. Frederick H. Dotolo, Second Reader

Dr. David M. Baronov, Program Director

Rochester, New York, the United States of America

20 November 2009
Western Europeans in the post-Cold War era enjoy unprecedented security at home, and undertake very little strategic action abroad. The object of this paper is to explain why they nonetheless maintain large military forces, mostly in Europe, configured and armed primarily for territorial defense. Three general factors contribute to Western European force structure. First, despite supranational integration and other encroachments on its authority, the state retains control over defense policy and substantial armed forces because these – and not international institutions -- remain the ultimate guarantors of its independence and sovereignty. Second, in contemporary conditions, Western Europeans face increased risk of strategic abandonment by their superpower Ally, the United States. To avoid encouraging a U.S. withdrawal from Europe, and to prepare for the consequences of such an eventuality, the European Allies must maintain capabilities for self-defense and for regional strategic action. Third, manpower-intensive territorial defense forces apply military spending disproportionately to pay and personnel benefits, and are therefore compatible (in a way that expeditionary militaries would not be) with the primary welfare role of the European state.
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WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE SPENDING AND FORCE STRUCTURE – TO WHAT ENDS?

I. INTRODUCTION: THE QUESTION, ITS BACKGROUND, REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE, AND OVERVIEW OF ARGUMENT

A. The Question

In the aftermath of the 1999 Kosovo campaign, British Defence Minister (and NATO Secretary General-designate) Lord George Robertson remarked that European states had dispatched only about two percent of their aggregate armed forces to the Balkans, and this slowly and with difficulty. “If they could not use the two percent effectively, then what, Lord Robertson asked his fellow Defense Ministers, was the use of the remaining 98 percent of their armies.”¹ What, indeed? The object of this paper is to attempt a response to the Defence Minister’s rhetorical question. Contemporary Europe enjoys unprecedented internal stability and freedom from external threat, while it employs military power abroad on only the most limited scale; why, then, do the states of Western Europe still maintain large armed forces?

B. **European Strategic Policy: Some General Points and Some Well-Known Explanations**

Europeans do not fight wars; or, more precisely – and with some diversity among the policies of individual states\(^2\) – the European members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have been far less disposed to undertake military action than is the United States. This phenomenon is well-recognized and widely discussed; it is clearly reflected in data for combat operations, for non-combat deployments (such as peacekeeping and stabilization missions), for casualties, and for combat and expeditionary capabilities.

The existing literature, taken together, affords a persuasive explanation of divergence between European and American strategic policy. First, attributing it chiefly to the transatlantic disparity in military power, Robert Kagan’s work\(^3\) sets forth a “capabilities thesis.” The U.S. occupies a “unipolar” position: though by no means omnipotent, it has no serious challenger for global strategic leadership,\(^4\) and is without peer in its ability to wage war and to project power abroad – capabilities that the European states, with partial and limited exceptions, do not possess. This capabilities gap influences psychology, ideology and world view, making the European states far less willing than the U.S. to pursue policy objectives by military means.

A valuable complement to the capabilities thesis rests on principles of political economy – specifically, the implications of the “exploitation thesis” for the distribution

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\(^2\) The U.K., for example, is closest to the U.S. in willingness to engage in combat and to accept casualties. Germany, at the opposite end of the spectrum, is subject both to unique constitutional constraints and special political considerations. The general tendency, though qualified by a degree of diversity, is substantial and pervasive.


\(^4\) There are, however, numerous challengers seeking positions of regional hegemony; this is, for example, the aspiration to which Russia is reduced.
of costs in providing public security goods.\textsuperscript{5} A strategic interest is a “public good” to the extent that the producer cannot practicably withhold the benefit from others.\textsuperscript{6} A large and wealthy state has greater means to produce public security goods, and derives greater benefit from them, than do smaller countries. The theory predicts that it will take steps to produce its desired level of security, even if other states that enjoy benefit withhold active assistance.\textsuperscript{7} Smaller (and weaker) states, therefore, can enjoy a “free ride” on the efforts of the great power – can benefit from the public security goods it provides, without making proportionate contributions.\textsuperscript{8} The relative efforts and costs borne by the U.S., and by its European Allies, are broadly consistent with the predictions of the exploitation thesis: the “unipolar” U.S. contributes a disproportionate share, while the smaller powers of Western Europe under-contribute in proportion to the benefits they may receive.\textsuperscript{9} For the many security interests that are public goods, therefore, economic theory points in the same direction as Kagan’s capabilities thesis.


\textsuperscript{6} Olson and Zeckhauser, “An Economic Theory of Alliances,” p. 267. Public security goods may include, among others, containment of dangerous common adversaries; prevention of conflict in vital regions; freedom of the seas and airways; access to economically critical resources; arms control and non-proliferation; etc. Security goods, to be sure, may be “impurely” public -- not equally available to or enjoyed by all beneficiaries; and particular military measures may produce more than one kind of security benefit. See Sandler and Hartley, \textit{The Political Economy of NATO}, pp. 34-36.

\textsuperscript{7} Olson and Zeckhauser, “An Economic Theory of Alliances,” pp. 269, 272, 274.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., pp. 274, 278.

\textsuperscript{9} As for strategic capabilities and actions outside Europe, the evidence is unambiguous, in the scale of U.S. overseas military deployments; in deployment capabilities; in blue-water naval formations; and in at least some military actions (for example, the ejection of Iraq from Kuwait in 1991). All of these have, at least in part, served to advance public strategic goods such as freedom of the seas, Persian Gulf security, deterrence of potential aggression in East Asia, suppression of international terrorism, and others. Western European contributions to these efforts, weighed collectively, have ranged from limited to negligible. By contrast, the Western European states have always made significant contributions to security and stability \textit{within Europe} -- an interest shared by the U.S., but more immediately affecting Europeans.
A diverse body of scholarship, meanwhile, emphasizes aspects of European political culture evolving in the postwar era that likewise incline European states against military action. First, the discrediting of and European retreat from imperial power eliminated a leading basis for strategic engagement abroad. As noted by Hurrell and Menon, decolonization reduced even the strongest of the imperial powers to second-rank status; profoundly affected domestic society and politics; and propelled a reorientation of their foreign policies and economic relations firmly toward Europe. Second, as Tony Judt has argued, the central and defining feature of the European order, and the chief end of state power, has become the implementation of “the ‘European model of society’” -- the welfare state -- in which military power is a disfavored alternative to social spending. Third, though the state remains the locus of security policy, it suffers from a “legitimacy squeeze.” Economic and political integration, and internationalist theories of political authority, strengthen supranational and multilateral processes at the expense of the state. Meanwhile, as Le Galés and Crozier find, consumer culture, individualism, “identity” politics, and attenuated nationalism diminish citizens’ deference to state

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authority.\textsuperscript{15} The nation-state’s freedom of action is impaired by its loss of political supremacy, its new “intermediate position between sub-national and international constraints and demands.”\textsuperscript{16} This trend is peculiarly prominent, perhaps uniquely influential, in Western Europe.

C. \textbf{Overview of the Argument}

The literature, in short, affords persuasive explanations for the relative aversion of America’s European Allies to military action. What it does not address directly or fully is their continued maintenance of large military forces -- despite the disinclination to use them for global strategic contingencies, and the attenuation of proximate threats.

Before 1990, there were obvious and important reasons for transatlantic differences in force structure and deployment.\textsuperscript{17} The persistence of the pattern since then is another matter. Though the Russian threat is diminished and physically more remote, though no other significant conventional threat to Continental security has appeared, the European NATO states still generally favor large but static manpower-intensive militaries, configured primarily for territorial defense. Ill-suited, and little used, for any other operational exigency, they are far less deployable, and far less deployed, than U.S.


\textsuperscript{17} The U.S. had a uniquely global strategic posture, necessitating forward positions in Europe and East Asia, and significant power projection capabilities, especially air and naval forces, as well as a large strategic nuclear arsenal. Between 1945 and 1991, most of the European states (with partial exceptions for the U.K. and France, which maintained some global strategic capabilities and had greater defense expenditures), were concerned primarily with territorial defense, and so maintained large land armies, with substantial complements of manpower but comparatively lower capital investment.
forces (even their reserve components). Military service no longer functions in Western Europe as the “school of the nation” -- if only because it is mostly voluntary, and the remaining conscription regimes no longer universal. Nor do European militaries play a significant role in routine domestic security functions.

Why, then, do the Western European NATO states maintain their substantial but largely immobile land forces? My research suggests that the answer lies at the conjunction of interstate strategic politics and domestic socio-economic policy.\(^\text{18}\)

First, exclusive control of military power has long been a core element of state sovereignty; it stands in sharper relief, in an era of diminished state authority. Nor is this mere symbolism: even in a Europe of unprecedented peace and order, armed force remains the ultimate defense of a state’s vital interests. The European Union’s effort to construct a framework for military action to serve its own policies illustrates the political significance of strategic capabilities; it also exhibits the member states’ reluctance to diminish their own sovereignty.

Second, each of the Western European members of NATO must manage alliance politics and its hazards. Divergence of strategic interests, and differences of mutual dependence, emphasize the danger of abandonment by an ally in time of need. The end of the Cold War both reduced systemic pressure on the U.S. to cater to its allies, and elevated the U.S. to “unipolar” power which -- with European strategic parochialism --

\(^{18}\) I confine my analysis to the Western European NATO states. They possess the greater part of Europe’s economic and military potential; their sovereignty is well-established, not recently emerged from Soviet domination. Greece and Turkey, meanwhile, have atypical geopolitical positions, and armed forces unique in NATO. Unless otherwise indicated, I address the militaries of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Portugal.
has aggravated strategic divergence. The European members of NATO must then seek to prevent, and to prepare for the consequences of, strategic abandonment by the U.S.

Europeans are chiefly concerned with security problems in Europe and its outskirts. NATO and the U.S. provide insurance against the low but catastrophic risk of war in Europe. Lest U.S. intervention be rendered futile, and the U.S. commitment to NATO be undermined, the European Allies must maintain adequate defense forces within Europe. Meanwhile, to manage abandonment’s possible effects, they need forces capable of dealing with the regional challenges that are of far greater concern to Europeans than to the U.S. One approach has been pursuit of EU military capabilities; this limited experiment is far outweighed, however, by the members’ own sovereign forces. These serve, moreover, as a hedge against the failure of European integration itself, which could occasion the return to Europe of old-fashioned power politics.

Finally, military forces configured for territorial defense are relatively compatible with the primary role of the state in Western Europe as dispenser of public welfare benefits. In general, military spending and welfare-state priorities are opponents in a zero-sum game (advantage to the latter). But spending on military payroll, benefits and “consumption,” to support armies stationed at home, contributes to consensus objectives of economic redistribution and social stability, by providing public-sector employment and complementing civilian benefits programs.

Domestic political priorities, therefore, move in the same channel as state sovereignty interests and the counsels of strategic policy. They all heavily favor substantial territorial defense armies over alternatives – especially over smaller and more deployable forces usable in response to global contingencies.
II. WESTERN EUROPEAN ARMED FORCES -- SCALE, STRUCTURE, AND DEPLOYMENT

As an initial matter, it is proper to describe common characteristics of Western European NATO members’ armed forces, and to compare them in configuration and use with those of the United States. Despite considerable military diversity among these states, key data disclose a prevalent pattern.

A. NATO European Forces and Deployability

First, though their forces are smaller than those of the U.S. in raw numbers and in proportion to population, the Western European members of the Alliance have substantial military manpower. In 2008, total active-duty military personnel numbered roughly 1.159 million, with an additional 1.067 million troops in reserve formations; drawn from a combined population of roughly 353.8 million. In terms of the numbers of men and women under command, these are large military organizations.

European forces have long been constituted and armed primarily for a territorial defense role. Throughout the Cold War, they prepared for warfare within a few hundred miles of their own territory, a priority reflected throughout their logistical and support arrangements as well as in their armament. Despite the end of the bipolar confrontation

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19 Data (current as of November 2008) are from the 2009 edition of *The Military Balance* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009). Active duty forces exclude national paramilitary police (Gendarmerie, Carabinieri, etc.) whose functions are chiefly law enforcement and domestic security. Reserve forces include such organizations as Britain’s Territorial Army units and Norway’s Home Guard.

20 In 2008, by comparison, the U.S. had 1.539 million active duty military personnel (0.51 percent of a population of roughly 303.8 million), plus 979,000 in various reserve formations. The data referred to in this discussion, mostly from annual editions of *The Military Balance*, are set forth in Appendix B.

focused in the heart of Europe, in the mid-1990s the European Allies remained notably
dependent on the U.S. for logistics, command and control, transport, and other
capabilities; nor has the picture altered appreciably since then.

The persistence of the Western European orientation toward territorial defense,
and concomitantly against expeditionary warfare, is demonstrable through a comparison
with the U.S. on key measures of strategic mobility. A proxy for expeditionary capability
can be derived from airlift (in numbers of transport, cargo and tanker aircraft) and sealift
(numbers of seagoing vessels for cargo, supply, fuel, transport, command, and similar
functions beyond coastal waters). These assets are indispensable for the delivery and
support of substantial forces in operations beyond their home region. Hence, the ratios
of a state’s aircraft and vessels in these two categories, to its total active-duty military
personnel, provide a rough but useful measure of expeditionary orientation.

Pertinent data are set forth in Appendix B (pp. 2-4). Among the Western
European states, a degree of diversity is observable. The U.K. leads consistently in the
seagoing logistical capacity ratio of vessels to troops, yet has ranged between one-third

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22 Ibid., p. 1 (citation omitted).
23 Their critical importance is illustrated by the experience of the Persian Gulf War, 1990-1991. Initial
rapid deployment of a deterrent force to Saudi Arabia was possible only by means of U.S. Air Force
strategic airlift assets, which in the first two days of operations flew 91 missions to Saudi Arabia, and more
than 70 daily thereafter. Jeffrey D. McCausland, “Governments, Societies, and Armed Forces: What the
Gulf War Portends,” Parameters 29, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 2-21, at p. 5. Online. Military & Government
modest French deployment of 16,500 troops required partial U.S. airlift assistance. Ibid., p. 7.

