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FUTURE WAR PAPER

FUTURE COALITIONS AT RISK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Future Coalitions at Risk

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Thesis: Future potential gap between the U.S. and western European countries can still be mitigated and thereby enable future strong, coherent U.S.-led U.S.-western European coalitions.

Discussion: Over the last few years clear signs of tension and disagreement between United States and several western European coalition members have become more apparent. This situation could lead to a decline in U.S.-led coalitions alongside western European countries. The most important factors impacting on future transatlantic relationship are; increased Muslim immigration to Western Europe, developing difference in threat perception and a growing difference in U.S. and Western European culture.

The challenge with increased Muslim population will lead to change in the political landscape. The general Muslim attitude towards the U.S. and U.S. foreign policy should be countered by integrating the Muslim population into western European societies to influence them and preserve western European culture and values. The differences in threat perception must be taken seriously, and both the U.S. and the western European countries should acknowledge each others perception to promote further cooperation. Even if cultural and political bonds between western European countries and the U.S. have been weakened there is still an expectation in most of Western Europe of U.S. leadership. This should be strengthening by more U.S. engagement in soft security issues and acknowledgment of difference in culture and traditions concerning waging wars. In addition U.S. should leverage its military capacity to influence the western European countries via military education, technology and procurement.

Conclusion: If the challenges of future cooperation between U.S. and western European countries are taken seriously now, there is still a possibility to reverse the unfavorable development keeping a favorable transatlantic political climate favorable for future U.S.-led coalitions.

Future Coalitions at Risk

U.S. doctrine and National Defense Strategy (NDS) have identified coalitions as the strategic framework for winning the long war. Over the last few years clear signs of tension and disagreement between United States and several western European coalition members are becoming evident. Therefore, conditions for U.S.-led coalitions alongside western European countries are likely to further decrease the next 20-25 years to come.¹

Disintegration of the transatlantic link (the relationship between North America and Western Europe) is based on three main factors. First and most important is the increasing Muslim population in Western Europe. Western Europe has already absorbed 15-23 million Muslim immigrants, immigration is expected to continue and within the next 20-25 years they will represent a significant part of the entire western European population. The general Muslim attitude towards the United States and its foreign policy will, if not countered, evolve and become a significant challenge for the transatlantic political relations and the ability to form future U.S.-led coalitions.

Second, different threat perceptions have replaced the Cold War's unified Soviet threat that aligned the United States and the western Europeans needs and measures for security. Asymmetrical threats especially represented by Muslim terrorism represent a significant security challenge on both sides of the Atlantic. But, opposing threat perceptions are causing disagreements in common strategies and if this gap is allowed to evolve, future common transatlantic strategies and coalitions will be difficult to form.

A growing difference in the U.S. and western European cultures represent the third factor. The U.S. and Western Europe have traditionally been bonded together; early European

immigrants anchored the U.S. and western European population together through Christianity and English customs. Both political and cultural issues over the last thirty years have created a gap, which is still growing.

This paper will explore the factors and discuss possible solutions to counter such an unfavorable development. If these factors are taken seriously, the potential gap between the U.S. and western European countries can still be mitigated and thereby enable future strong, coherent U.S.-led U.S.-western European coalitions.

The nature of this problem is complex and broad, therefore solutions argued in the paper will be of a general art but when solutions relate to military issues the paper will go into some more details.

The increase of Muslim population.

Today 15 to 23 million Muslims are living in Western Europe, representing four to six percent of the entire population.² Based on the historic increase in both legal and illegal immigration and on a relative higher birthrate among the Muslims population the Muslim part of Western Europe will increase significantly. A moderate forecast predicts the Muslim population to approximate 11% in 2015 and 20 % in 2050.³ So by 2030 it can be anticipated that the Muslim population in western Europe could reach 15%.

Non-western immigrants, to include Muslims, are mostly uneducated and will often end up as unemployed and in isolated communities in the western European society. Muslim immigrants represent a variety of different groups where the majority does not easily align to western culture. In most cases these nonintegrated groups will identify themselves with their own culture and roots of their origin, and thereby rejecting impulses from their new homeland.⁴ Large

nonintegrated groups are vulnerable to extremist influence and recruitment to extremist and terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda.

