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Conflicts Of The Past As Lessons For The Present

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THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE

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KORI SCHAKE • BARRY STRAUSS • BING WEST

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ABOUT THE POSTERS IN THIS ISSUE

Documenting the wartime viewpoints and diverse political sentiments of the twentieth century, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Poster Collection has more than one hundred thousand posters from around the world and continues to grow. Thirty-three thousand are available online. Posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia/Soviet Union, and France predominate, though posters from more than eighty countries are included.

European Defense

By Angelo M. Codevilla

Europe was never a full partner in its own defense. The very question—will Europe ever fully partner with the United States, or will the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) continue to downplay the necessity of military readiness?—is no longer meaningful as posed, because the political energies of Europe's elites are absorbed as they try to fend off attacks on their legitimacy by broad sectors of their population.

The notion that Europeans and Americans were full partners in the NATO alliance and that this “kept the Russians out . . . etc.” was always a fiction, albeit a useful one. Today, it is dysfunctional, an obstacle to all sides’ understanding of what useful cooperation may yet be possible. Thoughts of Europe’s role in its own military defense against the Soviet Union were incidental to the Alliance’s 1949 founding. Common European armed forces have always been a fantasy. The Alliance prospered from 1949 until April 1961, because of America’s then unequivocal commitment to respond to any Soviet attack on Europe by massively devastating the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons. But when the Kennedy administration informed the Europeans that massive nuclear response was no longer US policy, the Alliance became a Potemkin Village, endlessly arguing about European troop levels and US nuclear thresholds.

The ensuing plans for a gallant common stand at the Fulda Gap with conventional weapons were fantasies based on hope, and on willful ignorance about Soviet military doctrine. Transferred East German Air Force war plans show that, as Soviet military literature had made clear, the Soviets would have precluded such a clash by opening the conflict with nuclear strikes on NATO storage sites and troop concentrations, confident that the Americans would keep the nuclear war local and one sided.

The 1960s and 70s saw unseemly and dysfunctional mutual diplomatic leapfrogs of each other with regard to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Would Willi Brandt’s Ostpolitik prevail or Henry Kissinger’s? Ronald Reagan, Helmut Kohl, and Margaret Thatcher managed a fruitful though brief exception in their time. Because Europe neither has nor is producing any more such statesmen, never mind any Adenauers or de Gaulles, its foreign policy devolved into backseat driving America’s foreign policy, then into a brake on America’s.

In 1990, Europeans joined Bush 41’s grand coalition against Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait on condition of limiting the mission, prompting Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to remark that missions should define coalitions, not the other way around. NATO invoked Article 5 after 9/11, nominally considering the attacks as being on all members. But again, a counsel of restraint has been its main contribution. As Iran built the capacity to produce nuclear-armed ballistic missiles able to hit America as well as Europe, Germany and France helped persuade the Bush administration to hold Israel back from stopping it, and the Obama administration to negotiate the “Iran deal.” Our NATO ally Turkey, for its part, became the sine qua non of ISIS’s takeover of most of Syria, and the hinterland that enabled it to endure. Today, Turkey is trying to convince the US to provide it with arms to kill ISIS’s remains, while obviously intending to use them against the only local force that helped America, the Kurds.



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Today as well, the primary feature of US-European military relations is the US demi-brigade rotated through Poland as a token of a commitment to defend Poland and the other post-Soviet members of NATO. As their inclusion on the treaty was being considered, no one suggested that the US has the capacity to redeem Article 5's commitment to them in the face of force majeure—especially since even were the US willing to wage a ground war on the Vistula, Germany would not lend itself even to the transit of supplies. Professor David Fromkin's suggestion in the *New York Times* that the version of the NATO treaty offered to them should lack Article 5 would have made it all too clear that they were being invited into a house with a pretend roof.