Meanwhile, movement of heavy forces – vehicles for armored and mechanized units, most other
equipment, supplies and munitions, and logistical support facilities for a large expedition – was carried by
sealift. “[T]hrough the entirety of Desert Shield and Storm, roughly 95 percent of everything required was
moved by sea. . . .” Ibid., p. 6. In general, “[s]ealift remains the principal means of moving vast amounts
of supplies required by even a relatively small force.” Ibid., p. 18.

Other assets useful in power projection are either not needed in all cases (e.g., intercontinental
bombers); or are more crucial for other purposes (e.g., main battle tanks, for territorial defense; etc.).
24 From The Military Balance (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies), various annual
editions.
and two-thirds that of the U.S. It is followed not too distantly by Germany and Italy; France, after major reductions in the late 1990s, is far behind.\textsuperscript{25} Since 1990, meanwhile, the leading European states (U.K and France) have had airlift-to-troops ratios one-third to one-half the U.S. level. Even British and French force structures, which have sustained a disproportionate share of European deployments, are not primarily expeditionary in character. U.S. deployability ratios have exceeded those of other large states, Germany, Italy and Spain, by factors between two and seven.

The overall picture is perhaps more striking. In 2007, Western European NATO states (with 1.212 million active-duty troops) possessed a total of 554 transport aircraft, and 79 seagoing logistical support ships. The U.S., with 1.506 million troops, had 1907 transport aircraft, and 216 sealift vessels. The chief difference in 1990, on both sides, was a larger number of troops.\textsuperscript{26} Despite the lower likelihood of major conflict in Europe relative to other regions, the vast gap between U.S. and European deployability, characteristic of the Cold War, persists.

\section*{B. Force Deployment Patterns}

The implications of contrasting U.S. and European force structures are amplified by data showing the proportion of active-duty forces deployed or stationed abroad\textsuperscript{27} during the post-Cold War period. Not only operational deployments, but the long-term

\begin{footnotes}
\item[25] Several smaller states -- Denmark and Belgium -- have had higher sealift-to-troops ratios than larger powers; due chiefly to the disproportionate effect on the ratio of a few additional ships, where active-duty force numbers are relatively low (in 2008, roughly 39,000 for Belgium and 30,000 for Denmark).
\item[26] The same European states, with 2.229 million men under arms, had virtually the same number of both transport aircraft (567) and sealift vessels (78) as they did sixteen years later; while the U.S., with 2.118 million troops, possessed 1853 transport aircraft, and 239 sealift ships.
\item[27] For purposes of these comparisons, I exclude forces stationed within Western Europe, which for Europeans is, of course, not “abroad.” This excludes substantial U.S. and British, as well as some French, forces, most in Germany. Addition of the figures for U.S. and other forces “abroad” in Europe would render still more emphatic the leading U.S., and British, positions in foreign military commitments.
\end{footnotes}
positioning of forces abroad – as deterrent or potential response to overseas threats – reflects a commitment to the projection of power as an instrument of policy. Deployment data are in Appendix A.

For 1990-1991, excluding operational deployments to the Persian Gulf theater, approximately 7.5 percent of U.S. forces were stationed or deployed overseas, followed closely by both the U.K. and France at about 7.0 percent. To this must be added the short-term Gulf deployments, as of early 1991: U.S., 697,000 (an additional 32.9 percent of total active-duty U.S. forces); U.K., 45,000 (another 14.8 percent); and France, 16,500 (3.6 percent). Forces deployed by the other European allies during this period were in general de minimis, and far below British and French levels.

In 1996-1997, with substantial deployments in the Balkans, the French and British proportions roughly equaled that of the U.S., at about ten percent; Germany, Italy and Spain stood at less than two percent. In 2002, the U.S. (with 8700 troops in Afghanistan and its neighbors) and France had comparable deployment percentages of about 11 percent; the U.K. stood at 7.6 percent.

The differences in 2005-2006 reflect, above all, the Iraq campaign: 25.2 percent of U.S. active-duty forces were deployed, including 139,700 in Afghanistan and Iraq. The U.K., at 9.7 percent, had 9500 troops in Iraq and Afghanistan; France, 8.5 percent, 1265 troops in Afghanistan. Denmark and the Netherlands, at 6.5 percent and 5.8 percent, had 566 and 1115 troops, respectively, between Afghanistan and Iraq. On the

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28 McCausland, “What the Gulf War Portends,” at pp. 9-10. Other NATO members deployed modest contingents to the Gulf: Italy, 1200 (0.3% of active-duty forces); Netherlands, 600 (0.6 %); Spain, 500 (0.18%); Belgium, 400 (0.43%); Denmark, 100 (0.32%); and Norway, 50 (0.15%). See “Military Statistics – Gulf War Coalition Forces By Country.” Online. http://www.Nationmaster.com/graph/mil_gul_war_coal_for-military-gulf-war-coalition-forces. Accessed on 26 February 2007.

29 Smaller states Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands were in these years conspicuous for relatively high deployment percentages (the majority for Balkans peacekeeping).
other hand, only 2.5 percent of German, 4.7 percent of Italian, and 1.8 percent of Spain’s forces were serving abroad. In 2008, British and French deployments reached, respectively, 12.2 percent (12,450 in Iraq and Afghanistan), and 10 percent (3035 in Afghanistan), while the U.S. remained in the lead, but by a lower margin.\(^{30}\)

These data demonstrate a hierarchy of expeditionary activity and capability, led by the U.S., with the U.K. and France typically close, or next in rank, with seven to twelve percent of forces deployed. The position of France is subject to significant qualification: its vigorous pursuit of private pseudo-imperial interests, especially in Africa, by military means\(^{31}\) accounts for a large share of its deployments; while its, at best, parsimonious approach to any action in coalition with the U.S. contrasts sharply with the U.K. All other Western European NATO states have lower deployment percentages -- in most cases \textit{far} lower -- than the U.K. and France.\(^{32}\) Germany, Italy, and Spain are conspicuously reluctant to send forces abroad.

\(^{30}\) The U.S. deployment percentage decline from 2005 appears to reflect return of some forces from Iraq and Afghanistan to the U.S. and Germany, replaced by units from Japan and South Korea.

\(^{31}\) French participation in operations advancing public security objectives -- in the Persian Gulf War, in Iraq, and in Afghanistan -- is dwarfed by that of the U.K. Most French troops overseas are stationed in former (or present) French possessions in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, serving primarily unilateral French interests that, in economic terms, represent “private” security goods.

Since the independence of its African possessions, for example, France has consistently used its military “to install leaders it deems friendly to French interests. In return, these countries give French industries first crack at their oil and other natural resources.” David Gauthier-Villars, “Colonial-Era Ties to Africa Face a Reckoning in France,” \textit{Wall Street Journal} (May 16, 2007), Section A, p. 1. \textit{See also} Norman Bowen, “Multilateralism, Multipolarity, and Regionalism: The French Foreign Policy Discourse,” \textit{Mediterranean Quarterly} 16, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 94-116, at p. 102. Online. \textit{Academic Search Premier.} \url{http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=5&hid=13&sid=fdec4f31-b0c2-4b34-a3d1-48583bd8a95a%40SRCSM1}. Accessed on 13 February 2007 (“Mixing business, politics and, security concerns. . . French administrations [have] considered Francophone Africa a \textit{pré carré français} [a privileged reserve]”). Units in Africa for these essentially unilateral purposes were roughly 40 percent of French forces abroad in 2007.

\(^{32}\) This pattern finds an echo in the ratios of states’ military spending, as a percentage of GDP, to their active-duty military personnel, as a percentage of national population -- a comparison that indicates non-payroll military spending, associated with expeditionary and combat capabilities. Throughout the post-Cold War period, this ratio was far higher for the U.S. than for NATO Europe (except the U.K. and the Netherlands). \textit{See} Appendix B, pp. 2-3.
A further characteristic of Western European deployments is noteworthy: most of the Allies (except the U.K. and France) have disproportionately favored local and regional operations. In sample years 1996-97 and 2002-03, three quarters or more of most Continental NATO states’ deployments were for peacekeeping and stabilization in Bosnia, Kosovo or Macedonia. Similarly, in 2008, several states had proportionally large commitments to UN peacekeeping in Lebanon, a nearby Mediterranean littoral country.33 These patterns illustrate a strongly regional emphasis in European military priorities (and probably also a preference for peacekeeping over combat).

C. **Territorial Defense: Core Purpose of European Militaries**

The primacy of territorial defense for Western European armed forces, and their limited deployment capabilities, are widely reflected in the literature. Yet a defining feature of the post-Cold War period has been the diminution of conventional military threats in Europe.34 Contemporary European planning rests on the assumption that there exists little or no risk of external, conventional, land-based attack against mainland Europe in the next two decades; even Russia is not expected in this period to field sufficient forces to undertake major aggression.35 European academic and policy thinking has indeed purported to transcend defense, emphasizing a broader if less

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33 See Appendix A, pp. 1-2.
coherent notion of “security”; but military structures and reforms have not kept pace, and show limited response to the emergence of new potential threats abroad.

Instead, “despite post-Cold War rhetoric,” European armies differ from their Cold War predecessors chiefly in reduced scale. Their core purpose remains defense of national territory against external threat. Formal statements of policy widely reiterate territorial defense as a central rationale for armed forces and military spending. More fundamentally, this role is embodied in the habits of states (reflected in deployment data),

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38 Edmunds, “What Are Armed Forces For?” p. 1066.


in public expectations, in the institutional cultures of military organizations themselves -- impeding strategic reorientation in light of contemporary global conditions.40

The U.K., and to a lesser extent France, with deployment capabilities and overseas military dispositions at the high end of the Western European spectrum, are partial exceptions.41 Beginning with the Balkans wars of the mid-1990’s, the other major European states -- Germany, Italy, and Spain -- showed a modestly increased willingness to participate, on a small scale, in selected multilateral operations abroad; but their armies are still framed primarily for territorial defense, and based on home soil.42

The greater proportion of all Western European forces is considered “non-deployable.” By one estimate, at the end of 2004, the 18 European states in NATO’s integrated command structure could deploy only 50 brigades; assuming force rotation requirements, only about 40,000 troops would be available for combat missions at any moment.43 Material constraints on deployability have arisen from two sources: legal restrictions on the role of conscripts; and the failure to train, organize and equip most units for expeditionary operations.44

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40 Edmunds, “What Are Armed Forces For?” p. 1066.
42 Ibid., p. 575.
In the late 1990s, most NATO members still maintained conscription regimes that barred or restricted deployment of draftees outside national territory.\textsuperscript{45} Despite relatively limited training, expertise, and flexibility, conscripts were politically suited to territorial defense, and had been needed as a reservoir of manpower to meet the hordes of the Warsaw Pact.\textsuperscript{46} Conscript forces proved unwieldy, however, even for regional peacekeeping in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{47} Since the late 1990s the significance of conscription has diminished markedly; of the major European powers only Germany now retains it.\textsuperscript{48}

The marginal status of expeditionary capability and action is today reflected chiefly in states’ reluctance to finance and organize forces for greater deployability, and in political resistance to military operations. Whether for combat or peacekeeping, foreign deployments are politically “contested,” as well as expensive.\textsuperscript{49} To square this circle, many European states have developed, in effect, two forces. The far greater proportion of active-duty troops constitutes a “bulk” military stationed at home, dedicated to territorial defense, “unreformed” in structure and training, and comparatively poorly funded.\textsuperscript{50} In parallel, small elite units are trained, financed and equipped for


\textsuperscript{46} Edmunds, “What Are Armed Forces For?” p. 1066.


\textsuperscript{48} Williams, “From Conscripts to Volunteers,” p. 37. As of 2005, Denmark, Germany and Norway intended to maintain conscription; France had suspended it in 2001; Spain terminated it the same year, and Portugal in 2003; Italy ended conscription by 2008. Belgium and the Netherlands had eliminated it in the mid-1990s, and Britain adopted an all-volunteer military in 1962. Ibid., p. 37.

\textsuperscript{49} Edmunds, “What Are Armed Forces For?” p. 1075.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 1075.
peacekeeping or combat deployments, mostly on a multilateral basis.\textsuperscript{51}

This bifurcation is evident, for example, in the Germany force structure. The Bundeswehr of the 1990s incorporated “two armies” – a far larger and less well-equipped main force, including a substantial number of conscripts, dedicated to territorial defense; and a much smaller “crisis reaction component,” all professionals, with superior equipment, prepared for out-of-area operations.\textsuperscript{52} This was much the same in 2007. A proposed long-term defense reform could ultimately improve deployability.\textsuperscript{53} But in the near to mid-term, the Bundeswehr can send only a fraction of its troops abroad at any time: with unit rotation requirements, it was said in 2007 to be “overstretched” at the modest deployment level of 3.7 percent.\textsuperscript{54} Reconfiguring a larger portion of the Bundeswehr for an expeditionary role would require large investments in training, equipment, support capabilities and reorganization, and less reliance on conscription.

Budget constraints, including continued heavy spending on non-deployable conscripts, have impeded reform.\textsuperscript{55} German military spending in general favors salaries and

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 1075.


\textsuperscript{53} The German Defense Ministry’s 2006 White Paper proposes a “response force” of 35,000, intended for “high-intensity” operations; 70,000 troops in a “stabilization force” for “low and medium intensity” operations; and 147,500 rear-echelon “support forces.” “White Paper 2006,” pp. 69, 78-79.