If western European countries allow 15 percent of their population to develop into a segment of Muslim extremists they will create a dramatic impact on the political landscape with their generally negative view on the United States as well as on the general internal security situation in these countries. Such a development is not promising for future political climate and western European participation in U.S.-led coalitions.

The problem of integrating the increased Muslim population into western European values must therefore be given the highest priority by the European countries. If not, domestic Muslim anger may result in political decisions that will further increase the gap towards the U.S.

Counter insurgency theory argues that insurgents must be isolated from the population. Integration of Muslim immigrants should be viewed in a similar way; isolating them from extremists and unfavorable cultural influence.

The political leadership must demonstrate the courage to define what is acceptable within their national values.⁵ So far this has been a controversial topic. Few moderate and liberal politicians have been willing to define criteria for what their national values and culture shall demand from immigrants with a different cultural background.

Furthermore, clear and defined expectations must be given to the immigrants; on the other hand it must be acknowledged that Muslim immigrants need to maintain their identity as a legitimate part of their culture. This fact will increasingly affect western European countries. The challenge will therefore be to frame the society into a direction where western values will be dominant and preferred also by the Muslim population.

A successful integration is dependent on flexibility from both sides. Native western Europeans must accept some changes in society and also be willing to prioritize immigrants regarding education and employment. The governments must explain that discrimination and racisms are counterproductive if a long term conservation of Western European values shall be achieved. A precondition is therefore to break up the immigrant ghettos and absorb them into the ordinary western European societies. On the other hand, sanctions and legislation must be in place and used against those immigrants who do not comply with the preferred values.

The military can play an important role as a social engineering tool. Conscription has been used as a nation building measure in Europe since the French revolution. Conscription is deliberately used in Israel today in the process of aligning the immigrants to Israeli national values and society.⁶ It can be argued that in Israel the religion is common and that is why it works. The counter argument is that conscriptions build a common relationship between people despite religion and culture by letting young men (and women, if chosen) meet and struggle at equal terms for a year or more. During this time they form loyalty they will bring with them further in life. Conscription takes place in a time of their lives when most people are open to influence. Bringing the male population of the immigrants together with the native male population represents a possible bridge for half of the immigrants into the European culture. By realizing the males' dominant position in the Muslim culture the impact will affect and influence the female immigrants as well.

Conscription could represent new opportunities for the immigrant; opportunities seldom found elsewhere. In the military promotions and possibilities for commissions are given on equal terms. For immigrants usually standing outside the society they will realize that they are given equal opportunities.

Conscripts are soldiers, and soldiers going through hardship together form bonds and loyalty. This loyalty will be of importance in binding the immigrants to the European culture and giving them a feeling of common and shared values with the native European population. If the conscription force is used for recruitment of professional units, the best of the Muslim conscripts could thereby be recruited into units serving in coalition operations shoulder to shoulder with U.S. soldiers.⁷ The military do not only represent possibilities for future military career but through cooperation with civilian education institutions, the military can expose those young immigrants to civilian education opportunities. Those soldiers will then return to their society with a balanced view, a favorable view on their own military as well as on coalition partners to include the U.S. Some of them may continue their education and through education may counter the radical Muslim views. As role models they can build a bridge into the European culture for other Muslim immigrants, which otherwise would have been easy targets for disintegration and radical Islam agitation. Furthermore, those Muslims will likely be the ones with a prospect for political carriers. Both western European countries as well as the U.S. will be better served by those seated in future European Parliaments than radical Muslims with a world view formed by radical clerics and Al Jazeera.

The paradox is that conscription is about to disappear. Among the old NATO nations it is only Germany and Norway that still maintain conscription (only 15-45% of the male populations are drafted). From a military perspective it is viewed more cost effective to operate small professional forces of higher quality and readiness than conscript armies. Quality, however, is not a decisive argument. The Israeli conscript system, Norway's and Germany's use of soldiers with conscription background in their operations clearly demonstrate that adequate quality can be achieved with units based on conscription. The short term cost from having the entire male

population serving one year or more is high, but if it contributes to domestic stability and preservation of Western European values the cost should be considered a good investment.