History is full of examples of alliances less potent than the parties thereto, never mind than of the parts' sum. Writing in Federalist Papers 18 and 38, James Madison referred to Greece's Amphictyonic League (fifth to second century BC) to caution Americans about the tendency of alliances to devolve into strife and tyranny. Winston Churchill, in the first volume of his memoirs of World War II, explained in some detail how Britain and France, looking to each other for support against Germany, had failed to do what each would likely have done for itself alone. From Britain's standpoint, he wrote, "There is something to be said for isolation; there is something to be said for alliances. But there is nothing to be said for weakening the power on the continent with whom you would be in alliance, and then involving yourself more in continental tangles in order to make it up to them."

In sum, history shows that the North Atlantic Alliance has been less an alliance than a protectorate, and that whatever capacities the beneficiary of protection might have had to defend itself after World War II have atrophied.

The European Union never became either an element of strength, or a mechanism by which the US could practice "one stop" policy in Europe. Instead, it is a bureaucratic entity with its own substance, an additional complication for dealing with member states, its decisions—often bad for America as well as for Europe—bidding for the status of customary international law. It has been the primary means for expressing Western Europe's contemporary international identity. Accommodation with the Muslim world and hostility to Israel have been its primary hallmarks. The Trump administration is de-emphasizing relations with it—including downgrading its diplomatic status in Washington—and dealing with member states bilaterally as much as possible. That includes holding out a US–British trade deal as an incentive for Britain to follow through with Brexit.

Though NATO is a far less consequential bureaucracy than the EU—few take it seriously—its residual symbolic value and the habits of dependence that it has fostered are among modern Europe's defining features. Germany's Chancellor Merkel and France's President Macron continue the tradition of verbally promoting Europe's assumption of responsibility for its own military security while damning America for considering letting Europe actually exercise it. They praise Obama for his commitment to Europe, and blame Trump for lack thereof, though Obama removed the last US main battle tanks from Europe, and Trump added troops. Meanwhile, US officials, seemingly wanting auxiliaries rather than allies, chastise Europeans for not doing more for themselves while dissuading them from forming autonomous forces. The military relationship has an air of unreality, if not of farce.

The underlying reality is that the Europe with which America has dealt is waning demographically, ceasing to exist culturally, and is dead politically, never to return. Today, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, etc. are disappearing biologically: In Germany, for example, 42% of all births in 2017 were to migrants from the Middle East or Africa. That percentage is already set to rise. Natives' birth rates are far below replacement levels (Italy's is 1.34 births per woman), together with the migration of young Middle Eastern/African people, well-nigh guarantees the end of Europe's biological character, fast. Its cultural character is changing even faster. We can only guess the extent to which Europe may be able to maintain a European identity in the face of migration.

Current European elites' inability to control their countries' invasion by people from the Middle East and Africa, the migrants' offenses against public safety, and the strictures imposed on native populations on the migrants' behalf, are not least of the reasons why political Europe as we used to know it has ceased to

exist. Other reasons, including the elites' contempt for ordinary people's way of life and manifold incompetence, are legion. Hence, the traditional parties are discredited, and the ruling classes are under siege by disaffected populations, especially the young. Without constituencies outside the establishment, they fear elections. Their very capacity to marshal people for any common purpose whatever is already gone. Their disappearance is only a matter of time.

The internal political cohesion of all European states having collapsed, the levers and buttons in the Atlantic Alliance's control rooms are connected to nothing. The titled officials with whom Americans deal represent only themselves.

That is why the salient questions about US-Europe relations are of scarce importance. What does it matter whether Germany and others devote 2% of GDP to the military instead of 1.2%? What would they buy with the rest and, far more important, what would they do with it? What do they have in themselves to do for themselves, never mind for us?

Management of migration is by far the biggest, most consequential challenge facing European states, individually and collectively. For that elementary task, they have far more material resources than might be needed. NATO's headquarters and the EU bureaucracy offer far more facilities for coordination than necessary. And yet, European countries have shown lack of seriousness and the opposite of cooperation: All, having subsidized domestic NGOs that fairly invited migrants, now condemn one another for failure to take the ones they do not want. Separately, Germany and Italy pay Turks and Libyans, respectively, to keep migrants from traveling farther. Italy and France back opposite contenders for power in Libya. Americans have no way of making up for impotence so existential in a matter so intimate.