\textsuperscript{55} Longhurst, “Endeavors to Restructure the Bundeswehr,” pp. 32-33.
personnel benefits – about 55 percent of the 2007 defense budget.\textsuperscript{56} This entrenched priority, and political barriers to budget increases, impede serious efforts to improve deployability.\textsuperscript{57} Meanwhile, conscription remains a consensus policy fixture. It is cited as the basis for a mobilization capability that ensures continued U.S. participation in NATO,\textsuperscript{58} and as an institutional guarantee of strategic reticence: “[a] citizen’s army is a prudent hedge against military interventionism around the world.”\textsuperscript{59}

As all this demonstrates -- as a 2006 Defence Ministry White Paper expressly stated -- “[d]efending Germany against external military threats is and remains the Bundeswehr’s core function.”\textsuperscript{60} Beside this central, consensus role, Germany’s limited peacekeeping and stabilization missions are both peripheral and exceptional.

The attention to Germany in the literature does not imply invidious comparison to other large states, Italy and Spain. Both have lately abandoned conscription; both possess appreciable numbers of amphibious ships and craft (Germany does not);\textsuperscript{61} both


\textsuperscript{57} Meiers, “The German Predicament,” pp. 628-629.


\textsuperscript{60} “White Paper 2006,” p. 56.

contributed forces to the Coalition in Iraq; and Spain’s purchases of transport aircraft have given it an airlift ratio superior to Germany’s. In other respects, however, these two states are inferior, or at best comparable, to Germany in expeditionary capability (sealift and airlift) and performance (deployments abroad). And even British and French forces - - the most potent, flexible and deployable in Europe -- are markedly less capable of power projection and expeditionary operations than those of the U.S.

Though there are important differences among NATO Europe’s military forces, it is nonetheless clear that all of the Continental militaries share a predominant orientation toward territorial defense. This, despite the attenuation of external conventional threats, through the military retreat and weakening of Russia, and the considerable progress in consolidating Europe, including much of its eastern marches, under the banners of both NATO and the EU.

Thus, again, Lord George Robertson’s question: what is the purpose of these large, yet mostly undeployed, mostly non-deployable forces?

Spain’s contingent was hastily withdrawn, however, after the victory of leftists in an election overshadowed by the Madrid rail bombings of 11 March 2004.
III. STATE SOVEREIGNTY

A. Armed Forces and Statehood: Substance and Symbol

The first part of an answer to this question rests upon the long-standing and vital nexus between authority over military forces and sovereign statehood.

In many respects the state’s authority has been diminished: from above by multilateralism and European integration, from within by a variety of domestic social and political changes. The nation-state nonetheless remains the primary locus of democratic legitimacy. As such, it naturally holds an effective monopoly on the affirmative use of military power, accountable to the national public that mans and pays for it. Yet state control of armed forces is also a matter of potent necessity. Military power is still a cornerstone of the state’s authority, independence, its very existence (albeit a cornerstone obscured by the recession of external military threats, the prevalence of intra-European peace, and an exuberant overgrowth of postmodern internationalism).

It may be a truism, but one worthy of occasional acknowledgment, that “[t]he fundamental objective of every nation is to secure its vital interests while maintaining its own standards and values.” The ability to employ physical force against threats to a

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64 Cooper, “Integration and Disintegration,” p. 20.
65 Maull, “Europe and the Changing Global Agenda,” in Story, The New Europe, p. 156. To be sure, international organizations (and subnational influences) can exercise political influence to restrain military action by states.
66 See, e.g., “Netherlands Defence Doctrine,” pp. 35, 36-37 (“National interests. The fundamental objective of every nation is to secure its (vital) interests while maintaining its own standards and values. . . . Foreign, security and defence policy. The main aim of Dutch foreign and security policy is to ensure the independence, integrity, stability and welfare of the home nation”).
state’s territorial integrity and political independence, and to secure other life-and-death interests, is the *ultima ratio* of sovereign statehood, the last resort for its preservation.

Were a state to rely, not on its own power, but on the kindness of strangers for the vindication of its vital interests, it would necessarily also cede to others the authority to determine what those interests are and how to advance them. A state in such position has foregone the substance of its independence.

This is not to suggest that a state must be able to defend itself alone against any and all adversaries. Participation in a coalition or alliance is quite compatible with sovereignty, where the cooperating members share a predominant common purpose. In joining such a group, however, the individual state must be able to contribute capabilities

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“White Paper 2006,” p. 54 (German national defense “within the framework of the Alliance continues to be a central responsibility of the Bundeswehr as an expression of national sovereignty”).

Ministerio de Defensa de España, “La Defensa en la Constitucion.” Online. [http://www.mde.es/contenido.jsp?id_nodo=4024&&&keyword=&auditoria=F](http://www.mde.es/contenido.jsp?id_nodo=4024&&&keyword=&auditoria=F). Accessed on 26 October 2009 (“El concepto de defensa nacional se fundamenta en el ordenamiento constitucional español y vincula a toda la sociedad en la salvaguarda de la soberanía e intereses nacionales. . . . La Constitución asigna a las Fuerzas Armadas un puesto entre los pilares básicos . . . . [L]es encomienda la misión de ‘garantizar la soberanía e independencia de España, defender su integridad territorial’ . . . . La citadella Ley Orgánica de la Defensa Nacional señala que ‘la política de defensa tiene por finalidad la protección del conjunto de la sociedad española, de su Constitución, . . . y de la garantía independencia e integridad territorial de España’


and resources useful to the group’s ends. Otherwise its allies, deeming the state’s participation of small account, or even dispensable, will tend both to disregard its preferences and to exact a price for any protection they confer.

National defense capabilities remain necessary, despite the apparent prevalence of stability and peace in Europe.67 This is true not only for the larger powers, but also for the smaller states: if they wish to avoid political dependence on France and Germany, and to participate in the councils in which strategic policy is discussed and influenced,68 states such as the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway must maintain the ability to make valuable contributions to coalition defense.

Above this enduring foundation of strategic substance has risen a more visible superstructure of political symbolism. Security and defense policy are widely seen as the “last bastion of national sovereignty.”69 Maintenance of, and direct control over, armed forces have become attributes of the sovereignty and political independence that they actually exist to preserve.70 This is best illustrated by the efforts (described below) of the European Union to develop military capabilities.

Thus military power is a badge of sovereignty. More fundamentally, however, it is the ultimate defense and arbiter of sovereignty, and a medium of exchange among

70 Börner, “The Future of German Operations Outside NATO,” p. 64.
states collaborating in the pursuit of common strategic purposes. Token or ceremonial
militaries do not suffice: these purposes require armed forces in scale and kind capable
of material contribution to the defense of vital state interests.

B. **European Integration and Military Power**

As the ultimate sanction of independence, the possession of and command over
military power have, by a natural process of association, become public symbols of state
sovereignty, even political identity. This is illustrated by efforts to promote defense
policy integration in Europe. European states’ reluctance to embrace these initiatives at
the expense of their own authority, meanwhile, points to the irreducible substance
underlying the symbolism.

(1). **ESDP in Outline**

The leading institutional challenge to the sovereignty of European states arises
from European integration. Under strong currents of policy convergence, broad swaths
of authority are now shared between national capitals and the supranational European
Union; but matters of defense, security and foreign policy have remained essentially
national. ⁷¹ Since the early 1990s, however, the EU has worked gradually to develop a
European Security and Defense Policy (“ESDP”).

ESDP is an institutional framework to devise EU policy on matters of common
interest in foreign affairs and military matters; it is also a platform for the application of

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military power to advance common aims. The 1992 Petersberg conference defined a set of military functions for EU attention: humanitarian and rescue, peacekeeping, crisis management, and limited peacemaking operations.72 Spurred by the experience of the Balkan wars, the EU’s 1999 Helsinki conference set new goals for ESDP including, above all, a “rapid reaction” force of 60,000 troops, dispatchable on two months’ notice and sustainable for a year in the field, with a complement of aircraft and ships.73

On foreign and defense policy, the EU acts on the basis of intergovernmental cooperation, without authority to bind any unwilling member state; indeed, any policy or action requires unanimous assent.74 Under the proposed Treaty of Lisbon, successor to the rejected EU Constitution, “[m]ilitary capabilities remain in national hands,” and “all contributions to [EU military operations] will always be on a voluntary basis.”75 All military units, equipment and financial support for ESDP actions must be subscribed by member states from their own standing forces and budgets;76 they remain subject to the contributor’s sovereign authority, and can be withheld as a matter of course from any proposed operation.77


ESDP and the “European Project”

ESDP’s purpose has not been only, or even primarily, means for collective responses to security problems; it is also aimed at the deepening of European integration as an end in itself. This project is not universally accepted; 2005 French and Dutch referenda rejected a proposed EU constitution, suggesting that construction of a European political identity has limited momentum beyond the circles of the Eurocracy. Its proponents have thus deliberately pursued a process of European “nation-building,” to enhance EU political legitimacy through formation of a European identity, a collective supranational self-awareness. By vesting the EU with some role in framing strategic policy, and some capability to carry it into effect, ESDP would appropriate the symbolic value of military power as an attribute of political sovereignty, and would thereby serve as a focal point for nation-building -- a means for the EU to increase its stature at home as well as on the global stage.

EU Member States: Reticence and Reservations

After the 1999 Helsinki Declaration, EU members soon earmarked impressive troop strength for ESDP functions (subject to the right to withhold them from operations). Yet critical deficiencies were quickly evident -- in the sophisticated equipment, command

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78 Ibid., p. 233.
and control, and logistical support required for effective operational deployment. EU members have since repeatedly failed to meet self-imposed targets for ESDP capabilities, and in 2004 -- purportedly as an interim measure -- agreed to replace the “rapid reaction” force with a modest array of small “battlegroups.”

Limited capabilities are reflected in limited operations. The largest to date, the EU’s succession to NATO peacekeeping in Bosnia, involved at peak 7000 troops; most other ESDP missions have been primarily civilian; all have been militarily unambitious in scope. This is less a matter of resource limitations than of political constraints: the dependence of any operation on an essentially ad hoc process of coalition formation, on finding voluntarily contributed forces and funds, and on averting exercise of the veto implicit in the unanimity requirement.

For ESDP to organize usable power, EU members must compromise traditional sovereign control over (their) forces and military policy. This is, in the near future, unlikely. Many observers rightly emphasize strategic divergence between the U.S. and “Europeans,” yet it does not imply convergence of policies and interests within Europe. To the contrary, EU members are strongly differentiated in their approaches to security, in their attitudes to the use of force, power projection, foreign intervention, and to the

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82 Clarke and Cornish, “The European Defence Project and the Prague Summit,” pp. 784-785. By 2006, seven of the 64 identified shortfalls had been “resolved.” Shepherd, “Irrelevant or Indispensable?” p. 75.
85 Ibid., pp. 235-237, 238-239.
86 Lindley-French, “In the Shade of Locarno?” p. 811.
proper balance between power and political influence. The "Atlanticism" of the U.K., the Netherlands and Denmark, for example, persistently contrasts with "Europeanism" in France, Spain and Belgium. Partly for this reason, Europeans do not accept any one state as their natural leader in defense policy; further, those states with relatively capable forces have stronger misgivings at the prospect of submitting them to the political control of others.

To the extent, then, that ESDP betrays a persistent "gap between rhetoric and capacity, between the real world and the EU world," it is chiefly because EU members resist the diminution of their own sovereignty, and insist on consensus as the basis for collaboration under the EU flag. Cession of more substantial defense authority to the EU would compromise a key residual block of members’ exclusive sovereign power; indeed, it might well mark a point of no return for the post-Westphalian state in Europe. There is no great disposition among EU members to take this leap beyond current intergovernmental cooperation on defense policy.

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91 Lindley-French, “In the Shade of Locarno?” p. 809.
C. Conclusion

Efforts to cultivate EU-directed military capabilities, and the reluctance of EU members to sacrifice the substance of their military authority, are pertinent here to demonstrate the political significance of military resources and command. To the EU and the proponents of further European integration, military capabilities are a visible public symbol of autonomous political identity: more a vehicle for the ideational project of “constructing Europe” than an instrument of usable power. Armed forces bear symbolic value for the states too; value that may be particularly important in a climate of political integration, regarded with hesitancy by substantial parts of their national constituencies. Unlike the EU, however, the states have a more fundamental, more substantial reason to maintain significant military power: their independence and territorial integrity rest ultimately on the ability to defend them against armed threat or attack. For the states of Europe, armed forces are not primarily symbols; they are still “the first and last bastions of sovereignty.”

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IV. THE ALLIANCE SECURITY DILEMMA AND EUROPEAN ARMED FORCES

Relations among allies entail two opposing dangers – “entrapment” in another’s policies, and “abandonment” by an ally when its aid is needed. Mutual interdependence mitigates, and strategic divergence aggravates, these hazards. With the end of the Cold War, the unipolar U.S. is less concerned with NATO cohesion, and more interested in exigent problems beyond stable Europe. Hence the Western European NATO states must deal with the risk of abandonment by the leader of their Alliance. By reason of proximity (and with U.S.-provided global public security), Europeans are most concerned with security problems in Europe and environs. Management of the abandonment hazard therefore demands local and regional military capabilities, both to limit the risk of U.S. withdrawal, and to mitigate its consequences if it should materialize.

A. Alliance Politics and the “Security Dilemma”

The “alliance security dilemma” was comprehensively outlined by Glenn Snyder in 1984.95 Alliance politics, in all phases and strategic environments, essentially involves balancing a state’s policy between the dilemma’s opposing horns: cohesion with and support for allies, at the risk of compromising its own interests; and divergence from them, at the risk of isolation.96 For NATO, the dilemma expresses itself in terms of a

dichotomy between the European powers and the U.S. as hegemonic leader. If smaller states support the dominant ally, they may be “entrapped” in its blunders, or in pursuit of priorities they do not share; if they withhold support, or adopt alternative policies, the unipolar power may abandon them: deny them, then or later, to lesser or greater extent, its aid and support. The choices, and their results, tend to mirror the alternatives, measures to manage one horn of the dilemma tend to aggravate the other. Strong commitment, to dissuade an ally from abandonment, reduces a state’s influence, and increases its exposure to entrapment. Weakening commitment or withholding support may avert entrapment, but at the expense of increased abandonment risk.