In short, integration must be given the highest political priority to shape the growing Muslim population to a degree that it will not destroy the political climate between the U.S. and the western European countries. Political leaders must dare to set clear criteria for what they expect from the immigrants and most important, carry the heavy political burden of prioritizing immigrants before own native population concerning education, employment and housing outside immigrant ghettos. Conscription has throughout history been a very effective tool for nation building and should be re-established by those countries that have suspended it. Through conscription, if used with prudence, the western European societies will have a solid mechanism for promoting integration and preservation of their values as well as the possibilities for contribution in future U.S.-led coalitions.

Threat perception in Western Europe and the U.S.

The threat during the Cold War was imminently felt by both western European countries and the U.S. Old European enemies united under U.S. leadership in NATO because of the common threat. With the collapse of the Soviet Union this common threat vaporized. Western Europe was left with no immediate enemies, a situation breaking the pattern of a 650 year period of unrest and wars.⁸



Christopher Daase’s “threat triangle” illustrates a threat situation.⁹

During the Cold War this triangle was clear to western European NATO countries and to the U.S.; the *actor* was the Soviet Union, the communist ideology signaled a hostile *intention* and the Soviet military and nuclear weapons indicated the potential.¹⁰ Today this triangle can vary from state to state with different variants within the triangle, leaving the common threat perception vague and often inconsistent.¹¹ The threat perception will also vary between European states as it varies with the U.S. The end of the Cold War has therefore allowed the western European countries to be more critical and independent because they no longer feel dependent of the U.S. for their security. Muslim terrorism represents the new “common” threat but the Europeans problem perception does not match the American view and is therefore hard to cope with.¹²

Until western European countries experience the same shock that struck the Americans on September 11, 2001, their willingness to commit militarily forces to the Long War is likely lower than their commitment was to the existential Soviet threat during the Cold War. This is in contrast with the U.S. that is more eager and willing to counter terrorism by intervening with military means around the globe. Western European countries see terrorism more as a result of the social economic situation in the Islamic world. Americans to a larger degree perceive Muslim

terrorism as a direct attack on American values and their way of living. Americans therefore see war on terror more as a natural reaction than most western European countries do.¹³

Solving the problem of difference in threat perception demands pragmatism and acknowledgment of the fact that there are differences. President Georg W Bush's statement that "*...you are either with us or against us...*" and that the Iraqi invasion did not gain any alignment of threat perception, created unfavorable reactions within the western European population, driving them over to a more anti-American attitude.¹⁴

U.S. foreign policy should take into account that relatively small western European states with mostly regional focus and interests see threat's from different angles than a super power as the U.S. with its global focus and interests. President Obama seems to be in a process of realizing this fact. One example is his decision to postpone the establishment of the planned Central European Ballistic Missile Defense System, a system most European leaders were reluctant to due to fear of raising tension with Russia.¹⁵ This compromise did probably hurt the U.S. because of the U.S. threat perception. But if the decision is measured against the risk of damaged transatlantic political climate and possibilities for future western European contribution to U.S.-led coalitions, it was probably a wise decision.

On the other hand, western European countries must realize that U.S. as a global super power has additional needs and interests. The fact that U.S. is still by far the largest contributor to NATO means that western European countries still benefit from U.S. security. Thus western European countries must acknowledge the importance of U.S. contributions, and when needed, they should compromise some of their own interests to support their most powerful ally. Cooperation based on imbalance in compromises will not last; this must be taken seriously on both sides of the Atlantic to maintain a climate for future U.S.-led coalitions.

Western European countries, U.S. and NATO are fully occupied with handling the Afghanistan problem; still strategy for countering future security threats should be given priority on the transatlantic agenda. NATO is the natural forum for this agenda. A well worked and agreed strategy for future challenges will mitigate friction when challenges arise. Areas not agreed upon should be taken further to separate bilateral arenas so the framework for possible future coalitions could be laid out before crisis occurs. If so, difference in threat perception would be clarified early to avoid showstoppers when the need for actions occur.

In summary, after the Cold War, the U.S. and western European countries perceived the new threats differently as well as how to handle them. To reconcile threat perception and to avoid a transatlantic deadlock, it is essential that both the U.S. and western European countries acknowledge their differences. Only then can a climate of mutual trust and possibilities for future U.S. led coalitions be maintained.

