

# **Friendly Force Dilemmas in Europe**

**Challenges Within and Among Intergovernmental  
Organizations and the Implications for the U.S. Army**

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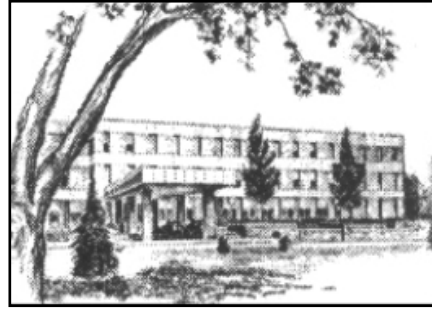
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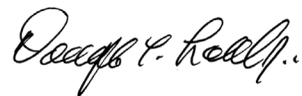
## FOREWORD

*Friendly Force Dilemmas in Europe* comes at an opportune time. Europe is in a period of significant transition, and the region faces its greatest security challenges since the end of the Cold War. The list of challenges is certainly sufficient to make national security practitioners on both sides of the Atlantic shudder—a revisionist Russia, terrorism, climate change, access to energy, demography and migration, weakening European identity and the rise of nationalism, and a changing information space. Within this precarious environment, the present monograph assesses the most important and most relevant shortcomings of security-related intergovernmental organizations in Europe. A range of potential solutions are offered to foster greater capability and drive a more coherent security response.

The security of the United States and Europe are interdependent. As the 2017 National Security Strategy reconfirms, a strong and free Europe remains of vital importance to the United States. Similarly, the 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasizes the critical role for the United States of its alliances and partners—one area where near-peer competitors like China and Russia are unable to compete. At the same time, and despite concerns over burden sharing, United States conventional and strategic forces continue to serve as the main guarantor of European security. To borrow from United States European Command’s tagline, we are truly “**Stronger Together.**”

I would be remiss if I did not draw attention to the unique composition of this integrated research team. As part of its core curriculum, the U.S. Army War College encourages broad perspectives, cross-cultural savviness, and constant challenge of any and all assumptions. In this spirit, the research team comprised academics, U.S. students, and international students and faculty from Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The end result is analysis that covers an array of transatlantic security perspectives.

*Friendly Force Dilemmas in Europe* answers a priority research topic for the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. In some cases, particular shortcomings may seem beyond the impact of the Army or the Department of Defense (DoD). However, both the Army—through the role the Chief of Staff of the Army plays on the Joint Chiefs of Staff—and DoD play critically influential roles in shaping U.S. strategy and policy through the interagency. Moreover, both the Army and DoD have an array of policy tools under their direct authority that could address challenges at the level of intergovernmental institutions. Finally, even for those issue areas where the Army and DoD cannot shape strategy or wield policy tools, having awareness of particular institutional hurdles and shortcomings is nonetheless useful and important.



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## SUMMARY

Over the last several years, European security has confronted major new challenges. Russia's land grab in Ukraine and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-inspired transnational terrorism are two of the most obvious, but climate change, destabilizing migration, insufficient energy resources, a weakened European identity, and manipulation of the information space greatly complicate an already threatening security environment.

Two of the most powerful, most successful intergovernmental security institutions – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) – have each taken steps to ameliorate insecurity in Europe. NATO's Readiness Action Plan and the EU's Action Plan for Military Mobility are just two examples of how the transatlantic community and the countries of Europe have sought to leverage their collective strength to achieve security gains for all.

Although these and other initiatives that were undertaken to date have been necessary, they have nonetheless proven insufficient in mitigating the aforementioned security challenges. This monograph identifies political divisions, a lack of shared threat perceptions, inadequate resourcing, insufficient capabilities and capacity, tedious decision-making procedures, insufficient interoperability, an incomplete operational picture, and inadequate maneuverability as the most problematic of the institutional shortcomings that collectively frustrate the ability of NATO and the EU to meet their security-related goals.

These institutional shortcomings are critically important to the United States, given how prominently Europe sits within the United States' vital national security interests. The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy is clear on how a strong and free Europe is vital to the United States, on how NATO in particular forms one of America's great advantages over its competitors, and on how a fractured NATO and a weakened EU only benefit U.S. adversaries.

Unfortunately, several of the institutional challenges identified in this monograph seem stubbornly persistent – for instance, disagreements over adequate resourcing of NATO are nearly as old as the alliance itself. Moreover, many of these problems might appear to sit beyond the influence of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) or the U.S. Army.

Nevertheless, this paper makes a number of recommendations in four broad areas where DoD and Army engagement can help to overcome the thorny problems identified in this monograph and thereby drive a more coherent security response from NATO and the EU. First, the monograph identifies needed improvements in NATO and wider European capability development, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. In particular, the monograph recommends that the United States refocus foreign military sales, reinforce EU defense consolidation, and build capacity in both the military sphere and in Europe's ability to respond to natural and man-made disaster relief operations.

Second, the monograph recognizes the key role that the Chief of Staff of the Army plays on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, encouraging Army leadership to use its influence to press for structural and policy changes within NATO. Specifically, this monograph recommends the Army and DoD use their influence in the interagency to address NATO's unwieldy decision-making process, foster greater commitment to the NATO Defense

Planning Process (NDPP), and promote the development of a division of labor strategy that would reduce duplication of effort between Europe and the United States.

Third, the monograph identifies critical improvements necessary in European infrastructure that would improve mobility and a rapid reinforcement in the event of a crisis in Europe. Here the United States should continue to pressure European countries toward implementing the initiatives already put forward in the NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP) and the extant Readiness Action Plan. Washington should also consider earmarking more European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) funding for infrastructure projects to improve redundancy and resilience in European transport networks, especially those that connect ports and airports with pre-positioned stocks.