Abandonment and entrapment presuppose differences, in substance or degree, between the interests of allied states. Thus a key variable in the alliance dilemma is the degree to which allies share interests potentially in jeopardy. Another factor is mutual dependence; a function of each ally’s strength and degree of conflict with an adversary. An alliance is “a continuous bargaining process,” and the party that least needs its allies’ support holds greatest leverage over them. Entrapment occurs when a state cooperates with an ally for the sake of an alliance it values more than the expected


101 Where two (or more) allies share interests with roughly equal intensity, they will tend to be in accord on policy, and the risks of abandonment and entrapment are minimized. Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 474. By contrast, where interests differ in substance or degree, the party less interested will face entrapment, and the other will worry about abandonment. Ibid., p 474.

102 Ibid., p. 474.

103 Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” pp. 113-114.
cost of cooperation; hence dependence on an ally magnifies entrapment risk.\textsuperscript{104} A less dependent state, meanwhile, will be readier to resist others’ preferences and to assert its own.\textsuperscript{105} Dependence obviously bears also on the potential costs of abandonment.\textsuperscript{106}

A more general factor driving the severity of entrapment and abandonment risks is the character of the interstate strategic system itself. In a “multipolar” environment, such as 1914 Europe, there are a several leading powers; none preeminent, each with interests more or less compatible or conflicting with those of potential allies and foes. Alliances are unstable, abandonment an omnipresent prospect, because mutual dependence coexists with multiple realignment options.\textsuperscript{107} After 1945, a “bipolar” system emerged: two opposing political-military blocs, each led by a predominant power, formed the poles of a stable strategic confrontation, whose ultimate prize was the freedom or domination of Europe. Entrenched antipathy, based largely on antithetical political and economic systems, severely restricted realignment options and hence the risk of abandonment.\textsuperscript{108} Since abandonment was so unlikely, a reluctant ally could avoid entrapment simply by disassociation from -- could even try to restrain -- another state’s policy, with little fear of the latter’s defection.\textsuperscript{109} Disagreements between the U.S. and European allies in the 1970s,\textsuperscript{110} for example, did not herald the collapse of NATO but

\textsuperscript{105} Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” p. 114.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 113. The potential cost of entrapment turns on the degree of congruence between two states’ policy preferences (and, presumably, the kind of action implied). Ibid., p. 113.
\textsuperscript{107} Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” pp. 466, 494. Alternatives aid escape from entrapment; but higher abandonment risk elicits tactics of commitment that increase entrapment hazards.
\textsuperscript{108} Kupchan, “NATO and the Persian Gulf,” p. 325. See also Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” p. 484 (superpowers’ own interests demanded defense of their allies; as for Western Europeans, the USSR was the main threat to their security, the U.S. their natural protector).
\textsuperscript{109} Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” pp. 484-485. Hence, for example, Western Europeans could withhold support for U.S. policy in the Yom Kippur War, or defect from U.S. policy against Soviet export pipeline construction in the 1980s, without fear the U.S. would leave NATO. Ibid., p. 485. See also Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” p. 120.
rather persisted within it, “precisely because the alliance cannot break up.” But this, Europeans suspect, is no longer the case.

B. **Alliance Security Dilemma in a Unipolar System**

The balance of dependence in an alliance, and the degree of policy divergence among allies, are variable over time, influenced for example by changes in the security environment or by perceptions of individual states. Transition from one systemic structure to another produces tectonic shifts in alliance dynamics. The end of the Cold War, and the emergence of a unipolar strategic environment, have had profound effects on NATO through changes in the pattern of mutual dependence among the Allies, and in the divergence of priorities, and even the devices, of policy. A key consequence has been an aggravated potential for abandonment of the European Allies by the preeminent U.S.

(1). **Diminished Systemic Pressure for Cohesion**

One crucial implication of the shift to a unipolar strategic system is that the U.S. has far less need to maintain formal alliances such as NATO. Western Europeans’ reliance on NATO is itself presumably less urgent than in the days when the Red Army’s legions faced westward a few hundred (or dozen) miles away, yet even for low-end problems such as the Balkans crises, they have leaned heavily on American capacity for decision and action. The U.S. need for NATO is, by contrast, far less exiguous.

Since World War II, the U.S. has received little affirmative assistance from European Allies (except the U.K.) in dealing with strategic problems outside Europe. Today it expects little of Europeans, beyond preservation of a general peace on the

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111 Ibid., p. 495 (emphasis original).
Continent.\(^{114}\) Loss of Europe to Soviet subversion or assault would have produced a dangerous shift in global power, but that sort of threat is no longer on the horizon.\(^{115}\) The lesser tasks lately taken up by NATO – Balkan stabilization, democratization of Eastern Europe -- have been intrinsically more important to Europeans, by reason of their proximity to the hazards involved; their disproportionate reliance on U.S. capabilities to address these regional problems undermines American fidelity to the Alliance.\(^{116}\)

NATO’s relatively lower importance to the U.S. is itself a reason for Europeans to apprehend a danger of abandonment;\(^{117}\) not, perhaps, in the form of actual denunciation of the North Atlantic Treaty, but more likely in diminished American attention and support for European interests on regional security problems.\(^{118}\)

(2). Strategic Divergence

Divergence of strategic interests is a prerequisite for both entrapment and abandonment. As Galia Press-Barnathan has explained, in the unipolar environment, not


only is alliance cohesion weaker than under Cold War bipolarity, but policy divergence is more pronounced.\textsuperscript{119} The perception of threats, and identification of problems requiring action, differ between the hegemonic leader and the smaller allies.\textsuperscript{120} Above all, the unipolar power has global strategic capabilities and concerns, while the weaker states are disposed to concentrate on nearby, “regional” problems.\textsuperscript{121} So predicts Kagan’s capabilities thesis: possessing the preeminent means for global action, the U.S. is inclined to undertake it; the Western Europeans, lacking the means to act globally, prefer to act (and so also to think) locally.

This was largely true during the Cold War, too. But Europe is no longer the cockpit of global confrontation, the chief focal point of U.S. strategic interest. Without the unifying Soviet threat,\textsuperscript{122} it has become a region of comparative “strategic calm.”\textsuperscript{123} Under these favorable circumstances, contrasts between U.S. cosmopolitanism and European parochialism are more pronounced, and more consequential for Alliance relations. Inevitably the U.S. will devote relatively more attention, effort and resources to its commitments elsewhere in the world, where peace has not conspicuously broken out; and relatively time and energy less to Europe.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{120} Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 275.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 276.
September 2001 only accelerated strategic divergence. The first major foreign attack on U.S. home territory in over 185 years was a watershed. The response (cast in even sharper relief by the torpor or, if you like, restraint of Clinton-era defense policy) brought into dramatic effect the American disposition for military activism and for unilateralism, with little deference to European sensibilities. Meanwhile the effect on European threat perception and policy was quite limited; the net result, a further widening of the transatlantic gap in strategic perceptions and priorities. European irresolution, exhibited during the Kosovo episode, had already become a spur to American unilateralism. In preparing for serious overseas operations, doubt about the military value offered by most European Allies (and the political motives plainly visible in their offer) strongly favored U.S. selectivity in the framing of a working coalition.


129 Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 299 (Europeans sought to use support offered though NATO to “restrain” U.S. in Afghanistan operations).

European Interests Defined by Proximity, and Nearsightedness

For the U.S., Europe is no longer the lodestar of strategic policy. In contrast, as one commentator put it, “Europe’s priority is Europe.”\textsuperscript{131} In a unipolar environment, with global public security largely outsourced to the hegemonic ally, the smaller powers regard security problems in their immediate neighborhood with far more interest, and devote far more attention and energy to them, than problems and threats “of a broader strategic, world-order nature,”\textsuperscript{132} about which they can do relatively little. European interest is fixed chiefly upon regional matters.\textsuperscript{133} The sharp difference in American and European policy on Islamist terrorism is but one example.\textsuperscript{134} Another illustration is the Western European bias for deployments within the European Continent and region -- in the Balkans, and more recently (on a smaller scale) in Lebanon -- rather than in arguably more important or volatile zones of conflict.

The widening transatlantic gap in strategic focus is compounded by the European emphasis on “soft power” and multilateralism. These preferences are largely the consequences not of superior wisdom but of inferior military capability; they are probably best suited in any case to the unique political conditions of contemporary Europe, and have limited application abroad.\textsuperscript{135} As one observer remarks, if American

\textsuperscript{131} Daalder, “Are the United States and Europe Heading for Divorce?” pp. 556, 558-559 (priority reflected above all in efforts toward consolidation and eastward expansion of the EU).
\textsuperscript{132} Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 276.
\textsuperscript{133} James, “The Transatlantic Defence R&D Gap,” p. 226.
\textsuperscript{134} The U.S. has sought to apply a preemptive “forward defense.” Major Western European states, facing threats from large, disaffected Muslim minorities, have emphasized domestic security measures against home-grown liabilities, rather than military action against international threats. de Nevers, “NATO’s International Security Role,” p. 63.
\textsuperscript{135} Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 278. See also Kagan, Of Paradise and Power, pp. 55-59. The European policy agenda gives preeminence to the felt need “to make the world a better place” (see Daalder, “Are the United States and Europe Heading for Divorce?” p. 560), through the role of “norm entrepreneur” on the global stage, to promote multilateralism, solidarity, pluralism, and transcendence of conflict through cooperation, democratic governance, and “reconciliation.” Alice Ackermann, “The Changing Transatlantic Relationship: A Socio-Cultural Approach,” International Politics 40, no. 1 (March
thinking assumes conflict inevitability, self-congratulation about Europe’s transcendence of power rests on “conflict myopia.”\textsuperscript{136}

C. \textbf{Management of Alliance Risks in Post-Cold War NATO}

Under conditions of unipolarity, then, the alliance dilemma is aggravated for the Western European Allies,\textsuperscript{137} especially through increased risk of abandonment by the U.S. The transatlantic divergence in strategic priorities -- intensified by a global U.S. campaign against Islamist terrorism, its sponsors, and other dangerous states -- would ineluctably dilute American attention to European security.\textsuperscript{138} Indeed it was no longer impossible that, in reaction to strategic fatigue or overstretch, the U.S. might disengage from Europe, retreating into “homeland sanctuarization” and hemispheric protection at the expense of overseas commitments.\textsuperscript{139}

Yet the European members continue to value the Alliance, as an organization expressly devoted to European security, and a means of mitigating strategic uncertainties linked with the shift to unipolarity.\textsuperscript{140} NATO still responds also to an older uncertainty, one obscured by integration’s rank efflorescence: the risk of conflict among the Western Europeans themselves (discussed in detail below). While external threats have receded and shrunk, NATO remains a hedge against risk, including emergence of new, or

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\textsuperscript{136} Lindley-French, “In the Shade of Locarno?” p. 802.
\textsuperscript{139} Heisbourg, “US-European Relations,” p. 121.
\textsuperscript{140} Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 308.
renewed, threats.\textsuperscript{141} Alliance with the powerful U.S. has also afforded Europeans opportunities to “pass the buck” on matters of concern, if not of vital importance.\textsuperscript{142}

Continuing interest in the maintenance of the Alliance requires Europeans to find means of managing both horns of the dilemma, one of which at least – abandonment – is aggravated by unipolarity. Press-Barnathan argues that to this end they have adopted two general strategies: for entrapment, they have sought to use NATO as a “pact of restraint” upon the U.S.; and to mitigate the threat of abandonment, they have pursued a “division of labor” with the U.S.\textsuperscript{143}

(1). \textit{“Pact of Restraint” Strategy}

An alliance serves not only to organize capabilities against threats, but also to manage relations among members. States concerned about domination by a powerful leader may attempt to use their alliance as a “pact of restraint,” a vehicle for influence through a bargaining process in which they threaten to withhold aid and support, or otherwise to penalize actions they disapprove.\textsuperscript{144} Bargaining position may be enhanced by coordination among the smaller powers,\textsuperscript{145} but the key is their strategic capability: bargaining power varies inversely with alliance dependence, directly with ability to withhold from the superpower something it needs.\textsuperscript{146}

In point of fact, Western Europeans have little real difficulty with entrapment, if this means the danger of being dragooned into unwilling support for the aims of a

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., pp. 278-279 (including, for example, an expansionist Russia, a resurgence of nationalism in Germany, or renewed violence in the Balkans).
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 279 (“Buck-passing refers to the attempt to get another state to bear the burden of deterring or . . . fighting an aggressor”). \textit{See also} Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut,” p. 108. The lead U.S. role in the Kosovo war reflects an outstanding instance of European buck-passing.
\textsuperscript{143} Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 282.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., pp. 283-284.
\textsuperscript{146} Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 284.
hegemonic ally. It is far from evident that European states move in lockstep with U.S. strategic policy – on military sales to China, on Iran’s nuclear program, on missile defense, on Turkish EU candidacy, on defense spending, or on military modernization. If the opposition of France and Germany did not deter U.S. action in Iraq, neither were they dragged involuntarily to war; nor were Spanish and Italian withdrawal penalized. By contrast, British support for U.S. policy was grounded in a congruent assessment of the Iraqi threat -- which by definition vitiates entrapment.

If dependence on the U.S. does not noticeably subject the European Allies to entrapment in policies they disapprove, this may be because their measures against the danger of abandonment are felt to be effectual.

(2). “Division of Labor” Strategy

Post-Cold War divergence of threat perception and strategic priorities is constituted, on the European side, by a preference for problems in and near Europe, while the U.S. is diverted by commitments and challenges elsewhere. The concomitant danger is that the hegemonic power will not devote the desired energy and resources to management of European regional problems. This points directly to the means to mitigate the danger of abandonment: “regional capabilities to deal with regional security threats,” which Press-Barnathan terms a “division of labor” strategy.149

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147 The Allies’ ability to restrain U.S. policy is to be distinguished from their ability to resist being entrapped into supporting it.
148 Ibid., p. 303.
Regional strategic capabilities respond to abandonment in two distinct ways. First, they may reduce its probabilistic risk -- the likelihood of its occurrence. If the U.S. values regionally capable European forces for its own purposes, it has a reason to maintain Alliance commitments;\(^\text{150}\) or, more to the point, if excessive military weakness within Europe might promote U.S. withdrawal, then preservation of defensive capability helps avert that result.