Since Europe's NATO members can't take care of something so essential for them and so mechanically simple, for which they have ample resources, what could they possibly do for us?

General James Mattis wrote in his letter of resignation as secretary of defense that "our strength as a nation is inextricably linked to the strength of our unique and comprehensive system of alliances and partnerships." That was never so, and is less so now.



ANGELO M. CODEVILLA is a professor emeritus of international relations at Boston University. He was a US naval officer and Foreign Service officer and served on the Senate Intelligence Committee as well as on presidential transition teams. For a decade, he was a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the author of thirteen books, including *War Ends and Means*, *The Character of Nations*, and *Advice to War Presidents*. He is a student of the classics as well as of European literature; he is also a commercial grape grower.



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NATO Renewed (Coming Soon to a Theater of War Near You)

By Ralph Peters

Clio, the muse of history, has a fabulous sense of irony: As the human pageant unfolds, she delights in confounding our intentions and expectations.

Thus, two public enemies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (whose acronym, NATO, sounds like another Greek deity) promise to be the unwitting saviors of the alliance, rescuing it from complacency, lethargy, and diminishing relevance.

The first—and most venomous—foe of the Atlantic Alliance is Russia's President Vladimir Putin. Putin does not drink alcohol, but he's long been intox-

icated by his hatred of NATO, which he blames, in part, for the Soviet collapse. As Central and East European states recently brutalized by Russia rushed to join the alliance to deter Moscow from future aggression, Putin depicted NATO, which has given Europe the longest era of peace in its recorded history, as a conniving and unscrupulous threat to Russia and its historical entitlements.

Content to prosper, NATO's European members overlooked Putin's rhetoric for years. Even Putin's assault on Georgia failed to alarm them much. Crimea, however, was different, and attempts to play down its seizure by Moscow's "little green men" foundered on the subsequent armored invasion of eastern Ukraine's industrial belt, where Putin hardly bothered to camouflage the direct participation of his military. At that point, NATO's depressed stock soared again on Europe's political exchanges. After stirring in Moscow's cyber-aggression, the assassination of critics at home and abroad, natural-gas cutoffs, and Russia's atrocity-laden air campaign in Syria, the world's most-successful peacetime alliance has come mightily back into vogue. (Indeed, Putin has revived the hoary Soviet tradition of reminding Europeans of NATO's value, as his predecessors did in Berlin in 1953 and 1961, Hungary in 1956, Prague in 1968, and Afghanistan in 1979.)

But even Putin's murderous shenanigans were not quite enough to fully arouse Europe's mandarins. Sleeping Beauty's eyes had opened, but she continued to yawn. NATO members—particularly those in Western Europe—still assumed that the United States would do the serious work.

Then along came NATO's other weighty adversary, US president Donald Trump. A man with no background in strategy and ignorant of history, Trump had for decades displayed an interest in doing business in Moscow. Then, early in his political campaign, when no establishment figures would touch his effort, advisors sympathetic to Putin molded his views on security and NATO. As a result, Trump came to the White House convinced that the United States has been bamboozled and robbed by cunning Europeans unwilling to pay their share of the club dues: A view that may be mathematically correct but which remains strategically naive. His virulent attacks on NATO, including immensely destructive insinuations that a fed-up United States might not honor its treaty obligations, along with his public adulation of Putin, have terrified Europeans.

Dad appeared ready to dump the family for Natasha Fatale—while inviting the neighborhood thug to beat up the kids.

Europe has been reminded that it needs the United States of America.

While relations and trust between the US and NATO are unlikely to return to full health while Trump remains in office—despite the best efforts of military officers and defense officials on all sides—the next American president will enjoy a rapturous welcome from NATO counterparts and will almost certainly reciprocate. And yes, European states will contribute a little more to their own defense. After this awkward trial separation, the trans-Atlantic security romance will be refreshed: Dad will be back, ashamed, while the kids will show more respect.