Fourth, the monograph recommends that Washington consider a number of steps that would reduce risk, generate a more robust deterrence, and enable greater cohesion among its European partners. Additionally, the monograph suggests the United States should reframe the intelligence classification process to emphasize sharing among allies, station additional forces in Europe to strengthen deterrence, and prepare to unilaterally deploy forces forward in advance of any decisions made by the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

Throughout, what sets this monograph apart from other analyses produced for senior Army and DoD leadership is that it is largely based on the informed assessments, research, and analysis of America's allies and partners. The team that authored this monograph includes military officers from some of America's closest security and foreign policy partners – Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The officers that comprise the research team collectively offer a unique perspective on the topics examined in this monograph, a perspective from which senior DoD and Army leadership do not typically hear. Given the importance that the United States has long placed on leveraging its alliance and partner relationships to address the most pressing security challenges of the day, it is vital to consider and heed the perspectives of those allies and partners.

# FRIENDLY FORCE DILEMMAS

## INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, Europe has witnessed a variety of security crises across the spectrum of operations from Russia's conventional operations in Ukraine to hybrid war to Islamic State-directed plots and attacks to domestic "lone wolf" terrorism. In response to these challenges, the principal intergovernmental organizations charged with safeguarding European security—the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)—have implemented changes in strategy, operations, and posture. Despite this, there is evidence that these same organizations have struggled to assure member states, muster sufficient resources, and ameliorate the aforementioned security challenges. These shortcomings have tested the viability of previously held assumptions and raised questions about the role and efficacy of collective, intergovernmental instruments.

At the same time, the political environment may be shifting. The Trump administration has placed nearly singular emphasis on transatlantic burden-sharing and questioned NATO's relevance. In Europe, Brexit and recent elections in the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Italy have had major impacts on the EU's institutional strength and its military, diplomatic, and foreign assistance capabilities. All of this adds further complexity to the political environment facing members of the transatlantic community. On the other hand, these factors might be the trigger for increasing defense efforts of America's European allies as well as a deeper

European integration leading to more strategic independence.

With domestic politics and the security environment providing context at the state and system levels, intergovernmental institutions like NATO and the EU find themselves on shifting ground. Whether and how they respond to this is critically important to the United States, given its vital role in European security today, a role that is arguably no less important now than it was during the Cold War. For the U.S. Army, the effectiveness and efficiency with which intergovernmental organizations—especially NATO but also the EU—respond to the new environment matter a great deal.

This monograph will critically assess the most important and most relevant shortcomings of security-related intergovernmental organizations in Europe. What makes this approach unique from others that have sought to address similar issues of the last several years is that it is largely based on the informed assessments, research, and analysis of America's allies. The team that authored this monograph includes military officers from some of America's closest security and foreign policy partners—Austria, Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The officers from these countries offer experiences, backgrounds, and expertise that collectively provide a unique perspective on the topics examined in this monograph. For over a quarter century, U.S. national security strategies have emphasized how the United States prefers to address the major security challenges of the day in coalitions of willing

and capable partners, and more specifically that the United States prefers to do so with allies and partners from Europe and North America. For this reason, it is vital to consider and heed the perspectives of those allies and partners, if only to ensure Washington does not succumb to a kind of beltway myopia.

This monograph first outlines the most pressing salient aspects of the security environment confronting the transatlantic community. It will then examine the major shortcomings of security-related intergovernmental institutions in managing or eliminating the security challenges. The monograph will do so with the goal of identifying critical implications for the U.S. Army and Department of Defense (DoD), as well as identifying potential means by which the U.S. Army and DoD might support and assist U.S. allies and partners in overcoming the institutional shortcomings to strengthen collective defense and security.

In some cases, particular shortcomings of NATO and the EU may seem beyond the impact of the Army or DoD. However, both the Army—through the role the Chief of Staff of the Army plays on the Joint Chiefs of Staff—and DoD play critically influential roles in shaping U.S. strategy and policy through the interagency. Moreover, both the Army and DoD have an array of policy tools under their direct authority that could address challenges at the level of intergovernmental institutions. Finally, even for those issue areas where the Army and DoD cannot shape strategy or wield policy tools, having an awareness of particular institutional hurdles and shortcomings is nonetheless useful and important.

## THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

According to the NATO Communiqué released after the Warsaw Summit in 2016, the alliance faces today “an increasingly diverse, unpredictable, and demanding security environment,” that provokes instability.<sup>1</sup> This section will identify the most salient challenges facing the transatlantic community.

### The Challenge from Moscow

The most significant military threat in Europe is that posed by a resurgent Russia, as evidenced by an array of hostile military, economic, political, and covert actions directed against the West over the last decade, reaching a pinnacle with the 2014 invasion of Ukraine. Russia perceives NATO enlargement as a threat and engagement with the West as largely futile.<sup>2</sup> The result is open security competition with the prospect of war, either by design or by accident, increasing each year.<sup>3</sup>

Many Russians view the Soviet decision to end the Cold War struggle as altruistic and beneficial to both Russia and the West, a move that was not appreciated nor reciprocated by the West. The Kremlin had wanted Russia to be treated qualitatively different from other non-members of the NATO alliance in its relations.<sup>4</sup> It also demanded that its relationship should be one of strategic dialogue, with Russia on equal footing with the West.<sup>5</sup> However, the initial agreements between NATO and Russia fell far short of Russian expectations.<sup>6</sup> Even the formal agreements to institutionalize relations between NATO and Russia sought to limit the influence of

Russia while maintaining NATO's freedom of action. In these cases, the strategy was to provide symbolic equality with no substance.<sup>7</sup>

The invitation by NATO to seven applicant states, including the three former Soviet republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, as well as two Balkan countries and two central European states, greatly exacerbated tensions between NATO and Russia. For the first time in post-Soviet history, the society and the elite saw NATO as aggressive as it approached Russia's borders.<sup>8</sup>

From the Russian perspective, Moscow is countering and balancing against a more powerful, expansive, and aggressive West.<sup>9</sup> This interpretation of present-day international relations is part of a broader historical pattern, in which there is a "traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity," driving Russia to view other states as threatening without determining intent.<sup>10</sup> In many ways, this is the same phenomenon observed over 70 years ago by U.S. diplomat George Kennan in the Long Telegram.<sup>11</sup> As such, Russia and the West may be in an unavoidable security dilemma, one that will require a significant effort to reverse.