Second, if abandonment should occur, regional capabilities reduce its potential impact on Europeans. The danger pertains, above all, to those security problems that, by reason of proximity, and disproportionately regional consequences, are of more concern to Europeans than to the global superpower. Military forces able to handle these problems, in the hands of Europeans themselves, reduce their dependence on the U.S., and take much of the sting out of the prospect of abandonment.\(^\text{151}\)

(3). “Division of Labor” in Practice via ESDP

Press-Barnathan’s analysis emphasizes a collaborative approach to the division of labor, through institutional policy integration in the ESDP.\(^\text{152}\) As she demonstrates, a lead motive for creating a strategic policy mechanism under the EU aegis was to manage the potential cost of abandonment. The idea of a common EU foreign and security policy, anticipated in the early 1990s, gained impetus with the experience of the Balkan wars.\(^\text{153}\) European interests, far more than American, were implicated; yet the European

\(^{151}\) Ibid., p. 285.
\(^{152}\) Ibid., pp. 285, 304, 308.
\(^{153}\) Ibid., p. 291.
response was marked by “ineptitude.”

The political circumstances of U.S. intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo cast doubt on prospects for similar action in the future, feeding new concern over abandonment, and prompting new convergence among European powers in favor of independent EU capability. Hence the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty’s enhanced policy mechanisms, and the Helsinki Conference’s “headline goals” for military assets. Its framers intended ESDP to serve as a vehicle to assemble European coalitions of the willing, to back EU policies with military options where U.S. interests were not engaged. It was to be the institutional and collaborative embodiment of a division-of-labor strategy, reducing potential abandonment costs through autonomous capabilities to meet regional problems.

Yet ESDP remains underweight, in relation to Europe’s security requirements, and to the consequences of abandonment. Only very limited forces are at the EU’s disposal, and only for low-intensity operations: it can at present field, on short notice, only two “battlegroups” of 1500-2200 troops, for crisis management and similar duties. It undertakes no guarantee of members’ independence and territorial integrity, and it has no mechanism for organizing collective defense against major threats.


159 After the Treaty of Amsterdam, finalized in 1997, the EU “focused on ‘Petersberg missions’ rather than . . . collective defense and security guarantees.” Gärtner, “European Security After September 11,” pp. 62-63. The proposed Treaty of Lisbon provides that ESDP may “lead to a common defence, when the
More fundamentally, ESDP’s military capability is inherently potential and *ad hoc*. Potential, since all forces and equipment earmarked to it remain under authority of the contributing state, and may be withheld from any proposed operation.\(^{160}\) *Ad hoc*,\(^ {161}\) because it omits any formal, binding *ex ante* commitment to military cooperation.\(^ {162}\) Any action requires a process of interstate consultation and coordination, aimed not only at procuring unanimous consent, but also at assembling a “coalition of the willing” to contribute the requisite military means. Hence ESDP is “perennially contingent.”\(^ {163}\) The uncertainties of the political effort in any discrete case\(^ {164}\) imply a measure of policy risk for EU members interested in the problem at hand. Even if consensus can be achieved, the process would take time,\(^ {165}\) impeding the prompt response often indispensable to effective crisis management.\(^ {166}\)

The ESDP project is incomplete. It still exists primarily on paper,\(^ {167}\) and its future trajectory and velocity are uncertain.\(^ {168}\) As a shield against abandonment, it remains a

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\(^ {161}\) Ibid., p. 237.


\(^ {163}\) Menon, “Empowering Paradise?” p. 244.

\(^ {164}\) Press-Barnathan, “The Changing Incentives for Security Regionalization,” p. 290 (acknowledging transaction costs of organizing regional security cooperation, and noting that “bandwagoning” with hegemonic ally may be easier and less costly).

\(^ {165}\) Menon, “Empowering Paradise?” p. 237. Hence, presumably, the intended “rapid” reaction force was to be deployable within *60 days* of crisis onset; and a lot can happen on the ground in two months.


skeletal framework, with limited reach and impact. This is not to suggest that the effort is wasted, or insincere. Yet EU members pursue it while maintaining large and well-established territorial defense armies under their own sovereign control.

What is indispensable to a division-of-labor policy is not institutional integration, nor collaboration (necessary as it may be in a crisis), but “regional capabilities to deal with regional security threats.” If European military power has limited global impact, in its home region it is more significant. European national forces, indeed, constitute the leading countermeasure against strategic abandonment by the U.S.

(4). **Maintenance of Territorial Defense Forces as Division-of-Labor Strategy**

The motive elucidated by Press-Barnathan for pursuit of ESDP – as a means to limit the effects of a potential U.S. abandonment of NATO – is even more persuasive in explaining continuity in the individual states’ force structures. Maintenance of large militaries, under state control, primarily configured for territorial defense but also capable of response to local and regional challenges, represents the most substantial (if less acknowledged) means for the European Allies to deal with U.S. strategic neglect or retrenchment. This policy serves in one respect to control the likelihood of abandonment, in others to minimize its potential costs. It is wholly within state competency; it labors

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168 ESDP is subject to a range of political constraints: the reluctance of EU members to cede control over armed forces; public preference for non-military applications of state spending; hesitancy to “militarize” the EU; and a widespread disinclination to employ military power abroad. See, e.g., Alistair Shepherd, “Irrelevant or Indispensable?” pp. 83-84 (consolidation of EU external and internal security functions hindered by fear of militarization of EU, of retreat from “the values and ethos of the EU as a ‘civilian power’”); Cornish and Edwards, “The Strategic Culture of the European Union,” pp. 801-802 (concern that ESDP will forfeit the “moral high ground established by a reliance on civilian rather than military power”); Crowe, “A Common European Foreign Policy After Iraq?” p. 545 (for most EU members, foreign policy means little more than “their immediate security and relations with neighbours” and, beyond that, “doing good, mainly through the UN”).
under no unanimity (or even multilateralism) rule; it supports national sovereignty interests, and welfare-state priorities discussed below. Above all, it is functionally congruent with the proximity-driven security concerns of European states.

(a). European Land Armies Essential to Alliance Defense

The Allies’ substantial territorial defense forces help limit the probability of abandonment by the U.S. NATO’s guarantee of European security has always rested on two foundations: substantial European armies, to bear the brunt of initial resistance against attack; and tangible assurance of a timely, effective transatlantic reinforcement by the U.S. The latter would be difficult, even impossible, without the former: defeat in Europe would leave nothing to reinforce, and nowhere to reinforce it. Were NATO European military forces too far diminished, in size and defensive capability, the U.S. reinforcement role would be rendered futile. Anticipatory realization of this futility would likely spell the end of U.S. commitment to NATO -- an outcome avoided through preservation of European defense forces at some level of perceived adequacy.

Throughout the Cold War, NATO’s conventional forces in Europe, composed predominantly of European armies, must manage the initial response to any crisis, while preserving the threat of continued escalation. As the offshore maritime superpower, the U.S. provided Europe with “crucial strategic depth.” Its forces stationed in Europe would participate in the initial defense, but more importantly served to reassure friends,


and to warn the enemy, that any attack would set in motion the full weight of U.S. power, committed from the outset, if delayed in operational engagement.\footnote{See \textit{The Atlantic Alliance}, ed. Sen. Henry M. Jackson, p. 34.}

U.S. relief of an initial, mainly European, defense was and remains central to NATO strategy against any major threat to Western Europe.\footnote{Tonelson, “NATO Burden-Sharing: Promises, Promises,” p. 39. \textit{See, e.g.,} Kupchan, “NATO and the Persian Gulf,” pp. 320, 322, n. 18, 340, 333, 335, 338, and 339 (U.S. planning from late 1970s for Rapid Deployment Force, to defend Persian Gulf region against external attack, was in tension with imperatives of defense and deterrence in Europe, premised on rapid and massive U.S. reinforcement).}

Since the end of the Cold War, conventional threats have diminished and retreated; they have not disappeared.\footnote{Tertrais, “The Changing Nature of Military Alliances,” p. 145.}


The U.S. guarantee rests on its promise of transatlantic intervention in case of attack. Without significant European defensive power, however, this promise would be eviscerated. As one commentator has said of defense in Northern Europe: “If the Nordic countries want help from other countries including NATO members, they must be able to hold off the enemy at least long enough for that help to arrive.” This was and is true for all of NATO Europe. Its task at the outset of major conflict is to mobilize sufficient forces, including large reserve elements, to resist attack and to hold key territory until arrival of the relief. Should Europe fail in this, intervention by follow-on U.S. forces would be problematic at best. U.S. deployment would require a broad logistical bridgehead – ports, road and rail links, large-volume airfields. Effective counter-offensive by maneuver would require retention of large portions of the mainland north of the Alps. Without these, American intervention might be not just difficult, costly, and delayed; it might prove impossible or ultimately futile.

Excessive reduction of Western European defense capabilities would make this futility a real risk for the U.S.; no conceivable European policy would be more likely to

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177 As of 2005, more than 120,000 U.S. troops were stationed or deployed in Europe and the Mediterranean (to put this in perspective, total French active-duty forces then numbered 255,000). In 1984, U.S. forces in the European theater totaled approximately 337,000. See The Military Balance, 1984-1985 ed., and 2005-2006 ed. at pp. 31-35.


179 Hence, for example, German military planners’ continued reliance on conscription: “National and alliance defence are still core elements of the mission of the Bundeswehr. . . . Mobilisation and the build-up capability cannot be accomplished without universal conscription and reservists.” German Federal Ministry of Defence, “Conscription,” 25 October 2006. Online. http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/kxml/04_Sj9SPvkssv0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QizKL4k3cTcHSUGYxvqR6GJu5gixoNQ8fW99X4_83FT9AP2C3NClckdHRQCs3f1L/delta/base64xml/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS80SVVFLzZrR8zMyiFG?yw_contentURL=/C1256F1200608B1B/W268SF2G013INFOEN/content.jsp. Accessed on 21 September 2009. See also Meiers, “The Reform of the Bundeswehr,” pp. 11-12 (Scharping and Kirchbach Reports cite “build-up capability” for Alliance defense as necessitating conscription).
provoke U.S. abrogation of the mutual defense guarantee -- or at least a withdrawal of American forces, that would make intervention both more difficult and more optional.\textsuperscript{180} To avoid this, European NATO states must maintain armed forces at levels not obviously inadequate, in light of current and potential near-term conditions, for a serious initial defensive effort.\textsuperscript{181}

(b). Territorial Defense Forces for Local and Regional Security

European defense forces are essential, then, to limit the chance that abandonment will occur. Through the functions they would assume in the event of U.S. abandonment, the same forces also limit its potential costs. Abandonment cost mitigation requires a state to possess or assemble the means to provide for its own security requirements, without reliance on the possibly wayward ally. For European NATO states, the critical requirement is for “regional capabilities . . . to deal with regional security threats.”\textsuperscript{182}

Each has at hand an instrument of long-standing substance, under its exclusive authority,\textsuperscript{183} suited to local and regional action: its own sovereign military forces.

\textsuperscript{180} Demands for such a response would arise in two quarters. U.S. military planners would argue that the NATO commitment binds the U.S. to a major strategic effort, now deprived of sufficient prospects of success. Public opinion and its official representatives would object to the incongruity of an American promise to rescue a disarmed and apathetic Europe.


\textsuperscript{183} This is not to suggest that a European state would be likely to act alone either in self-defense or in response to some regional crisis; far more likely would be action by an \textit{ad hoc} coalition -- perhaps coordinated and guided under ESDP. The nearer a security problem to Europe, the more likely that several European states will have similar interests in it, and similar reasons for action (or inaction).
European armies in general still adhere to a territorial defense configuration. In the Bosnia and Kosovo peacekeeping missions, their effectiveness rested on geographical proximity; in effect, they are tethered to Europe and its immediate periphery.

As this implies, proximity magnifies capability. Europe’s sealift shortage is mitigated by territorial contiguity (except in parts of the periphery); regional air transport would require fewer aircraft than inter-continental operations, since distances and turnaround times are far shorter. Territorial defense force structures, emphasizing manpower, armor, and interceptor and strike aircraft, would support a broad spectrum of interventions within the European region, including combat operations against the full range of potential adversaries. Regional non-combat operations likewise suit the manpower-intensive European armies. Peacekeeping and crisis response demand boots

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184 Richard L. Russell, “NATO’s European Members – Partners or Dependents?” p. 34.
185 Schmidt, “Last Alliance Standing?” pp. 102-103.
186 Ibid., p. 103.
187 The opportunity to employ this combat capability in the Kosovo crisis – and the no doubt difficult political question whether to do so -- were avoided through a highly successful European effort to “pass the buck” to the U.S.; which opted for strategic bombing rather than a ground campaign.
on the ground more than firepower -- labor for emergency relief work, a large and visible armed presence for security.\textsuperscript{189} Such operations, moreover, may entail prolonged engagement, likewise placing a premium on troop strength for deployment rotations.\textsuperscript{190}

The national forces of Western Europe enjoy a crucial advantage over ESDP’s military arm, in that they exist: they are not \textit{ad hoc} and contingent, but have established institutional being, stand in clearly defined relation to civilian authority, are woven into the political and economic fabric of states, and retain considerable physical substance in peacetime. Nor are the national armies subject to ESDP’s limitations of scale and scope; the EU’s nominal 13 battlegroups would be brought to full complement by less than 2.5 percent of Western European NATO active-duty manpower. And the states hold sole command authority over their armies: with the exception of Germany, in case of need they can undertake military action without an intergovernmental political or coalition-building process. With or without EU consensus, the several states’ forces form the real basis for action, in coalition or otherwise, to address regional security problems.