When it comes to the future of NATO, hysteria about a collapse of the alliance is unfounded (as is doomster talk of the European Union's impending demise). Massed Russian tanks may no longer be a few days' march from the English Channel and Moscow's armed forces are in long-term decline, but Putin's will to violence, his readiness to break the accepted rules that kept the peace even during the Cold War, his innovative methods of subversion and, not least, his multipronged interference in elections, have alarmed Europe as nothing else has done in a generation or more.

Previous—surmounted—crises within the alliance involved immediate, practical challenges and existential threats, not merely rhetorical bombast or the local violence of a declining power. Washington's blunt ultimatum over Suez in 1956 did not derail the alliance. When France's president Charles de Gaulle announced, in 1966, that France would withdraw from NATO, it meant the loss of NATO's leading continental military power; the need to swiftly relocate strategically vital American air bases; the cutting off of critical lines of communications and the closure of strategic depots; and a question as to the continued military viability of the alliance.

NATO survived. It also survived Euro-Communism, left-wing terror, the "P2" Pershing-missile deployment crisis, and the fall of the Berlin Wall followed by the Soviet collapse—which appeared at first to negate NATO's reason for existence (until the human delight in sadistic violence re-erupted in Europe's Balkan borderlands).

NATO's foundational rationale was to defend the West's battered civilization against the new barbarians from the east, but its public role as a military deterrent to foreign aggression obscured its vital role in keeping Europe's internal peace. Indeed, "peace-keeping," when it came into vogue in NATO in the 1990s was hardly new: NATO, under American aegis, turned traditional enemies-onto-the-death into mere commercial and financial competitors. It submerged the Federal Republic of Germany in a greater and benign identity. NATO prevented hostilities between Greece and Turkey on Europe's southeastern flank and marked the end of ethnic and religion-fueled atrocities on the continent—until the (non-NATO) Yugoslav collapse.

NATO is, at once, a guarantor of peace and an excuse for peace. Behind its defensive shield, both free Europe and the United States and Canada enjoyed an explosion of wealth in the place of exploding bombs. Transitory squabbles about trade practices briefly obscure the immense mutual benefits, but those of us born in the postwar years have enjoyed an economic miracle, with the United States the greatest beneficiary, thanks to the stability provided by the Atlantic Alliance.

To undercut that alliance, to quibble about fractions of a percentage point in defense outlays, is destructive folly. Germany's military is, indeed, in pathetic condition. But should we truly mourn the demise of Berlin's former militarism? From 1864 to 1945, Prussian then unified-German aggression ravaged and finally ruined Europe—costing the lives of tens of millions of Europeans and hundreds of thousands of American soldiers (one could propose that German aggression began with Frederick the Great in the 1740s, but that was a false start—as Napoleon demonstrated a half century later). A mature, historically informed view might welcome Germany's current pacifism and the lack of spare parts for its obsolete warplanes and aging panzers. Shouldn't we be quietly pleased that Italy's armed forces maintain a higher degree of combat readiness than Germany's?

Of course, the alliance—which has grown from twelve to twenty-nine members with more clamoring to join—will never be problem-free. Interests, sentiments, and even threat perceptions will not always coincide. Old resentments bubble up under stress; some governments should, indeed, contribute more; and, in democracies, politicians will always question the need for defense outlays, assuring us that the Peaceable Kingdom has come and that we're to blame for resisting the will of monsters. But NATO is essential, a stabilizing force well beyond its geographical confines. Its two noisiest detractors have only reminded us of the fact.

This commentary certainly is not intended to make light of the challenges facing NATO. Welcomed into a newborn NATO, thanks to its strategic location, Turkey now has a vociferously anti-Western and increasingly dictatorial strongman in its presidential office, a religious fundamentalist determined to play the Russia card to have his way with Turkey's long-term allies. NATO ultimately may have to devise a means to suspend or end Turkey's membership. Nor is all well with democracy and the rule of law in every East European member state.

In the Baltic zone, the Nord Stream 2 natural-gas pipeline project threatens misery and strategic division. If completed, it will allow Russia literally to freeze out NATO's eastern members by shutting down older pipelines that transit former Soviet-occupied states (which Putin views as belonging to Russia's historical vale of influence—or empire). And shameless German greed is at fault for this strategic travesty: Berlin's selling out its allies at a discount. The pipeline signals active Russian malice and strategic ambitions that are far more worrisome than malaise in the *Bundeswehr*.