Change in transatlantic cultural and political relations

European culture was the dominant influence on early American society through Christianity and English customs, anchoring the American culture to Europe. With the increases in Latino population in the U.S. the Catholic part of Christianity has grown significantly and changed the traditional religious pattern. In contrast the importance of religion in western European countries seems to decrease. In 2005, 61 percent of the French and 39 percent of Germans and British thought Americans were too religious.¹⁶ The paradox is that the only religion that currently gains influence in western Europe countries is Islam, which in many areas exhibits anti-American attitude. Nevertheless, Christianity still remains a common bond and if not overplayed, it will also in the future be of value for maintaining the transatlantic link, especially conflicts that from a western perspective is related to values or religion.

The cultural link and the impression of the greatness of the United States and the U.S. military in most west European countries were strengthened during World War II. The Marshall Plan helped to rebuild Western Europe and had a massive strategic effect, promoting American values and culture in contrast to the Soviet Union.

Over time disputes over political issues seem to be the issue with most negative impact on the transatlantic cultural link. Cases that contradict the relatively liberal western European population's political views have the most impact. Cases like the Vietnam War, the U.S. support of right wing regimes in South America, President Reagan's military race and missile build up in the 1980s and the U.S. rejection of the Kyoto Treaty did all represent a contradiction to a large part of European opinion.¹⁷ But all these cases seem moderate in contrast to the reaction to the Iraq invasion with the additional cases of Abu Griaab and Guantanamo.¹⁸

There could be some signs of positive potential changes in the current development of the transatlantic relation. Even among liberal European leaders in stark opposition to U.S. foreign policy it can still be found acknowledgment of the U.S. as the morale leader of the world. An indication of this could be seen when the Nobel Peace prize was awarded to President Obama in 2009. It was applauded by most liberal European politicians. Knowing that conservative European politicians traditionally are more supportive to the U.S. it clearly indicates the potential for a further change of western European attitude toward the U.S. Much will depend on how U.S. foreign policy develops and how President Obama cooperates with his western European counterparts.

A larger American participation and responsibility in soft security issues, for example climate control and other environmental and humanitarian challenges, could help enhance the European sympathy and reduce the current differences. So far President Obama has been more

successful than his predecessor and he has also been able to gain some more positive perception of the U.S. among the western European population.¹⁹

The development in Afghanistan will have important impact on further coalitions and the transatlantic political climate. Western European countries are deeply involved via their NATO commitment and most of them are facing decreasing popular support for this commitment. In such an environment it seems very important that U.S. strategic decisions are well balanced with their western European coalition partners. Western European countries have different culture in use of military forces abroad and some are very sensitive when it comes to employment of their forces.²⁰ If their situations are not acknowledged and they are pressured to hard, their governments are risking serious domestic challenges. New governments will then most likely be reluctant to future commitments to U.S.-led coalitions. But if the western European views are included motivation for future coalitions could be preserved. For the U.S. such compromises and the balancing of strategic choices could have a prize in the short run. But if acceptance of some compromises could result in future possibility of support from western European countries and even NATO as a whole, the U.S. should consider the short term consequences worth it.

The U.S. influence in the military sphere is still great because of the leading position of the U.S. military. From a U.S. perspective, this should be viewed as an opportunity to influence western European military institutions by intensifying exchange programs and participating in exercises in Europe. A solid exchange program with possibility for future top level officers to attend U.S. advanced military education will secure the U.S. an indirect impact into important strategic European security decisions. On the other hand, it will also give the U.S. military increased understanding of western European viewpoints'. For the U.S., with its global focus this is a matter of priorities and resources. But if future relationship with western European countries

is of highest priority, there should be more Western European officers on exchange in U.S. than Eastern European and third world officers.

The U.S. superiority in military technology should also be used to attract Western European customers and strengthen military commercial cooperation. For the U.S., this will probably mean that they will have to compromise on price and on their disclosure policy. Access to the newest technology will increase western European military capacity and interoperability with the U.S., making technical and tactical cooperation in future coalitions more relevant as well as strengthen the transatlantic military link.

In short, Western European leaders acknowledge the U.S. as the leading global power and welcome the U.S. to take lead. If the U.S. further involves into the soft security issues, this could have a very positive impact on the transatlantic relationship. The U.S. acknowledgment of the different cultural tradition is important to develop a coherent strategy for Afghanistan. If not, this may have a negative impact on western European countries future commitments to U.S.-led coalitions. The U.S. has a great potential and should use its leverage in military matters to influence top level military leaders in western European countries as well as tightening the bounds to western European further by selling unique military equipment to them.