## **Terrorism**

In the past several years, a string of attacks has brought terrorism to the forefront of the European mindset. The attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris on January 7, 2015; the complex series of attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, that killed 130 people and wounded hundreds more; and the attacks in Brussels on March 22, 2016, that killed 33 people (including the 3 attackers) and wounded over 300

additional people have raised the awareness of the terrorist threat within Europe to new heights.

That this new awareness of the threat within Europe coincides with a massive refugee crisis has led to at least a cursory linkage between the two stressors on European stability in much of the public perception. There have in fact been some legitimate linkages between these two factors, with at least one of the attackers in the Paris November 13th attack traveling on a fake Syrian passport with the refugee flow into France, with Frontex (the border agency of the EU) identifying a number of individuals requesting refugee status based on false Syrian passports. Although the actual amount that refugee flows will contribute to the movement of terrorist elements is difficult to assess with precision, the conclusion that some radicalized elements will penetrate into Europe is a surety. Additionally, personnel who have fought in Syria or Iraq who return to Europe will continue to pose a terror threat.<sup>12</sup> Arguably, a significant proportion of the refugee population is unlikely to be radicalized, and many are well-educated professionals from Syria who fled after the Islamic State created an authoritarian proto-state. The results in the public perception though are colored by the few who are linked to terrorism.<sup>13</sup>

European states have identified a lack of assimilation of some in the Muslim communities found within Europe as a potential path toward radicalism. Countries in Europe have adopted different approaches to increase assimilation, with mixed success. Some have tried to force assimilation, while others have attempted a soft power approach to encourage assimilation.<sup>14</sup>

However, in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks, some European governments have turned from the more inclusive liberal approach to Muslim immigrants and have begun to adopt more hard power approaches to counterterrorism within their own territory. Following the Charlie Hebdo attack in 2015, France added nearly 2,700 personnel to its military and intelligence agencies, and later the parliament authorized wiretapping without a judge's ruling. France is not alone, with similar approaches taking place across Europe to counter the increased terrorist threat.<sup>15</sup>

### **Climate Change**

Terrorism and the Russian threat to European and transatlantic security are obvious and acute. However, there are other significant threats to European security that will also impact American interests, some in the short run, but many in the medium and long terms. Foremost among these from Europe's perspective is the threat of climate change. European governments, as well as U.S. agencies, agree that there is unambiguous scientific data to establish a long-term warming trend in global temperatures. Over the coming decades, climate change will become more noticeable as temperature and precipitation extremes become more common,<sup>16</sup> resulting in rising sea levels, increased risk of coastal flooding, increased droughts, heatwaves, and land degradation.<sup>17</sup> Decreasing ice coverage of the Arctic sea, increased accessibility, and the resulting opportunities for trade and resource exploitation of permafrost areas will lead to an increasing strategic importance of the region.<sup>18</sup>

Europe acknowledged the effects of climate change on international security in a report to the European Council nearly a decade ago.<sup>19</sup> Compared to global trends, the foreseeable effects of climate change on Europe itself remain limited, though Europe's Mediterranean region will face large increases in heat extremes resulting in droughts, forest fires, and loss of crop yields.

An increase in natural disasters will be the most direct effect on European security. European countries differ, but they generally maintain a wide array of capabilities to manage and mitigate natural disasters.

Although Europe may not feel significant direct effects of climate change, regions nearby most certainly will. For example, the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near and Middle East, as well as Central Asia, will all be affected by decreasing water sources and food scarcity. Rudimentary infrastructure, local conflicts, and weak governance will prevent effective redistribution of food and water. Given the proximity and relative stability of Europe, mass migration from each of these regions is likely, resulting in potentially destabilizing political, economic, and even diplomatic outcomes.

### **Access to Energy Trade**

With a projected population of about 9 billion people and an average rate of 3.4 percent growth of the global economy, current studies expect an increase of global energy demand of 30 percent until 2040. Most of this new demand will come from India and developing South-East Asian countries. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is projected to supply 90 percent of the growth in long-distance gas trade. Russia's

dependence on energy based revenues, an increasingly interconnected energy network in Europe as well as the rise of the United States as an exporter for oil and LNG will decrease the potential of Russia to use energy supply as a coercive tool.

However, other energy trade-related challenges will arise. For example, transportation of LNG deemphasizes the importance of pipelines in favor of large-scale LNG terminals and transport on the sea as well as inland waterways.<sup>20</sup> This, combined with the increased local availability of efficient renewable energy sources, will decrease the global importance of individual energy sources while increasing the importance of the maritime transport routes through the global commons.

A more highly interdependent European energy network comes at the price of increased vulnerability of the system to cyber threats. The 2015 attack on the Ukrainian power grid that resulted in a power outage for 80,000 customers was one of several incidents that have already proven the potential of catastrophic impacts on the energy security.<sup>21</sup> Threats can affect the generation, transmission, and distribution of energy, process technologies, confidential strategic energy infrastructure data, as well as energy market services.<sup>22</sup> Cyber risks concerning the energy sector have an especially high potential to cross into the physical domain, as disruptions will affect supply chains, individual households, and could cause additional environmental effects through attacks on oil and nuclear infrastructure.

### **Demographic Hurdles**

Although environmental trends may push more migrants toward Europe, domestic political and socio-economic

conditions are the most important “push”-factors.<sup>23</sup> More specifically, conflict is the strongest incentive for migration. International wars—including national wars fought with foreign military intervention—trigger more migration than civil wars without foreign involvement. Human rights violations cause fewer movements than physical conflict, and ethnic rebellions usually result in bigger internal refugee movements, whereas population movement remains low.<sup>24</sup>

Actual and expected wage differentials and differences in living standards are the most important economic incentives.<sup>25</sup> Analyzed in conjunction with the skill-level of migrants, employment opportunities in the destination country are triggers of deliberate migration.<sup>26</sup> These considerations largely explain EU internal migration from Central and Eastern Europe to the west and, to a lesser extent, from South to North-West European countries.