Having served in successive US Army units and formations earmarked for NATO in wartime, I have never been blind to the alliance's nuts-and-bolts problems. As a first lieutenant in the 1st Battalion of the 46th Infantry, stationed in Erlangen, Germany, I published my first article on strategy. It was a critique of NATO's politically essential, militarily lunatic forward-defense commitment. Prissy NATO staff officers infuriated me with their (overheard) we're-sophisticates-and-they're-dumb-cowboys remarks (that haughtiness collapsed with Saddam's swift defeat in Desert Storm). And I, too, found Europe's contributions to its own defense too stingy.

But over the years I came to appreciate NATO's phenomenal success at keeping the peace on the continent that has generated, perpetrated, and exported more death and destruction than any other. In another example of Clio's ferociously whimsical sense of irony, the founding members of the European Union, to trumpet their solidarity, chose Charlemagne, Western Europe's first unifier, as their symbolic figurehead. They overlooked another side of the record: During Charlemagne's forty-six years as a ruler, first as king then as emperor, the continent saw but a single year of peace.



RALPH PETERS is the author of many books, including works on strategy and military affairs. As a US Army enlisted man and officer, he served in infantry and military Intelligence units before becoming a foreign area officer and global scout. Since retiring in 1998, he concentrates on writing books but remains Fox News's strategic analyst. His latest novel, *Hell or Richmond*, a gritty portrayal of Grant's 1864 Overland Campaign, follows his recent *New York Times* best seller, *Cain at Gettysburg*, for which he received the 2013 Boyd Award for Literary Excellence in Military Fiction from the American Library Association.

Urging More from Our NATO Allies

By Robert G. Kaufman

The United States should never expect to achieve full burden sharing with the European members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Even in the most balanced alliances, the most powerful member will pay some premium for ensuring its credibility and effectiveness. The United States can strive plausibly to minimize but not eliminate the massive degree of free riding and strategic incoherence that has become politically untenable and strategically unwise. Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay, NATO's first secretary general, described NATO's purpose as keeping the Russians out, the Americans in, and the German's down. That remains no less true today, with emendations. A muscular American presence in Europe offers the best practicable option for keeping Putin's authoritarian, expansionist Russia at bay, Germany firmly anchored in the democratic West, and Central Europe democratic and free from the ravages of Russian imperialism.



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Credit the Trump administration for recognizing that NATO's vitality depends on fundamental reform, including less inequitable burden sharing. Otherwise, the American public will not continue to support the alliance. On the one hand, the administration's 2018 National Security Strategy deems vital "a strong and free Europe, bound by shared principles of democracy, national sovereignty, and a commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty" in order to "deter Russian adventurism, deter terrorists who seek to murder innocents, and address the arc of instability on NATO's periphery."¹ On the other hand, the administration insists, "NATO must adapt to remain relevant and fit for our times—in purpose, capability, and responsive decision-making. We expect European allies to fulfill their commitments to increase defense and modernization spending to bolster the alliance in the face of our shared security concerns."²

The Trump administration's carrot and stick policy of bolstering American military capabilities, the president hectoring NATO allies to do more, while reiterating the importance of the alliance has yielded provisional success.

The combination of President Trump's relentless warnings that NATO must start paying its own bills, Russia's military buildup, and Putin's naked imperial ambition on display in Ukraine has roused an increasing number of members to do more though not enough. The number of NATO members on track to meet the 2 percent goal established at the 2014 summit in Wales has jumped from 5 to 15. Even some of the president's sternest critics—the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* editorial pages, for example—concede the substance if not the style of President Trump's case.³ In 2017, the United States provided nearly three-quarters of NATO's defense spending, while spending 3.6 percent of its GDP on defense.⁴