Conclusion

The relationship between western European countries and U.S. has weakened during the last years and if not taken seriously it will further decline, making future U.S.-led coalitions alongside western European countries more difficult.

There are three main factors causing this problem. First, increased Muslim population in Western Europe and their anti-American viewpoints. This issue must be countered by integration of the Muslim population into the western European societies to preserve western European

culture and values. The Military can play an important role as an integration and nation building tool with re-establishment of conscription.

Second, the differences of threat perception must be taken seriously, and both the United States and the western European countries must acknowledge each others perception. Their contributions and methods will be formed by their fundamental perception of the problem and this is a crucial point to understand to avoid political friction and future problems in forming new coalitions.

Third, the once tight cultural and political bonds between western European countries have been weakened mainly because of disagreement over political issues and if not mended it will give severe problems in forming new U.S.-led coalitions in the future. There is still an expectation in most of Western Europe of U.S. leadership. To strengthen this and close some of the evolving gaps of disagreement and friction, the U.S. should to a larger degree engage in soft security issues. The U.S. should also acknowledge the difference in western European countries culture and traditions concerning waging wars. On the other side western European countries must acknowledge and to a larger degree tolerate the different interests the U.S. has as a superpower and global player. Furthermore, the U.S. should to a greater extent listen to and make western European countries part of the decision making process related to Afghanistan. The U.S. should also leverage its military power to influence top level military leaders in western European countries as well as tightening the bonds to the western European countries by selling unique military equipment to them.

This paper has argued that if the challenges of future cooperation between U.S. and western European countries are taken seriously there is still a possibility to reverse the

unfavorable development keeping a favorable transatlantic political climate favorable for future U.S.-led U.S.-western European coalitions.

¹ Countries meant by western European countries are the “old” NATO members: United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Norway. These countries represent the largest European potential for military, economical and political power.

² U.S. State Department estimated in 2003 that more than 23 million Muslims lived in Europe. Quoted by Timothy M. Savage, *Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing*. Washington Quarterly, Summer 2004, 28. Numbers vary and no official numbers are available because most European countries do not register their population by religion.

³ Timothy M. Savage, “Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing”. *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2004, 28.

⁴ Peo Hansen, and Stephen Castles, *Migration, citizenship, and the European welfare state: a European dilemma* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 97.

⁵ France has started a process to distinguish what it means to be French regarding culture and values.

⁶ Yossi Alpher. “The Conscription Prescription”, *The Jewish Daily Forward*. August 29, 2009, <http://www.forward.com/articles/2605/> (accessed December 28, 2009).

⁷ Germany and Norway recruit their professional units from their conscription force.

⁸ Rajan Menon. *The End of Alliances* (Oxford University Press 2007), 18.

⁹ Michael J Williams. *From Kosovo to Kandahar* (Routledge 2009), 19.

¹⁰ Williams, 19.

¹¹ Lundestad, Geir. *Just another major crisis?: the United States and Europe since 2000*. (Oxford University Press 2008), 71.

¹² Michael J Williams. *From Kosovo to Kandahar* (Routledge 2009), 19.

¹³ Rajan Menon. *The End of Alliances* (Oxford University Press 2007), 72, 76.

¹⁴ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *American Character Gets Mixed Review: U.S. Image Up Slightly But Still Negative*, June 23, 2005, 5, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/247.pdf>.

¹⁵ Mark Champion and Peter Spiegel, “Allies React to U.S. Missile U-Turn” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 18, 2009.

¹⁶ Peter J. Katzenstein, and Robert O. Keohane, *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Cornell University Press 2007), 309, 312.

¹⁷ Katzenstein, and Keohane, 9, 140.

¹⁸ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *American Character Gets Mixed Review: U.S. Image Up Slightly But Still Negative*, June 23, 2005, 5, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/247.pdf>.

¹⁹ Pew Global Attitudes Project, “Most Muslim Publics Not So Easily Moved, Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image Around the World” July 23, 2009, 13, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/264.pdf>.

²⁰ Janne Haaland Matlary, “Political Dynamics of Asymmetrical Warfare, The Case of ISAF”, (Report to the Ministry of Defense, Institute of Political Science University of Oslo/The Norwegian Defense University College 2009), 23.

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