Two qualifications are appropriate. First, European emphasis on territorial defense is not wholly exclusive. It is compatible with limited expeditionary capabilities, and occasional, limited multilateral actions beyond the European region; for example, the deployment of small contingents by several Continental states to Afghanistan and Iraq.\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., p. 511. \textit{See also} Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 296 (after end of combat operations in Kosovo, European states provided majority of peacekeeping forces there); Shepherd, “Irrelevant or Indispensable?” pp. 79-80; and The Economist, “Europe: Peaceful, Rebuilt But Still Divided; Bosnia Ten Years On,” 377 no. 8454 (26 November 2005): p. 46. Online. ProQuest Research Library.  
\textsuperscript{191} Through a physical presence within U.S.-led operations, these states secure a basis (albeit limited) for consultation on, and possibly influence over, U.S. policy at the operational and tactical levels. Press-Barnathan, “Managing the Hegemon,” p. 299-300.
Second, European capabilities even for territorial defense and regional security are limited. Yet even at low levels, they suffice for abandonment mitigation, under contemporary conditions – with NATO, and with the U.S. commitment still anchored by forces on the Continent. Were the U.S. to withdraw its forces or to abrogate the North Atlantic Treaty, a commensurate increase in European defense spending and regional military capabilities would be likely, if not inevitable.

To the extent capable of national self-defense, and of action to maintain stability in and about the Continent, European NATO states avoid a hazardous dependence on Americans for vindication of their most immediate and accepted strategic interests. By the same means, they protect themselves against the effects of strategic abandonment by the U.S. -- whether in abstention from specific action, or generalized inattention to European interests, or a wholesale transatlantic re-embarkation. Maintenance of Europe’s long-standing territorial defense armies thus serves a division-of-labor strategy.

Further, by reducing the potential impact of abandonment, these forces limit the threat of entrapment in U.S. policy. The more they can dispense with U.S. assistance in addressing their leading priorities, the more readily Europeans can refuse to conform to American preferences. The efficacy of this strategy is suggested by the exceptionally limited gravitational pull of U.S. policy on the Western European Allies.

In sum, NATO Europe maintains seemingly anachronistic force structures for the primary military purpose\(^{192}\) of limiting the prospective ill effects of strategic neglect or retrenchment by the U.S. Among other evidence for this is the widely recognized – though, in capability, far less substantial -- pursuit of ESDP to the same end. National

\(^{192}\) Another strong motive, addressed below, involves the persistent linkage between large manpower-intensive militaries and domestic socio-economic policy.
territorial defense armies remain the essential means to survive both the possible decline of NATO, and the possible deadlock or breakdown of ESDP.

(c). European Armies Essential to Stability in a Post-NATO Europe

In the event of radical strategic abandonment by the U.S. -- withdrawal from NATO, or withdrawal of American forces from Europe -- Western Europeans must defend against external aggression and manage regional security problems. They would also have to resume full responsibility, without external support, for the preservation of peace within Europe, among themselves.

(i). Internal Stabilization Role of the Alliance

NATO’s initial impetus, and most obvious Cold War function, was to organize members’ military capabilities for effective deterrence and defense against Soviet power (itself a sustaining influence for NATO cohesion). Yet even in the bipolar era this was not all. NATO also imposed peace among the European Allies and facilitated a reordering, without modern precedent, of the relations among them. The mutual defense commitment under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, and the American promise of intervention, were not limited to “external” threats. They applied implicitly also to aggression by any member against another. As the framework for “structural peace” in Europe, NATO essentially eliminated the risk of war among the Allies.

194 Article 5 provides, in pertinent part, that an “armed attack against” any Ally “shall be considered an attack against them all” and that in such case each “will assist the Party . . . so attacked by taking such measures as it deems necessary.” Article 5 of The North Atlantic Treaty, April 4, 1949; in The Atlantic Alliance: Jackson Subcommittee Hearings and Findings, Documents, p. 282.
Sheltered against the hazards that feed mutual distrust, the European states could pursue cooperative relations. As John Mearsheimer explained, NATO’s security guarantee mitigated relative-gains concerns among Allies (“who will gain more?”), thereby greatly expanding the potential range of interstate collaboration. NATO enabled members to abandon (at least suspend) strategic rivalry; cemented their renunciation of territorial grievances; and facilitated economic and political integration. It also solved the “German problem,” framing a secure position at the heart of the Continent for a state both intrinsically powerful and geographically vulnerable, without resumption of militarized nationalism. The Alliance’s combination of supports and constraints was essential to a German reunification that neighbors might otherwise have found threatening. And in Eastern Europe, keeping peace among neighbors (many with

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198 Cooper, “Integration and Disintegration,” p. 14 (“solving the security problem in Europe made the launch of the then-EEC possible”; the “preconditions” for integration included “certainty about borders,” and a framework for the “postwar defense system”).


This is the core of its contemporary significance. François Heisbourg wrote in 1992 that “Western Europe has to guard against the risk of a return to ‘la géopolitique de grand’papa’,” or old-style geopolitics -- a reversion to the national strategic policies, a resumption of the contest for national power, that marked most of Europe’s modern history.\footnote{Heisbourg, “The European-US Alliance,” p. 668.} The European states share a fundamental interest in averting such regression, through maintenance of multilateral defense arrangements.\footnote{Ibid., p. 668.} With ESDP in an uncertain infancy, NATO is \textit{the} basis for defense collaboration.\footnote{Hunter, “Europe’s Leverage,” p. 98. \textit{See also} Kaiser, “Reforming NATO,” p. 129 (commitment of the Allies’ armed forces to mutual defense under Article 5 “helps to maintain the status quo all over Europe and its periphery”).} As a system of reassurance and restraint through deterrence, NATO has prevented aggression among its members; as a system of support through mutual assured defense, it has obviated a potentially destabilizing renationalization of security.

In both respects, its efficacy is founded on U.S. participation. NATO formalizes, embodies and “cements” the U.S. commitment to Western Europe.\footnote{Hurrell and Menon, “International Relations, International Institutions, and the European State,” in Hayward and Menon, \textit{Governing Europe}, p. 403.} Western European acceptance of security dependence on the U.S. was essential to the postwar European
order, since the degree of cooperation achieved was possible only with the U.S. as “ultimate arbiter” in the alliance system. Only the assurance of intra-European peace and of each Ally’s independence and territorial integrity, through the promise of intervention against any aggressor, made by an offshore superpower stronger than any of them (or indeed any coalition of them), could suffice to overcome their previously endemic rivalry. Only under this strategic shelter could Western Europeans “pursue[] their new order, freed from the brutal laws and even the mentality of power politics.”

Yet beneath the public self-assurance of Europe’s liberal internationalism lies a dormant uncertainty. By themselves, Western Europeans have not been notably effective in producing collective goods such as mutual defense or political unity, even in the shadow of Soviet aggression. They have relied heavily on the U.S. as “the great organizer” (as well as the preeminent bearer of public security burdens). The uncertainty, then, is whether European integration and cooperation would have self-sustaining momentum in the absence of external support. If war in Western Europe is today “unthinkable,” this is because the U.S., through NATO, has made it so. The reluctance of European states to hand over to the EU any real authority over foreign and

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207 Ibid., p. 403.
209 The U.S., through NATO, “guaranteed that no EC state would [attack] another.” Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future,” p. 47. France “did not have to fear Germany as it rearmed, because the American presence . . . meant that the Germans were not free to attack anyone.” Ibid., p. 47. See also Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” p. 20 (continued U.S. strategic presence in Europe was “the key to the solution of the German problem,” by means of “a guarantee against any resurgence of German militarism”). It must not be supposed that the “problem” was (or is) exclusively “German.” The most open and direct examples of America’s pacification function, for example, took effect on the southeastern flank of NATO territory, where Greece and Turkey, “more than once . . . on the verge of war,” were restrained “not by their common membership in NATO, but by US pressure unilaterally applied.” Yost, “Transatlantic Relations and Peace in Europe,” p. 293 (citing Roderic Braithwaite, “Bringing Russia In,” Prospect [June 1997], p. 36).
210 Joffe, “Bismarck or Britain?” p. 110.
212 Joffe, “Bismarck or Britain?” p. 112.
213 Ibid., p. 112.
military policy suggests that political and economic integration remain the superstructure -- are not the foundation -- of a durable European peace. Whether the widely advertised European transcendence of power can stand on its own, without “insurance underwritten by the United States,” remains therefore an open question.214

(ii). U.S. Withdrawal and National Military Power

Were the U.S. to abandon NATO, this uncertainty would cease to be dormant; indeed it would become an exigent policy challenge. Together with the necessity of preparing for potential threats, it would tend to promote a remilitarization of national policy215 and a renationalization of military policy in Western Europe. In particular, withdrawal of the unipolar American power would remove the chief material barrier to resumption of strategic competition among the Western European Allies themselves.

As Germany achieved reunification, a position from which it might also attain Continental preeminence, France and Britain were in a gradual relative decline, and Italy adrift under leftist (and other) governments.216 It is significant that Europeans, especially French and Germans, are not fully confident in the “German problem’s” permanent resolution.217 Nor, without NATO, has Germany’s French-and-Russian problem been solved in any permanent sense. Under la géopolitique de grand ‘papa’, German power must suffice to protect it against a combination of hostile neighbors; that power would in turn be a worry to others, who must “combine against it, as they have . . . before.”218

214 Ibid., p. 110.
216 Joffe, “Bismarck or Britain?” p. 112. Italy has been described as “a big country that behaves like a small one.” Lindley-French, “In the Shade of Locarno?” p. 794.
No one would desire a reappearance in Europe of the multipolar strategic system of 1914. Yet -- obscured as it may be by integration, by NATO defense, and by the fashionable aspirations of liberal internationalism -- European security is nevertheless “founded upon a balance of power”\textsuperscript{219} stabilized by U.S. preeminence. It is instructive to observe, for example, the consistency with which French military strength has been held closely in line with that of Germany, despite an appreciably smaller population and GDP.\textsuperscript{220} So long as war between them is essentially impossible, this French policy presumably serves to maintain a balance with the Berlin Republic in the hard-power basis for political influence within Europe.

Thus, with the U.S. in position as anchor of European security. In case of American withdrawal, one would expect a general and more pronounced trend toward interest and investment in the devices of power. Even without resumption of nineteenth-century power politics -- even with a stronger EU, perhaps as successor to NATO in organizing a common defense -- armed forces under state control would assume greater significance, as Europeans assumed plenary responsibility for the stability of their Continent. Military capabilities would be vital resources in intra-European policy formation, in the forging of bargains on common security problems. And if, on the other hand, after withdrawal of the American \textit{deus ex machina}\textsuperscript{221} a cooperative environment should not prevail, tendencies to rearmament and renationalization would be still stronger; for state power would then face urgent demands.

\textsuperscript{219} Lindley-French, “In the Shade of Locarno?” pp. 804-805.

\textsuperscript{220} Since the early 1990s, French military spending has (until quite recently) exceeded Germany’s -- sustained by a national GDP \textit{three-quarters} the size. French forces have been kept within about ten percent of German active-duty strength -- despite France’s military professionalization, and a population about 75 percent of the post-reunification German level (and a small French nuclear arsenal, too). This cannot be fully explained by France’s African adventures, small-scale as they are; nor by the small garrisons on remote islands in the South Pacific.

\textsuperscript{221} Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” p. 16.
These possibilities lie in an uncertain future. Meanwhile, the territorial defense armies of Western Europe serve as a hedge for each state against instability in the wake of a U.S. withdrawal, and as a basis for the exercise of influence in the negotiation of each state’s position in a post-NATO Europe.
V. SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Faced with no proximate existential threat, enjoying general peace and order among themselves, the Western European states’ chief function – and their electorates’ leading demand – is the provision of social welfare and other public benefits, and the management of economic stability. This priority exerts its own influence on defense spending and force structure.

A. Primacy of Social Welfare, and Zero-Sum Game with Defense Spending

The priority for social welfare is deeply rooted in the postwar European order. To deal with social and political tensions accompanying reconstruction, industrialization and urbanization, and to manage challenges to the consolidation of political liberalism, the Western European states adopted deliberate (and widely supported) policies of redistribution and social spending.222 State provision of a wide array of benefits and services is entrenched in public preferences: Europeans expect income supports, restrictive labor policies, extensive unemployment insurance, free or subsidized health care and university education, media, and transportation services.223 Indeed, the term “welfare state” was coined to describe the predominant role of modern European government224 -- socio-economic and quality-of-life guarantees for constituents.225

Data on European public spending are illustrative. Among EU members in 2004, 70 percent of state expenditures went to public benefit programs such as education, health, housing, recreation and culture, and “social protection”\(^{226}\) – functions that (unlike road-building, law enforcement, and defense) involve neither public goods nor collective action problems, but are essentially redistributive. Among Western European NATO states, public spending (net of defense) in 2006 ranged between a low 37.2 and a high of 51 percent of GDP, with most values in the mid and upper 40’s.\(^{227}\)

In the near term, state spending is largely a zero-sum game between mutually exclusive priorities. Expenditure of public resources on defense means withholding them from other, more popular purposes. One implication of the dominant welfare priority is that, since the end of the Cold War, the Western European Allies have consistently fallen short of U.S. defense spending as a percentage of GDP.\(^{228}\) Only the U.K. and France have exceeded *two-thirds* the U.S. level in even part of this period; and almost across the board European defense spending has been in decline.

\(^{226}\) See Appendix B, p. 5.

\(^{227}\) See Appendix B, p. 5. U.S. non-defense public spending was at 30.6 percent of GDP.