Credit President Trump likewise for calling out Germany—the wealthiest European member of NATO—for its dereliction. Since the 1990s, German defense spending has declined steeply, falling to 1.2 percent of the GDP in 2017. German military capabilities have atrophied as a result. Worse, Germany continues to lack a coherent grand strategy, with German statesmen marinating in the illusion that the United Nations

or some version of a European Army under the auspices of the European Union can substitute for NATO's hard military capabilities.⁵

Yet the limits to burden sharing and the threats to the vitality of the alliance loom large despite the Trump administration's substantial provisional progress. As Raphael S. Cohen and Gabriel M. Scheinmann observe, "most European militaries" languish in "a pitiful state of decline" that will take time and sustained effort to reverse.⁶

That holds especially true for Germany. Although the Merkel government pledged to spend 1.5 percent on defense in 2018—the first increase in decades—that amount falls considerably short of what is necessary to redress the wide and deep deficiencies in Germany's armed forces. Even with the Russian military modernizing considerably and with Putin's serial provocations, the legacy of World War II still operates as a powerful constraint on Germany fulfilling even its minimal responsibilities to field a military more commensurate with its economic clout. Witness the fierce opposition that even a defense increase to 1.5 percent has triggered in a conflict-averse German electorate prone to the fallacy of moral equivalence, or worse, between the United States and its enemies. Nor is the inadequate defense spending the only serious problem Germany poses for the alliance. Critics, including President Trump and all the Eastern European members of NATO, rightly accuse Germany of naively and selfishly undermining NATO in its decision to proceed with the pending 800-mile pipeline under the Baltic Sea, known as the Nord Stream 2. The consummation of Nord Stream 2 will increase Germany's already dangerous dependence on Russian energy, enervating Germany's already wobbly political will to resist Putin's ambitions.

Nor, despite NATO having a collective GDP of 18 trillion—not far below the US GDP of 20 trillion—will the French President Macron's revival of Charles de Gaulle's bad idea of a European Army ever come to pass. Even if the EU muddles through the endemic crises menacing to its very existence (e.g., economic stagnation, demographic decline, rising unassimilated Islamic populations in many EU democracies, high taxes, mounting debt, and the fiscal unsustainability of Western European social democracy), these crises will conspire to thwart the EU much less NATO from adequately substituting a collective EU military for American military power and the will to use it. Even the chimera of a European Army will strike a blow to the alliance by diverting attention and resources away from where it belongs—augmenting NATO's capabilities while adapting NATO's strategies to meet contemporary and evolving challenges. Nor, for solid historical reasons, would the Eastern European members of NATO trust a European Army to substitute for an American-led NATO alliance. Since 1914, Europe has failed dismally to balance against hegemonic threats minus the United States. What shred of credible evidence exists that European states will do any better left to their own devices at deterring Putin or defeating radical Islamists in their midst or on their periphery?

So the United States will have to settle for mitigating rather than eliminating the asymmetries in the alliance. The survival of NATO on these terms is well worth the bearable cost, especially compared with the less prudent alternatives: pressing our discontent to the point of breaking the alliance; or investing hopes in a phantom European Army or hapless United Nations. As a caveat, Josef Joffe observed sagely in the previous issue of this journal that the Trump administration's successes come with a long-term warning: Excessive pressure on our allies could reach a culminating point damaging to the alliance and our long-term interests.⁷ For the time being, the benefits of the president's approach outweigh the potential liabilities so long as President Trump does not throw out the baby with the bathwater. The departures of Secretary of Defense Mattis and UN Ambassador Haley may portend, however, that the president has moved too close to that culminating point for comfort.

- 1 *Summary of the 2018 National Security Strategy of The United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*, p. 9. [<https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>].
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Peter Beinart, "NATO Doesn't Need More Defense Spending; America needs less," *Atlantic* (July 11, 2018). [<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/07/trump-nato-defense-four-percent/564911>]
- 4 Niall McCarthy, "Defense Spending of NATO Members Visualized," *Forbes* (July 10, 2018). [<https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/07/10/defense-expenditure-of-nato-members-visualized-infographic/#415fa14d14cf>]
- 5 Barbara Kunz, "The Real Roots of Germany's Defense Spending Problem," *War on the Rocks* (July 24, 2018). [<https://warontherocks.com/2018/07/the-real-roots-of-germanys-defense-spending-problem>]
- 6 Raphael S. Cohen and Gabriel M. Scheinmann, "Can Europe Fill the Void in U.S. Military Leadership?" *Orbis* 58, no.1 (Winter 2014), p. 45.
- 7 Josef Joffe, "The Structure of the Contemporary International System," *Strategika*, Issue 55 (November 15, 2018). [<https://www.hoover.org/research/structure-contemporary-international-system>]