Migration causes second and third order effects on security. Examples include the perceived relationship between immigration and terrorism, fueling nationalistic populism with negative ramifications for collective security. A situation of mutual fear can accompany high levels of migration, which promotes a chain of self-protective actions and reactions between the native population and foreigners, ultimately leading to a threat to national security, and even conflict.<sup>27</sup> Uncontrolled immigration in 2015 had only moderate effects, but further migrant inflow could finally reach the important level of 10 percent foreigners among overall domestic populations, which research suggests is a critical threshold for increased tensions between migrants and the extant domestic population.<sup>28</sup>

Eastern European countries—which have been particularly hostile to migrant flows from outside of Europe—will see a considerable population decrease until 2050. In Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine, the total population decrease will likely exceed 15 percent.<sup>29</sup> A decrease of ethnic Latvians while ethnic-Russian population levels remain stagnant could lead to increased Russian influence based on a higher share in the overall population.<sup>30</sup> Finally, the population decrease through net emigration is nothing less than a threat to the viability of smaller states like Latvia or Lithuania.<sup>31</sup>

### **Weakened European Identity**

The history of Europe has been a continuous clash of identities. The continent has been subject to periodic and frequently violent migrations, as well as a seemingly permanent struggle for hegemony among the different European nations. The final outcome of such a history has been a plethora of national identities. All large European countries are the result of a union, by will or force, of different historical communities. In some cases, one of those communities maintained a situation of real or perceived political and economic privileges to the detriment of the rest. This was the situation of England in the United Kingdom, Castile in Spain, or the Walloon community in Belgium. Ethnicity and religion also play a role as instruments wielded by nationalist leaders to incite tension and conflict, especially in regions like the Balkans.

European collective identity, symbolized most obviously by the EU, rein-

forces the commonality of interests that modern Europe represents. This European common identity is hampered by a growing Euroscepticism and a return to previous national identities as a shelter against some of the more negative consequences of the 2008 economic crisis and increased immigration.

Eventually, the existence of a common European identity with associated common interests and threat perceptions may benefit transatlantic solidarity, simplify collective decision-making, and make building and sustaining interoperability easier. For now, though, the momentum toward a common European identity is still too weak to undergird a unified European security and defense policy and strategy effectively.

### **A Changing Information Space**

European societies are fully immersed in the information age, which presents both opportunities and vulnerabilities. European citizens have easy access to ideologically diverse press and media. The level of education suggests an intellectually sophisticated population, capable of using critical thinking to evaluate the information products they constantly receive. Theoretically, European citizens should not be especially vulnerable to disinformation, but actually, there are several indicators showing a different reality.

In 2014, 80 percent of European citizens used the internet every day and 30 percent had access through a broadband connection. This amount is less than other developed countries such as the United States (87 and 31 percent, respectively) or Japan (91 and 30 percent), but still much higher

than most developing countries like China (49 and 14 percent).<sup>32</sup>

Europeans also enjoy excellent access to print, online, and television journalism. For instance, half of the EU countries have access to more than 400 television channels, while the typical consumer has access to an average of 127 on-demand audiovisual media services.<sup>33</sup> In many European countries, television is considered a public service, and there are many state-broadcast television (TV) channels.

However, the tendency toward concentration and the creation of “global media empires” has been a decrease in the quality and reliability of the information received by the average European citizen. The main two foreign sources of disinformation and manipulation of information in Europe over the last decade have been the Russian Federation and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Russia’s original main tool for strategic communication was Russia Today (RT) TV channel, initially conceived as a vehicle for Russian promotion abroad.<sup>34</sup> Currently, RT includes seven different channels broadcasting in English, Arabic, and Spanish from Moscow, Washington, and London. From its initial goal of praising and promoting Russia in foreign countries, the channel has evolved toward a more aggressive tone, especially after the crisis in Ukraine in 2014, highlighting negative aspects of European societies, culture, and politics.

Just after the crisis in Ukraine, Moscow launched a new communication tool, Sputnik News, a complex network of sites that intends to broadcast in 30 languages. Russia also owns a diversity of websites and news agencies all around the world. It has even established partnerships with Western media outlets.

Probably the best-known Russian instrument for disinformation is the cyber networks apparently composed of thousands of automated accounts (bots) and human operators. This network contributes to the disinformation campaign launched from channels that are more conventional, and carries out operations that are more offensive like hacking e-mails, phones, stealing data, or blocking web pages and databases.<sup>35</sup>

Russian offensive cyber capabilities are well known since the crippling cyberattacks against Estonia in 2007 and Georgia in 2008. Currently, Moscow combines a more sophisticated mixture of complementary and mutually reinforcing cyber and disinformation campaigns. The main targets are the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and countries under the Soviet umbrella during the Cold War. The central message is to show how Western societies are aggressive, decadent, and on the verge of collapse, as the Soviet Union was in the 1980s.<sup>36</sup>

ISIL disinformation campaigns primarily target Muslim communities around the world, and the primary objective of its strategic communication campaigns is recruitment and support for its cause. Social networks are the main communication tool for ISIL, although they also use tools like web pages, magazines, declarations, and even printed publications that are more traditional.

The success of Russian and ISIL strategic communications in Europe is difficult to evaluate. Russia’s image in Europe has not improved and, even if the campaign has been more successful in Eastern Europe, the impact on governance and political decisions has been limited. It is more likely that Russian disinformation has achieved more success internally in Russia than

externally in Europe. However, even if the rise of radical parties and the deterioration of the EU's image are more the results of the economic crisis than Russian disinformation, Moscow also had some influence on it.

ISIL's information campaigns have obtained moderate success recruiting fighters in Europe and inspiring terrorist attacks. The number of attacks has been limited, even if some of them were quite costly in human lives. Public alarm after the attacks has been considerable, but still has not attracted a significant number of Muslim militants in Europe, nor provoked widespread violence against Muslim communities living in European countries.

European institutions are not well suited to combat information wars. In European democracies, the principles of freedom of opinion and expression make it difficult to react against messages that are often considered as covered by those rights. Additionally, the virulence and sophistication of some disinformation campaigns have been a surprise.