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<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00-04</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Germany, the largest economy in Europe, is among the most parsimonious with its military. Further, “defense” expenditures as calculated by NATO for France, Italy (up to 2007) and Spain are overstated by inclusion of outlays for their large paramilitary police organizations (103,000 Gendarmerie; 107,000 Carabinieri; and 73,000 Guardia Civil). *See* *The Military Balance* 2009, p. 447.
The disfavored position of defense spending is reinforced by two other factors: the absence of a publicly appreciated strategic exigency; and the availability of public security goods provided and paid for by others. Under these conditions, asking voters to forego public benefits in favor of defense entails a task of persuasion beyond the reach of most politicians. Governments responsible to electorates predictably favor domestic priorities, and without a visible near-term threat, a significant shift toward military spending is politically improbable.

The zero-sum game, with the deck stacked against the military, has been a long-standing constraint on European power. In the 1980s the European Allies, faced with possible U.S. redeployment in case of a Persian Gulf contingency, recognized the need, and even promised, to build up their logistics capabilities and reserve forces. Subsequent “inability” to perform this undertaking is attributed to the non-negotiable welfare priority. More recently, refusal to increase military spending at the expense of welfare programs has impeded force modernization programs.

The preference for welfare, however, also influences the allocation of funds within defense budgets. Without imminent war-fighting needs, elements of military spending perceived to advance welfare priorities attain a favored position.

---


230 Chalmers, “The Atlantic Burden-Sharing Debate,” p. 577. See also Meiers, “The Reform of the Bundeswehr,” p. 19 (in Germany, “[t]he political reality . . . is that the defense budget has no constituency in the government and public” [emphasis added]).


232 Russell, “NATO’s European Members – Partners or Dependents?” p. 32.
B. European Socio-Economic Priorities Reflected in Military Spending and Force Structure

(1). European Military Spending is Biased Toward Personnel Expenditures

Welfare-state influence on defense budgets favors certain forms of spending, and thereby influences force structure itself. Specifically, it promotes a continued priority for manpower, or “consumption” spending, over “investment” in weapons, technology, and logistical assets.233

Cold War conventional defense required manpower, in the form of large conscript armies based almost entirely on home territory – a necessity that constrained the investment components of defense spending. The Continental Allies have maintained this pattern since the end of the Cold War,234 as shown by NATO data for members’ defense spending allocations, including the proportion for “personnel”235 (see Appendix B, p. 6). In 1990-1994, the U.S. averaged 39.3 percent, joining the U.K (42.2 percent) and Norway (40.6) at the low end. The Continental states (with no data for France236) applied substantially greater proportions of defense funds to manpower:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent:</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2008 NATO estimates show the U.S. percentage down to 29.9, with the U.K. (40.7 percent) and Norway (42.2 percent) next. Other European states significantly prefer personnel spending:

---

234 Despite “a new willingness . . . to carry out limited foreign deployments,” as of mid-2000 only small percentages of German, Italian and Spanish forces were stationed or deployed abroad; by contrast, the U.K. and France, with greater expeditionary capabilities and residual imperial interests, had deployment percentages of 17 and 12 percent (compared with 16 percent of U.S. forces). Ibid., p. 575.
236 Ibid., p. 8. In 1995-1999, French “personnel” expenditures were 58.2 percent of defense outlays.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Against the contrary U.S. trend, and with the reduced physical scale of European armies since the mid-1990s, the persistent tendency is striking.\(^{237}\)

This bias, together with the gap in spending as a share of GDP, has magnified the transatlantic capabilities divergence. Then-Defense Secretary William Cohen remarked in 2000 that European NATO states “spend roughly 60 per cent of what the United States does, and they get about 10 per cent of the capability.”\(^{238}\) Allowing something for hyperbole, and something for the metrics of “capability,” the point is beyond dispute that military power is not the sole object of European military spending. Force structures for territorial defense and regional action do serve the primarily local security priorities of NATO Europe. At the same time, these force structures are under strong influence from the political consensus favoring social welfare, an influence independent of strategic and security considerations.

\[(2). \text{ European Militaries as Providers of Employment and Public Benefits} \]

Threat management is not the sole “functional imperative” of armed forces; they can also serve significant domestic socio-political purposes.\(^{239}\) The symbolism of sovereignty is one. Otherwise, in Western Europe, non-strategic functions are limited.\(^{240}\)

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\(^{238}\) Tonelson, “NATO Burden-Sharing,” p. 52.

\(^{239}\) Edmunds, “What Are Armed Forces For?” p. 1073.

\(^{240}\) Western European forces’ “socio-political” roles do not involve state-building (these countries are mature and stable democracies), nor nation-building (where it exists, conscription is not universal, and armies are no longer “schools of the nation”); nor do they undertake significant routine part in domestic security or emergency response -- let alone act as praetorian supervisors of domestic politics. In contrast, armed forces in Eastern Europe and elsewhere may perform a wider range of socio-political functions.
with one exception: armed forces are a major “parallel or substitute provider of state goods,” including public employment and associated benefits.\(^{241}\)

(a) Military Employment -- Uniformed Personnel

A large military payroll affords both a supplement and an alternative to the private sector, and to civilian public-sector employment. Armed forces serve, in part, as employment programs – to keep participants occupied in a publicly accepted function, while providing them a stable income. European states hence often prefer to maintain active-duty personnel on the payroll, rather than to divert limited funds to modernization or acquisition programs.\(^{242}\)

Employment maintenance, if not necessarily inconsistent with military needs, is autonomous of them. Its significance as a policy motive is illustrated, moreover, by other personnel practices, common in Western Europe, that do compromise military requirements. For example, in some states, military pay is tied directly to the salary regime for civilian public-sector workers, with a deeply ingrained priority for “equity” between them.\(^{243}\) Since civilian state employees are typically under the authority of powerful unions, the equity principle limits the responsiveness of military payroll\(^{244}\) to functional considerations peculiar to the armed services, such as retention rates, training and expertise, and deployment experience; or, for that matter, physical capability.

Many members of the Western European armed forces are represented by labor associations that approximate trade unions.\(^{245}\) Even those not quasi-unionized generally

\(^{241}\) Edmunds, “What Are Armed Forces For?” p. 1074.

\(^{242}\) Williams, “From Conscripts to Volunteers,” p. 57.

\(^{243}\) Ibid., p. 52 (in Germany, for example, this “comparability” is so far accepted that military personnel “often call themselves ‘bureaucrats in uniform’”).

\(^{244}\) Ibid., p. 52.

\(^{245}\) Ibid., p. 49.
enjoy the same highly restrictive employment protections applicable to the private sector, with the result that many professional soldiers “expect to serve for a lifetime, whether or not the services need them.” Employee protections, together with generous military pension plans, have favored retention of older personnel, and impeded recruitment of the young. After force reductions in the mid-1990’s, for example, the Belgian Army was notable for forty-seven-year-old corporals and an average service duration of thirty-eight years -- neither especially favoring combat readiness.

As Williams remarks, “what sounds to a Western European like reasonable equity and career stability can sound to an American like a jobs program.” Indeed it does.

(b). Military Employment of Civilians

The employment function of the military is illustrated also by the significant contingents of non-combatant civilian staff maintained by most Western European armed forces. According to figures published in early 2008, the French Defense Ministry had approximately 79,000 civilian employees (for about 250,000 active-duty military personnel); Germany, about 117,000 (as of 2006, with active-duty forces then about 284,000); Italy, roughly 35,000 (for about 185,000); and Portugal, nearly 10,000 (for 43,000). A British Defence Ministry report of 2009 cites roughly 76,000 full-time employees for active-duty forces of about 250,000.

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246 Ibid., p. 49 (emphasis added). A related, if emerging, phenomenon is the assertion of a “right” to military service, demanding accommodation of homosexuality and even physical disability. Anthony Forster, Armed Forces and Society in Europe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 103 et seq.

247 Ibid., p. 45.

248 Ibid., p. 45.

249 Ibid., p. 57.

employees (exclusive of “locally engaged civilians” overseas).251

A problem encountered in German military reform efforts suggests the implications of heavy civilian employment.252 A proposal floated in 2000 would have closed roughly half of Germany’s military installations and bases, to save funds and improve military efficiency through facility consolidation.253 Expected effects on local civilian employment,254 however, provoked significant opposition.255 Citing “local economic and social factors,” the Defense Ministry scaled back the plan, ultimately to reach fewer than ten percent of its facilities.256 The anecdote is not cited to suggest that German policy is uniquely influenced by civilian employment interests: this is to be suspected in any state that both possesses a large complement of civilian defense employees, and largely refrains from the operational deployments that may necessitate reliance on civilians for domestic support functions.257

(c. Military Compensation -- Overlap with Public Benefits

Military pay and benefits substitute for a portion of generally available civilian welfare and unemployment programs that the state would otherwise provide. Indeed, the overlap between them is so substantial that (in contrast to the U.S.) military recruiting in

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252 In 2000 the Bundeswehr possessed a civilian staff numbering approximately 140,000 – for about 338,000 military personnel. Meiers, “The Reform of the Bundeswehr,” p. 3.

253 Ibid., p. 9 (citing effects in rural areas where Bundeswehr was a major employer). Another telling objection to the plan was that active-duty conscripts ought to be able to serve near their homes.


255 Longhurst, “Endeavors to Restructure the Bundeswehr,” p. 34.

256 It is advantageous for an expeditionary, war-fighting military to “outsource” as many of its service and support functions as possible to civilians, so as to maximize the number of troops available for combat duties. In such organizations, civilian service employees are force multipliers.
Europe is typically not advantaged by deteriorating economic conditions and higher unemployment.258 “Western European social safety nets [support] people who in the United States would see military service as an alternative to unemployment. . . .”259

Among other typical benefits are policies favoring military families, including subsidized housing, child care, and efforts to “reduce family separations.”260 Useful as incentives for recruiting and retention, they also tend to encourage early marriage and child-bearing. This may not always serve interests of military readiness,261 in terms of individual soldier deployability, availability for training, morale and unit cohesion.

By way of a final example, German conscription policy offers alternatives to military service, and thereby affords a significant side “benefit” for the state: a large body of conscientious objectors provides inexpensive (if also unskilled) labor in support of the social welfare system.262 Reluctance to forego this labor pool aided the successful opposition to Defence Ministry conscription reform proposals.263

C. Spending Priorities Favor Territorial Defense Force Structure

In the policies shaping contemporary European force structure and defense budgets, military effectiveness is not the sole consideration. Public expectations and the state’s commitment to social welfare priorities weigh heavily in the allocation of defense funds. Hence, among the military’s practical functions is to provide stable employment,

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258 Williams, “From Conscripts to Volunteers,” p. 49.
259 Ibid., p. 49. In much the same way, “where college is virtually free, U.S.-style college bonus programs hold little attraction.” Ibid., p. 49.
260 Ibid., p. 53.
261 Ibid., p. 53.
263 Ibid., p. 752.
salaries, and benefits that, in part, substitute for other welfare-state programs. This is evident in the marked preference among Western European militaries for expenditure on personnel and “consumption,” rather than on arms, equipment and power projection resources.

Meanwhile, the leading strategic concern for NATO’s European members is to prepare for potential abandonment by the U.S., whether in the form of abstention from particular security problems or a generalized withdrawal. Limiting the potential damage from such eventualities requires certain military capabilities: for territorial defense, to preserve state sovereignty; and for regional action to manage those problems that, by reason of proximity, implicate regional security. It does not require the means for global strategic action.

At the confluence of these imperatives lies the contemporary European force structure. It is a lineal descendant of its Cold War progenitor, albeit on a reduced scale; heavily weighted toward manpower, and to the facilities, weapons and capabilities of territorial defense; and, for the most part, incapable of action beyond the immediate environs of Europe.
VI. CONCLUSION

I have argued that three significant strands of policy inform the continued preference of the Western European NATO states for large territorial defense militaries. Of the two elements falling within the broad category of strategic policy, the first is the more general: that a state’s independence rests ultimately on its ability to use force in defense of its vital interests, or to contribute materially to common defense by a coalition. The relationship is of such long standing that military power has become a symbol of sovereignty. In a Europe at peace, the symbolism may seem more relevant than the substance. But the makers of policy -- to whom all possible futures are perforce uncertain -- are reluctant to relinquish the hard instruments of power that would be needed to vindicate territorial integrity and political independence against armed threat.

This first factor is generic, bearing (presumably) upon the policy of almost any state. By contrast, the alliance security dilemma pertains to members of a mutual defense alliance; it is particularly important for the European members of post-Cold War NATO. Strategic abandonment by the preeminent transatlantic Ally reentered the realm of possibility with the end of the Cold War, with the emergence of the U.S. as a unipolar power, and with the prevalence of peace in Europe. This danger demands measures both to diminish its likelihood and to control its prospective consequences. To avert a U.S. withdrawal premised on the futility of Alliance defense, the Western European Allies must possess adequate defense forces. In case the U.S. should withdraw or, more likely, decline to act on a regional problem, the Europeans must hold regional strategic capabilities. Finally, a full U.S. withdrawal would end the offshore great-power guarantee of European peace, and would test the resilience and momentum of European
integration by removing a crucial barrier to resumption of competitive politics in Europe. Whether in a self-sustaining and free-standing Union, or with its disintegration, European states would need military power -- ultimately, to preserve their own independence. The one policy that meets each of these demands is for states to maintain substantial military forces, armed and organized principally for territorial defense.

The third factor, exogenous to strategic policy, nonetheless strongly influences it: the primacy of welfare in the allocation of public resources. Spending on manpower-intensive territorial defense armies is congruent with the priorities, and complementary with the programs, of the social welfare system. Alternative forms of expenditure, especially on force modernization and power projection capabilities, are not.

These three positive policy influences contribute to the persistence in Western Europe of force structures remarkably consistent with the Cold War model – built chiefly for territorial defense, and substantially non-deployable.

There are also, however, what might be termed “negative” influences, in that they tend to impede movement toward an alternative strategic orientation and force structure. One is summed up in the exploitation thesis: that, with the unipolar superpower more or less consistently providing the global public security goods that Western Europeans find useful, there is little reason for them either to duplicate or to contribute to American efforts beyond Europe. Further, the loss of almost all significant overseas possessions dramatically reduced the state-specific “private” goods that, in a remote past, gave European states reasons for strategic action abroad.