ROBERT G. KAUFMAN is a Robert and Kathryn Dockson Professor at Pepperdine University's School of Public Policy. He is the author of four books, including his most recent, *Dangerous Doctrine: How Obama's Grand Strategy Weakened America*, which University Press of Kentucky Published in May 2016. He has written extensively for scholarly journals and for opinion pages, including the *Wall Street Journal*, *Fox*, *Daily Caller*, *New York Times*, and the *Washington Times*.

The European Alliance That Never Was

By Angelo M. Codevilla

The notion of an Atlantic alliance consisting of Europeans and Americans as full partners was once a useful fiction. Today it is a dysfunctional one, an obstacle to all sides' understanding of what useful cooperation may yet be possible.

Thoughts of Europe's role in its own military defense against the Soviet Union were incidental to the alliance's 1949 founding. The European Defense Community, a failed treaty between West Germany, France, Italy, and the Benelux countries brokered by the United States between 1950 and 1952 was supposed to have been NATO's "European pole." The treaty failed, but the alliance prospered, because of a truth that became ever truer as the years passed, namely: European nations were unwilling to muster serious military forces. Instead, they yearned for the most unequivocal commitment that Americans might muster to respond to any Soviet attack on themselves by massively devastating the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons. Thus did the alliance's heyday last, from 1949 to 1961.

In April 1961, when the newly elected Kennedy administration informed the Europeans that massive nuclear response was no longer US policy, the alliance began its unending crises. Thenceforth, the United States would help fight a Soviet invasion on the ground, and would require substantial increases in European military forces. Endless arguments about nuclear thresholds and triggers followed, as well as between insufficient European commitments of conventional forces and "uncertain trumpets" on the US side. The 1960s and '70s also saw unseemly and dysfunctional mutual diplomatic leapfrogs with regard to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Ronald Reagan's Helmut Kohl's and Margaret Thatcher managed a fruitful though brief exception in their time. But Europe's foreign policy devolved into back-seat driving America's. "The Europeans" became one of Washington's lobbies, before melding with the US ruling class's left wing.

Europeans and Americans today inhabit political worlds more alien to each other than they have been for more than a century and a half. The Soviet threat's demise had convinced Europeans, unlike Americans, to imagine dwelling in an endless, beneficent age in which their "soft power" holds sway. While Americans continued to live in the real world of purpose and force, Europeans had slipped into a dream. But dreams do not obviate reality. The internal political cohesion of all of America's major European allies has collapsed. Their traditional parties are discredited, and their ruling classes are under siege by disaffected populations, especially the young. Their very capacity to marshal people for any common purpose whatever has well-nigh disappeared. Their inability to control their countries' invasion by people from the Middle East and Africa is not least of the efficient causes of a debility for which no end is in sight.

The common sentiment of American and European elites against their countries' rebelling voters is the Trans-Atlantic alliance's principal vestige.

The political, diplomatic, and bureaucratic structures and issues of Euro-American relations are far less relevant for our purposes than who is who in Europe now, and what they mean for us. Germany's level of military expenditures, Angela Merkel's vicissitudes, concern us less than the character of the opposition forces that are overshadowing them. What do they portend for Germany's role vis-à-vis Europe and America? France's body politic is torn between historic alternatives, as much as it is occupied by the West-wide revolt against the last half century's ruling class. Spain's main issues, as always, are centrifugal. Italy's, as always, are about the scarce compatibility of its North and South. Britain's muddles may be decided by the rise of England. In today's Europe, there are no Adenauers, de Gaulles and de Gasperis, and none are being produced. It behooves Americans to get to know what movements and people are rising, and what they mean to us.