The EU External Action established the East Stratcomm Taskforce in 2015, specifically aimed to counter Russia disinformation and propaganda. NATO has two Centers of Excellence (CoE) working on doctrine and procedures against hostile cyber and information actions: the Cyberdefense CoE in Tallinn and the Strategic Communications CoE in Riga.

## **INSTITUTIONS TO THE RESCUE?**

The countries of Europe and North America have developed an array of institutional arrangements to cope with problems that are too large or too complex for any single country to handle alone. The

most important of these from a security perspective is NATO, largely because it links the United States and Canada with Europe. The EU has also come to play an increasingly important role in security, not least because its governing documents include a mutual assistance clause similar to the NATO treaty's Article 5.

These intergovernmental institutions help to ameliorate the security dilemma, lessen the security burden on individual countries, and facilitate more efficient and more effective collective action. NATO and the EU face challenges in adapting to the evolving security environment and dealing effectively and efficiently with the security threats outlined above. This section will examine in greater detail the most significant of these hurdles.

## **Political Divisions within the EU**

The EU has long had a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), but disagreements among member states limit its effectiveness to relatively small, short-lived, and low-intensity crisis management missions outside Europe. The CSDP currently suffers from a lack of commitment and a lack of resources, with its scope shifting increasingly toward border monitoring and training activities.

Although the EU's strategy recognizes NATO's relevance for collective defense, it nonetheless makes clear that the "EU needs to be strengthened as a security community" to enable the EU to act more autonomously when necessary.<sup>37</sup> This implies a division of labor that could realize Washington's current goals of maximum influence under minimum force presence. However, most EU military efforts have

been focused on international security beyond the EU's borders.

Among EU members, there has been a critical mass eager to press the accelerator on European security and defense. Other member states, while keen on security and defense in general, want to ensure the EU's approach to security and defense in no way challenges NATO's supremacy on collective defense, in order to avoid duplication of effort and the wasting of resources. Still, other EU member states, particularly those that are not members of NATO, are uneasy about excessive deference paid to NATO's prerogatives.

### **Lack of Shared Threat Perceptions**

A study of NATO's Communiqué from the 2016 Summit clearly indicates a common threat picture that is comprehensive and touches on all of the potential threats that NATO nations must confront or at least consider. However, NATO's process is consensus-driven, and all member nations have a part in drafting the communiqué. Ultimately, the text of the communiqué is written to the lowest common agreed upon language and contains every interest of importance across the range of member states.

A European state's geographic location is the primary—but not the only—driver of threat perception. The closer a state is situated to Moscow, the more prominently Russia figures into national threat perceptions. Latvia has some of the most forceful language of all the allies within its National Security Concept of 2015, stating, "the aggression in Ukraine fuelled by the Russian Federation has been an unprecedented attack on the basic principles of the international rights since the end of WWII."<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, Lithuania's National Security Strategy of 2017 clearly states, "the main threat for the security of the Republic of Lithuania is posed by aggressive actions of the Russian Federation violating the security architecture based on universal rules and principles of international law and peaceful co-existence."<sup>39</sup> Norway—who also shares a border with Russia—recognizes that Russia has increased its capabilities in the north in order to become more coordinated, flexible, and mobile.<sup>40</sup>

The threat perceptions of the more dominant European states vary more significantly in terms of focus. The 2016 White Paper on Germany's defense describes Russia as challenging the European order by use of force, rejecting a partnership with the West, and trying to establish itself as an alternate power. However, Germany's threat perception is equally balanced between extremist terrorism and the potential threat posed by Russia.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, in Italy's 2015 White Book for National Defense, the clear focus is on the instability in the south with the rise of terrorism and domestic political instability in the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>42</sup> This view is shared by officials in both France and Portugal.<sup>43</sup>

### **Inadequate Decision-Making Capability**

NATO enlargement has added complexity to the alliance's organizational and bureaucratic processes. Political decision-making remains state and consensus-based, which ultimately affects whether and how the alliance responds to crises.

NATO's decision-making culture has not evolved sufficiently to meet the demands of conventional deterrence in

the contemporary security environment. As Russia's Ukraine operation highlights, security challenges arise and evolve rapidly, and time is therefore of the essence. While NATO has taken measures to improve its ability to react in a time of crisis with high readiness joint forces, these elements require a unanimous vote of the North Atlantic Council (NAC). As it presently stands, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe's standing authorities over NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) extend only to staging and preparation.<sup>44</sup> While a culture of consensus is a strength for overall NATO cohesion, the time required to seek political consensus does not correlate well to a fast-moving security crisis.

### **Lack of Consistently Strong Resourcing**

Debates over the resourcing of collective defense are nearly as old as the alliance itself. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent drive by many European countries to secure a peace dividend led to a broad-based reduction in capabilities and capacity during the 1990s.<sup>45</sup> Since 2008, the global financial crisis, burgeoning levels of public debt, internal domestic fiscal challenges, recession, and slow growth have all led to further downward pressure on European budgets.<sup>46</sup> The inevitable result has been a general decline in defense spending across the alliance with only a handful of members meeting goals for overall spending and acquisition spending. Recently, some Americans have accused NATO of being a one-sided relationship where the United States absorbs much of the cost while their European allies derive all the benefits.<sup>47</sup>

The threat of a resurgent Russia appears—at least on the surface—to have galvanized many European nations into action with promises at the NATO Summit in 2014 to reverse the downward trend and meet spending commitments by 2024. It remains unclear though whether the largest, most capable allies—especially Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Italy—will find or continue to have the wherewithal to realize these goals and hence enable allied operations across Europe and beyond.

### **Limited Capacity**

While the drive to improve military mobility must be sustained, attention must now turn to the underlying issue of NATO mobilization and defense planning. If the ability to move is critical to conventional deterrence, it only follows that NATO must have sufficient numbers of troops to move and enough transportation assets to move them. Moreover, all alliance forces must be prepared to conduct operations once they arrive in the theater of operations. Anything less detracts from credible deterrence and risks strategic instability.