A second constraint is indicated by Kagan’s “capabilities” thesis: that the gap in military power between Europe and the U.S. has occasioned development of genuinely
divergent ways of perceiving threats and of formulating responses to them. Europeans, in general, are less disposed to use power, more inclined to the processes of collaboration and integration that have so strikingly marked (recent) European history. Here, too, a major cause is to be found in history: the destruction wrought by World War II, and the weakened condition of Europe in its aftermath, from which American strategic dynamism took an early and still unchallenged lead.

These changes in turn took root in political culture -- in widely held, if often implicit, expectations conditioning the role and power of the state. Disproportionate U.S. capability and activity; Europe’s retreat from empire, and inability to undertake a major overseas role in the containment of Communist aggression; absorption in the broadening and deepening of European integration – all have contributed to strategic insularity as a habit of thought and a way of life. Europe has not embraced a successor to empire as a rationale for serious global engagement. Instead, much of its “modern history has been spent adjusting to the notion” that it need not be concerned with “quarrels [among] peoples of faraway countries about which Europeans know nothing. . . .”

## Appendix A: Forces Deployed or Stationed Abroad

*Global (excluding forces in W.E. NATO states) [troops abroad within W.E. NATO]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>% of A.D. Forces</th>
<th>% of Depl. Forces in Balkans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990 – 1991&lt;sup&gt;265&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>161,000 [308,000]</td>
<td>7.6 % [14.5%]</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>22,000 [67,200]</td>
<td>7.2 % [22%]</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>32,000 [55,400]</td>
<td>6.9 % [12%]</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ger</td>
<td>[naval detachment, Med.]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp</td>
<td>10,064</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>650 [5700]</td>
<td>0.63 [5.6%]</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel</td>
<td>0 [24,900]</td>
<td>0 [27.1%]</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 – 1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>150,000 [111,000]</td>
<td>9.7 [7.2]</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>25,000 [29,000]</td>
<td>10.4 [12.1]</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>39,000 [15,000]</td>
<td>9.5 [3.7]</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ger</td>
<td>5100</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sp     | 1700            | 0.83            | 82.4                         | W.E. total in Balkans: 57.1 % 37.8%
| Ne     | 3500 [3400]     | 4.7 [4.6]      | 99.1                         |
| Bel    | 1240 [2000]     | 2.6 [4.2]      | 36%                         |
| Den    |                 |                 | 76.5                         | Excl. UK: 49.2% |
| Nor    | 1650            | 5.5             | 53.8                         |
| Port   | 1250            | 2.3             | 72                           |
| 2002 – 2003 |            |                  |                              |
| US     | 148,000 [104,000] | 10.8 [7.6]     | 5.4%                         |
| UK     | 16,000 [17,700]  | 7.6 [8.4]      | 24.4                         |
| Fr     | 32,000 [3000]   | 11.7 [1.1]     | 23.1                         |
| Ger    | 8500            | 2.8             | 76.5                         |
| It     | 6500 [93]       | 2.8 [0.04]     | 89.2                         |
| Sp     | 3050            | 2.1             | 82.0                         | W.E. total in Balkans: 94.4% 41.0%
| Ne     | 4130 [2680]     | 8.2 [5.3]      | 76.3                         |
| Bel    | 1475 [2000]     | 3.7 [5.1]      | 84.5                         |
| Den    | 1210            | 5.7             | 74.8                         | Excl. UK: 49.2% |
| Nor    | 1165            | 4.4             | 94.4                         |
| Port   | 1425            | 3.3             | 45.0                         |

<sup>265</sup> Excludes deployments for Persian Gulf War, noted *infra.*
Global (excl. W.E. NATO)  
[troops stationed abroad within W.E. NATO]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>% of Active-Duty Forces</th>
<th>% of Depl. Forces in Balkans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2005 - 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>325,000</td>
<td>[103,500]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>[22,600]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>21,700</td>
<td>[2800]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ger</td>
<td>7200</td>
<td>[450]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>9055</td>
<td>[91]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>[2680]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>[2000]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den</td>
<td>1375</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor</td>
<td>368</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **2008** | | |
| US | 246,224 | [79,132] | 16.0 | [ 5.1 ] | 0.62% |
| UK | 19,594 | [22,870] | 12.2 | [ 14.3 ] | 0.88 |
| Fr | 24,852 | [2800] | 10.0 | [ 1.1 ] | 7.8 |
| Ger | 6354 | [509] | 2.6 | [ 0.21 ] | 37.6 |
| It | 7591 | [91] | 4.1 | [ 0.05 ] | 32.4 |
| Sp | 3025 | | 2.0 | | 33.9 |
| Ne | 2535 | [300] | 6.2 | [ 0.73 ] | 3.64 |
| Bel | 1269 | | 3.3 | | 15.0 |
| Den | 1133 | | 3.8 | | 28.3 |
| Nor | 544 | | 2.9 | | 7.04 |
| Port | 698 | | 1.6 | | 44.1 |

**UNIFIL – U.N. Peacekeeping Mission in Lebanon, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Deployed Troops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>2177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ger.</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It.</td>
<td>2420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp.</td>
<td>1139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel.</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port.</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Major Operational Deployments

**Persian Gulf War, 1990-1991**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Deployments by NATO Members</th>
<th>Percentage of Active-Duty Forces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>697,000</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>45,400</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>14,600</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>0.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>100</td>
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**Bosnia:**

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### KFOR, Kosovo

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\text{[US} \quad 18,000 \quad 31,700 \text{]}
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**Fatalities, Coalition Forces (NATO Members)**

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<tr>
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<td>naval det Med</td>
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<td>/ 177</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ne.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bel.</strong></td>
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<td>104 K / 148 K</td>
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<td>90,422 / 271,771 (I – 165.7 K; Af – 12 K)</td>
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<td>17.7 K / 16 K</td>
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<td>22,303 / 24,351 (I – 9500; A 6100)</td>
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<td>15 K / 39 K</td>
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<td>2.8 K / 21.7 K</td>
<td>2800 / 26,016 (Afgh. 1100)</td>
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<td>/ 8.5 K</td>
<td>450 / 7200</td>
<td>409 / 9071 (Afgh 2900)</td>
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<td><strong>It.</strong></td>
<td>/ 2.5K</td>
<td>93 / 6.5 K</td>
<td>91 / 9055</td>
<td>91 / 6592 (I 50; Af 1300)</td>
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<td>/ 1.7K</td>
<td>/ 3050</td>
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<td>/ 3400 (Afgh 625)</td>
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79
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<td>2680 / 2700</td>
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<td>/ 368</td>
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<td>/ 1425</td>
<td>/ 800</td>
<td>/ 823 (I 8; Af 166)</td>
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</table>
Appendix B: Defense Spending, Personnel Strength, and Power Projection Assets Compared

**Rows represent:**

1. defense spending as a percentage of gross national (domestic) product.
2. active-duty military personnel as a percentage of national population.
3. ratio of the two proportions.
4. total active duty forces (1000s).
5. airlift aircraft (transport and tankers, etc.).
   a. ratio of airlift assets to personnel (thousands).
6. sealift vessels (supply, logistical support, transport; excluding amphibious).
   a. ratio of sealift assets to personnel (thousands).

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| **74-75** |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |      |      |       |      |
| 4.9   | 3.1  | 2.9 | 2.9  | 1.9 | 3.3 | 2.0 | 1.9  | 3.3  | 4.7  | 6.2   |      |
| .631  | .966 | .789| .764 | .806| .844| .915| .733 | .873 | 2.36 | 1.02  |      |
| 7.76  | 3.21 | 3.68| 3.80 | 2.36| 3.91| 2.19| 2.59 | 3.78 | 1.99 | 6.08  |      |
| 354.6 | 502.5| 490| 421  | 284 | 113.9| 89.7| 37.1 | 34.9 | 217  | 2174  |      |
| a/l   | 144  | 195 | 56   | 93  | 20   | 12  | 32   | 10   | 12   | 65    | 2348 |
| s/l   | [ data inadequate for comparison ]|      |      |     |     |     |      |      |      |       |      |

| **79-80** |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |      |      |       |      |
| 4.7   | 3.3  | 3.4 | 2.4  | 1.8 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 2.4  | 3.2  | 2.8  | 5.0   |      |
| .577  | .947 | .804| .638 | .860| .814| .867| .674 | .954 | .615 | .917  |      |
| 8.15  | 3.48 | 4.23| 3.76 | 2.09| 4.05| 4.04| 3.56 | 3.35 | 4.55 | 5.45  |      |
| 322.9 | 509.3| 495| 365  | 321 | 114.8| 86.8| 34.7 | 39   | 60.5 | 2022  |      |
| a/l   | 87   | 197 | 97   | 33  | 89  | 12  | 25   | 11   | 14   | 27    | 1784 |
| s/l   | 3    | 2   | 19   | 2   | 2   | [?] | 2    | --   | 1    | 7     | c. 571 |

---

272 U.S. figures for manpower and spending, 1968-'69, reflect peak of Vietnam War; other NATO states were not then involved in significant military operations.

273 High spending-to-manpower ratio reflects early U.K. adoption of fully professionalized, hence smaller, forces (1962), while maintaining substantial Royal Navy and strategic nuclear capability. The most nearly comparable Continental power, France, had smaller Navy and retained conscription.

274 Figures in early editions The Military Balance do not adequately distinguish coastal and littoral support vessels from ocean-going ships, and therefore do not facilitate power projection comparisons.
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(1). defense spending as a percentage of gross national (domestic) product.
(2). active-duty military personnel as a percentage of national population.
(3). ratio of the two proportions.   (4). total active duty forces (1000s)
(5). airlift aircraft (transport and tankers, etc.).
  (a). ratio of airlift assets to personnel (thousands).
(6). sealift vessels (supply, logistical support, transport; excluding amphibious).
  (a). ratio of sealift assets to personnel (thousands).

**NOTES on DATA**

**PROXIES.** Power projection proxy assets: airlift (“a/l”: transport and tanker) aircraft, and sealift (“s/l”: logistical support, supply, cargo, transport) vessels. These are indispensable to intercontinental operations on any substantial scale. The ratio of these assets to manpower (1000s) indicates degree of the force’s expeditionary capability.
An alternative proxy to sealift might be amphibious ships and craft, capable of approach to and landing on beaches under fire. This is a specialized subset of seaborne operations, however, and as a proxy of deployability would tend to be narrow and under-inclusive.

Other proxy candidates would be less representative: aircraft carriers (predominantly U.S., needed for maritime control and defense functions as well as power projection); heavy bombers (solely U.S. since phasing-out of British strategic bomber force in early 1980s, but strongly associated with strategic nuclear role, as one element of nuclear deterrent triad); fighter and ground attack aircraft (latter, in particular, probably indispensable to power projection, but both also necessary for territorial defense); armored vehicles – cannot be moved without heavy sealift capacity, and central to territorial defense.

SPENDING RATIOS. A high ratio of defense expenditure to manpower can of course result from a very low level of personnel; thus, only states with both relatively high spending per GDP and a high spending / manpower ratio possess capital-intensive forces.

## Public Spending as Percentage of GDP, 2006

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* excluding defense spending.

As of 2004, among the 27 EU member states, 70 percent of public spending was devoted to what could broadly be termed welfare priorities: health care, education, recreation and culture, housing, and “social protection.” Another 27 percent was for “general public services,” “economic affairs,” law enforcement and public safety, and environmental protection; the remaining three percent went to defense.

Defense Spending, Percentage of GDP, Post-Cold War

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Spending on “Personnel” as Percentage of Total Defense Expenditures. Source: NATO\textsuperscript{275} (before 2004, period averages only.)

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\textsuperscript{275} NATO Press Release, “Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence,” 19 February 2009. NATO calculations allocate total defense expenditure to four categories: personnel, equipment, infrastructure, and “other.”
Note on NATO and Member Sovereignty

NATO “operates as a ‘loose’ or unintegrated structure in which sovereign allies maintain both policy independence and discretionary power over military expenditures.”\(^{276}\) In general, the “member states have not committed themselves to go along with any decision that they disagree with.”\(^{277}\) More specifically, [T]he allies decide the overwhelming portion of their defense spending independently. . . . For the 1970s, common funding was a little less than 1 percent of NATO’s total defense spending, so that over 99 percent . . . [was] at the discretion of the allies. . . . Although allies discuss defense strategies, weapon requirements, and defense planning, actual defense outlays are primarily decided at the country level, where domestic trade-offs and political influence affect the outcome. Even when agreements to increase defense spending are [made] – for example, the pledged 3 percent increase in real defense spending given at a 1978 Council meeting – there is no provision to enforce such agreements.\(^{278}\)

The Treaty’s organizational provisions do not incorporate any requirement of unanimity for action by its members, except with respect to the admission of new members.\(^{279}\) Consultation among members is prescribed; but there is no provision for “majority rule” binding on a minority, or any other means to compel assent by an unwilling member. Thus, members may agree on and undertake joint action without unanimous consent; but their decisions do not bind dissenters. Neither, however, does any member have a “veto” over policy or joint action.\(^{280}\)


\(^{277}\) Ibid. at p. 27.

\(^{278}\) Ibid., pp. 27-28.


\(^{280}\) *The Atlantic Alliance: Jackson Subcommittee Hearings and Findings*, p. 20.
Even in the event of an “armed attack against one or more” members – under Article 5, to be considered “an attack against them all” -- each state is required only to render such aid “as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force. . . .” Action is not formally obligatory under the terms of the Treaty. This “loose” alliance structure was deemed sufficient, since a Soviet assault on Western Europe, the chief military hazard against which NATO was formed, would present so obvious and immediate a threat to members generally that all could be expected to appreciate the need for (and to contribute to) a mutual defensive effort.

In sum, the NATO member states retain essentially all of their sovereign authority on defense matters, including decisions on spending, force structure, and military deployments.

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