NATO's current posture relies too much upon the VJTF alone being able to achieve the desired effect of deterring Russian aggression and opportunism. Assuming the VJTF deploys, it is still only a brigade, albeit joint and well enabled. While a multi-national brigade is a useful tool to signal alliance resolve, it does not have the combat power to deter decisive Russian aggression nor can it deter across a wide frontage.<sup>48</sup> The focus, therefore, should turn to NATO's follow-on forces in order to reinforce the deterrent effect.

As presently envisioned, NATO's next tier of readiness forces—the Initial Follow-on Forces Group of the NATO Response Force (NRF)—largely comprises light forces that probably require 30-45 days to deploy.<sup>49</sup>

Recently, NATO members agreed to establish two NATO Commands in the U.S. and in Europe (Germany) to improve logistic support and strategic mobility in Europe. It has yet to be seen how effective these two commands in the NATO Force Structure will be at supporting movements from North America to Europe, as well as in Europe to the east and to the south.

### **Lack of Capabilities**

Securing sufficient funding for defense is only half of the problem. Money alone will not ensure capability development, interoperability, and integration. These problems have increased in complexity as NATO has expanded from 12 original members to 29.

There have been a number of attempts in the last few decades to overcome the capability gaps between the various NATO members, including the Defense Capabilities Initiative of 1999, the Prague Capabilities Commitment of 2002, the Smart Defence initiative of 2012, and the Framework Nations concept of 2014. None of these initiatives has been particularly successful in overcoming the significant national sovereignty and budgetary challenges, or in enabling European allies to keep pace with an American military that seems to be perpetually reinventing or transforming itself with advanced technology or new concepts. Some countries that are investing in new programs focus on capabilities to counter hybrid threats and

terrorism, at the expense of conventional capabilities.<sup>50</sup> With inertia and impasse plaguing the alliance, the deterrence posture has leaned toward training and military exercises rather than investing in major capability programs.

The EU recently breathed life into an initiative known as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). This initiative should more easily enable EU member states to jointly develop military capabilities, invest in shared projects, and enhance their respective armed forces. EU officials have identified 17 joint projects, but it remains to be seen whether they can overcome domestic political imperatives to protect defense manufacturing and the jobs that come with them.<sup>51</sup>

### **Insufficient Interoperability**

NATO's posture today places interoperability at center stage. During the Cold War, the alliance's defensive plans divided the inner-German border into nine NATO Corps operating areas, limiting the need for interoperability, except for minor coordination across corps boundaries. However, given NATO's new strategic depth, the downsizing of most member states' military forces, and the lack of a coherent defensive plan, the alliance requires a higher level of interoperability.

Interoperability requirements increasingly include civilian-military shared domains and resources. Examples include technical limitations of the Trans-European Transportation Network, required procedures, and standards for the future integration of remotely piloted aerial systems in the "Single European Sky" air traffic management, or—pending results of ongoing negotiations—mutual access

to encrypted global navigation satellite systems for increased performance and resilience.

### **Incomplete Operational Picture**

The divergence in threat perception that exists across the alliance can manifest itself in the inability of NATO to recognize gathering storm clouds. Volatility and unpredictability in the European theater place a newfound emphasis on continuous strategic awareness, enhanced indicator and warning capability, and the rapid sharing of intelligence between allies.

U.S. Army Europe has a supporting role to play in aiding the alliance to improve its speed of recognition, although U.S. rules and culture on information sharing remains a barrier.<sup>52</sup> Of greater concern for the United States regarding the speed of recognition is that its NATO allies do not agree on the nature or extent of the threat posed by Russia.<sup>53</sup>

### **Inadequate Maneuverability**

Managing one of the most densely inhabited regions on the globe with a correspondingly high volume of traffic, Europe's comprehensive transport policy seeks to establish a competitive, safe, secure, and sustainable transportation system. However, the strong policy-focus on civilian user groups does not necessarily reflect military requirements, thus preventing the military from taking full advantage of the existing transportation network.

The ability to move and deliver forces and effects to a crisis area is a key dimension of successful conventional deterrence.<sup>54</sup> Quick, accurate recognition of a

threat and subsequent timely decisions to act against that threat will matter little if forces cannot move quickly and easily across national boundaries.<sup>55</sup> To its credit, the European Commission recognizes these challenges and pledges to develop a military mobility action plan by March 2018.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, NATO's recent decision to create a support command focused on logistics and military movement is also a promising development.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, military capability and capacity gaps still exist among NATO and EU member states in terms of planning, executing, and monitoring military transports in and around the European theater.<sup>58</sup>

## **ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS**

These challenges represent a complex array of issues that the transatlantic community must address together in order to better position itself vis-à-vis Russia and other security challenges. From the perspective of the U.S. DoD or the U.S. Army, not all of these challenges may appear readily or easily solved. Nonetheless, there are a number of steps the U.S. Army and DoD can take to enable a more coherent response on the part of NATO and the EU to better promote Western interests.

### **Refocus Security Cooperation and Weapons Sales**

Security cooperation and foreign military sales can bolster the capability and capacity of in-place forces in Central and Eastern Europe. These measures should include both traditional conventional capabilities (such as anti-armor and air defense) as well as tailored capabilities to counter Russia's hybrid means that fall

below the threshold of armed conflict.<sup>59</sup> Security cooperation and capacity building are certainly critical in the Baltic States and Poland.

Additionally, U.S. Army units stationed in or on deployment to Europe can help build capacity within Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast, located in Szczecin, Poland. This headquarters needs assistance augmenting its knowledge and experience as its aperture expands beyond VJTF scenarios to more comprehensive and integrated collective defense contingencies across the breadth of NATO's east-ern front.

### **Strengthen EU and NATO Capacity for Disaster Relief**

In 1998, NATO created the small Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre within NATO's headquarters. Two years later the EU created its own center, which in 2013 grew into the Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC).<sup>60</sup> Besides the EU member states, 6 further European countries are part of the program, which is able to draw upon a voluntary pool of 90 capacities.<sup>61</sup>

In November 2017, the EU announced plans to invest an additional 280 million Euros to establish a dedicated reserve of operational capacities and to strengthen preparedness and prevention measures.<sup>62</sup> Unlike NATO's non-standing Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit, the EU aims to develop permanent, dedicated, high-readiness forces at its level to bolster national capabilities.

The EU's pool of civil and military capabilities encompasses a wider range of response options to natural- and

man-made disasters than NATO. Therefore, the EU is the actor of choice to develop further disaster relief capacities in a European framework. NATO's role will be to support efforts in Europe and its periphery with military means.

U.S. military forces in Europe can support EU and NATO capabilities by addressing specific shortfalls such as tactical and operational air-mobility. The United States can more effectively facilitate these kinds of support by creating a liaison capacity to the ERCC.

### **Streamline NATO Decision-Making**

The Defense Department should use its influence in the U.S. interagency to advocate for NATO to adopt different voting procedures for certain issues. Modifications the EU has made to its voting procedures may provide a useful model. When the EU Council votes on certain proposals of the Commission or the High Representative, it does so under a qualified majority voting, instead of seeking consensus.<sup>63</sup> This new voting model means that certain decisions now only require the approval of 55 percent of EU member states, which must represent at least 65 percent of the EU's total population. Qualified majority voting has helped the EU to overcome some gridlock and to move beyond proposals of limited ambition.<sup>64</sup>

It is important to note that qualified majority voting is not applied to all issues confronting the EU—for instance, decisions regarding the CSDP still require consensus. Nonetheless, the EU's modified voting procedures may provide a useful starting point for discussions among NATO allies on modifying consensus-based decision-making.

Critics might argue that if NATO moved away from consensus procedures, it would place the organization's interests above those of its members. However, changes in voting procedures are absolutely vital if the alliance hopes to retain any semblance of efficiency and effectiveness, and it could therefore implement initiatives that otherwise might be opposed by a single ally.

### **Encourage a Division of Labor between NATO and EU**

The DoD should push the U.S. inter-agency toward encouraging greater cooperation between NATO and the EU, especially in the form of a division-of-labor strategy that would benefit both sides of the Atlantic and avoid duplication of effort.<sup>65</sup> A properly coordinated division-of-labor could even solve the problem dual members currently have of having to contribute to both organizations in a zero-sum game.<sup>66</sup> The EU could assume the management of small-scale operations focused on the threats along its near borders. This would allow the EU to use its leverage as an economic institution with its neighbors. It would also enable NATO to focus its main effort on deterrence in the east. However, in the foreseeable future European allies will not be able to conduct major military operations like Operation Unified Protector or Operation Inherent Resolve without U.S. support. More effective coordination of EU and NATO is essential to successfully face the challenges in the south and the east.

A division of labor could also include theater-specific services and enablers that

either could be part of a calibrated U.S. force posture in Europe or exclusively provided by NATO Europe for all NATO forces. Certain areas such as drone operations in controlled airspace will require comparable standards. Finally, a smart combination of diverse resources, such as combining Navstar-Global Positioning System (GPS) and Galileo in a multi-global navigation satellite system, could increase performance and resiliency.

Of course, the major impediment to increased cooperation between the EU and NATO—including negotiation of a greater division of labor—is the Cyprus-Turkey issue.<sup>67</sup> Turkey leverages its membership in NATO—which does not include Cyprus—to prevent Cyprus from joining the alliance's Partnership for Peace, which subsequently prevents increased cooperation between NATO and the EU. Ankara does this as a means of reminding Europe that it must solve the challenge of a divided Cyprus. Until this issue is overcome, any more significant cooperation between NATO and the EU is unlikely.

### **Station Additional Forces in Eastern Europe**

Through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), U.S. forces in Europe will soon total four brigade combat teams, one of them airborne, with the equipment for an additional fifth team pre-positioned.<sup>68</sup> However, to ensure timely deployment, until the infrastructure is updated in Europe, the U.S. Army ought to shift more of its forward presence to Poland and the Baltic States.<sup>69</sup>

## **Develop Additional Infrastructure in Europe**

The EU currently has a military mobility initiative, but it may not necessarily deliver the infrastructure priorities desired by the United States. Moreover, most projects in that initiative, if approved and adequately resourced, are not likely to be completed before 2025.

As with the EU's infrastructure initiative, the U.S. Army should also be concerned with NATO's capacity to improve existing infrastructure and develop new capabilities through the NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP).<sup>70</sup> The United States has input into the NSIP at several levels, and ultimately no NATO infrastructure project is approved without U.S. agreement (and funding). The flipside, however, is that NSIP budget decisions also require the agreement of all 29 NATO allies. Just to implement NATO's extant 2014 Readiness Action Plan as well as new capability packages for air basing (air-to-air refueling and bulk fuel installations) is expected to cost NATO \$200 to \$300 million per year for the next several years.<sup>71</sup> NATO's limited resources and the need for a 360-degree approach to security for both practical and political reasons mean that Army priorities face stiff competition.

While the EU and NATO continue to shoulder some of the defense infrastructure burdens, the United States should do more on its own. Out of the \$4.8 billion allocated to EDI for 2018, only \$337.8 million is earmarked for infrastructure improvements like airfields.<sup>72</sup> EDI infrastructure spending should be expanded to address more of the most significant infrastructure priorities. Based on the threat and anticipated tasks, U.S. Army Europe

requires redundant and resilient transportation networks that connect airports and seaports and Army pre-positioned stock-2 locations (Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands) with Central and Eastern European states. Any short-term reduction in presence or exercise tempo caused by devoting more EDI funds to infrastructure is ultimately offset by the longer-term contribution to credible conventional deterrence.

## **Plan for Early Deployment**

As a hedge against a lag in NATO decision-making as well as the inability of European allies to share the same threat perceptions, the U.S. Army must prepare to deploy its assigned and rotational forces to vulnerable allied countries before NAC consensus.<sup>73</sup> However, it is important to note that this posture places a significant staff demand, not currently resourced on Army command structure in Europe. In addition to restoring more robust staffing of U.S. Army command structure in Europe, a full complement of high-quality multi-national liaison officers will help to facilitate bilateral deployments in advance of any delayed NATO decision-making.

## **Add Teeth to the Defense Planning Process**

For the NATO Defense Planning Process (NDPP) to be effective, it needs to evolve from identifying and promoting to identifying and assigning capabilities through a carefully selected set of incentives and disincentives.<sup>74</sup> The U.S. DoD should use its influence to develop and encourage the adoption of limited but impactful incentives for NATO member states to comply with the NDPP outcomes

as well as disincentives for member states to deviate from the NDPP. This will not be an easy task for it may imply that members lose a certain amount of national sovereignty in relation to defense issues. However, a more robust NDPP would help to ensure that the alliance has available the capabilities that it actually needs, not simply those developed for reasons of prestige, tradition, or inertia.

Incentives might include awarding general and flag officer billets in NATO command positions or awarding NATO summits to those countries that are achieving their targets. Disincentives might include naming and shaming of those allies that are not accepting or meeting their capability targets. The alliance does this to some degree already through annual release of defense spending figures, but those figures do not identify which countries are accepting and meeting their capability targets and which are not.

### **Reframe the Classification Process**

Much of the challenge in getting all allies to perceive threats similarly has to do with the inability to share intelligence adequately. Recent research shows that shared threat perceptions among elites and decision-makers are an important variable in explaining recent increases in NATO member state defense spending.<sup>75</sup> For this reason, the U.S. military should reframe the intelligence classification process by emphasizing first the sharing of information with allies. At present, there is little incentive to declassify information to the lowest level, and so U.S. military security classifications have limiting effects upon allies' ability to perceive threats and often to operate together. Reframing intelligence

classification as a process designed to promote and facilitate the sharing of information with allies will help NATO and the EU to overcome problems associated with recognizing when a crisis is unfolding.

### **Promote the Right PESCO**

To ensure that PESCO fulfills its objective of building European capabilities while also strengthening collective defense and deterrence in Europe and beyond, the United States should support projects such as the European Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft System, which could be integrated within the U.S. Global Hawk system. Moreover, the United States should promote the development of strategic enablers such as Special Forces, airlift, helicopters, naval assets, and others capabilities beneficial to future EU and NATO task forces.

### **CONCLUSION**

Europe is facing a number of complex, concurrent challenges. A resurgent Russia is attempting to counter-balance the perceived threat of an expanded NATO by conducting largely low-risk spoiling operations in the gray zone just below the threshold that might provoke an Article 5 response from NATO. Russia has ruthlessly exploited opportunities presented by the rapidly developing cyber and information spaces to undermine democratic elections, spread propaganda, intimidate its former allies, and threaten the vulnerable web of European national infrastructure. As NATO grapples with these challenges, the long-running tensions over burden sharing continue to create internal fissures in the trans-Atlantic relationship.

The threat posed by Islamic terrorist organizations, or “lone wolf” attacks by homegrown radicalized individuals, dominates the internal security agenda in many European countries. This threat has been exacerbated by the challenge of absorbing the mass migration of people from the Middle East and North Africa fleeing war, famine, and poverty. In its wake has followed a continuing political shift away from the center to more radical nationalist movements, and a concomitant weakening of European identity. It is a challenge that may only increase as the long-term effects of climate change—and the ongoing instability in Europe’s “near-abroad”—continues to drive large numbers of migrants toward the relative safety of Europe.

The European security institutions of NATO and the EU face a myriad of challenges that have plagued them since the end of the Cold War. The enlargement of NATO has led to problems with timely decision-making, and there is little consensus over the priority of the threats facing Europe. There is the ongoing dilemma over the EU’s role in European security and defense, and how it might affect the balance of resources and capabilities also assigned to NATO. There continues to be a lack of political will to resource defense despite a string of initiatives designed to improve interoperability, reduce the growing capability gap between the United States and its allies, and address some of the major capability shortfalls. Europe and the United States cannot avoid dealing with these fundamental problems for much longer.

Many of these seemingly interminable problems sit outside the influence of

the DoD or the U.S. Army. Nevertheless, this paper has identified a number of recommendations in four broad areas where DoD and U.S. Army engagement can help to build greater capability and drive a more coherent security response from NATO and the EU.

First, we have identified much-needed improvements in NATO and wider European capability development, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. The United States could refocus its efforts in terms of foreign military sales, lending rhetorical and other forms of support to PESCO, and strengthening capacity building in both the military sphere and in Europe’s ability to respond to natural and man-made disaster relief operations.

Second, there are opportunities for the DoD to use its influence to press for structural and policy changes within NATO. These efforts should focus on NATO’s unwieldy decision-making process; on developing initiatives to encourage NATO members to comply with the NDPP; and on encouraging a division of labor strategy that would reduce the duplication of effort from both within Europe and the United States.

Third, there are critical improvements needed in European infrastructure that would improve mobility and a rapid reinforcement in the event of a crisis in Europe. Here the United States should continue to pressure European countries toward implementing the initiatives already put forward in the NSIP and the extant Readiness Action Plan. Washington should also consider earmarking more of the enhanced EDI allocation for infrastructure projects to improve the redundancy and resilience in

the transport networks connecting airports and seaports of debarkation with pre-positioned stocks across Europe.

Finally, the United States should consider a number of internal changes that would reduce risk, generate a more robust deterrence, and enable greater cohesion among its European partners. There is considerable benefit in reframing the intelligence classification process to facilitate greater intelligence sharing and promote a better understanding of the threats facing NATO. At the same time, Washington should consider stationing additional forces in Europe until such a time as the

infrastructure could support a more rapid reinforcement from the continental United States, while also being prepared to unilaterally deploy forces forward early and in advance of any decisions made by the NAC.

Individually, none of these initiatives can address the myriad of complex difficulties facing the trans-Atlantic alliance. The powerful, cumulative effect of these developments taken forward over a broad front will bolster NATO and EU capability and help provide the credible deterrence necessary to face the increasing threats from Russia and elsewhere.

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