To what extent can Europe maintain a European identity in the face of migration? What do Europe's rising political forces portend for relations with Eastern Europe and Russia? To what extent are they capable of

geopolitical engagement? What is their image of the United States, and what are the areas in which they might wish to cooperate with us?

In the past, American discussions concerning Europe have focused on what we might do for them, of for matters that concern them more than they do ourselves. It is past time to consider how, if at all, Europeans might be able and willing to contribute to dealing with problems that are of primary concern to us. For a half century, for example, European governments have subverted America's interests in Cuba as well as elsewhere in Latin America. Might they reverse course? Might they coordinate policy toward China?

The problems of the several "Atlantic crises" are extraneous to the present and future problems toward which we must direct our attention now.



ANGELO M. CODEVILLA is a professor emeritus of international relations at Boston University. He was a US naval officer and Foreign Service officer and served on the Senate Intelligence Committee as well as on presidential transition teams. For a decade, he was a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the author of thirteen books, including *War Ends and Means*, *The Character of Nations*, and *Advice to War Presidents*. He is a student of the classics as well as of European literature; he is also a commercial grape grower.

Europe Is Alert to the Dangers It Faces

By Kori Schake

I think the question (Will Europe ever fully partner with the United States—or will the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) continue to downplay the necessity of military readiness?) is lagging the reality of European acknowledgment of their military shortfalls. Europeans are no longer downplaying the necessity of military readiness.

Russia's 2014 capture of Crimea and invasion of Ukraine's contiguous territory shocked Europeans into the realization that they had for too long pretended the end of the Cold War ended the threats requiring military responses. Defense spending in most European countries started increasing in the immediate aftermath of Russia's aggression. NATO countries also agreed to the goal of 2% GDP on defense spending by 2025 at the Wales summit of 2014 in response to Russian aggression. NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg said on October 2 at the meeting of NATO chiefs of defense, all NATO countries have increased their defense spending, an average of more than 5% since 2014. Russia's continued malevolent behavior, seeking to affect election outcomes in the West, poisoning British citizens on British territory, has cemented attitudes in Europe that Russia is a predator and a threat to the West.

The other shock that has energized European efforts to increase military readiness has been the election of President Trump, which gave both negative and positive impetus. Negative in the form of the president of the United States denigrating the value of allies and alliances—for example, retorting to Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau's appeal against national security grounds for trade sanctions with "it's useless to make tear-jerking speeches about Canadian soldiers fighting alongside the US in the war if he then puts very high tariffs on dairy products."¹

Concern about the reliability of US security guarantees has also encouraged cooperation among US allies in the European Union and other realms. The EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation is admittedly another bureaucratic exercise, but it does have the potential to make better use of existing resources, especially for the smaller European countries. French President Macron has also gained support for a European operational force outside EU structures; the excellent performance of French forces in Mali and elsewhere are providing a framework other European nations can participate in and emulate.

Moreover, fear of a post-American international order has scared American allies in both Europe and Asia to cooperate to try and uphold the order without American leadership. Europeans are beginning to acknowledge former Norwegian foreign minister Espen Barth Eide's warning that "China is not just rising for the United States, but also for Europe." France and Britain are jointly conducting freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea, France and Australia are likewise conducting joint military exercises.

President Trump's election was also a positive effect on efforts to increase military readiness in the creative activism of Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to devise cooperative projects like NATO's "four thirties" that overcome operational shortfalls. Designed to demonstrate practical progress, the 430s initiative commits NATO allies to the standard of producing thirty battalions, thirty squadrons, and thirty ships for combat within thirty days. NATO allies committed to this at the Brussels summit in June 2018—although President Trump chose to make the summit divisive. He could equally have celebrated the progress in increasing spending and readiness.

So Europe is doing better than the question suggests, partly because of American leadership, partly because of its absence.

1 Donald Trump in Alberto Nardelli, "World Leaders Managed to Find an Agreement at the G7. Then Trump Tweeted," *Buzzfeed* (June 9, 2018). [<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/albertonardelli/g7-statement-communique-agree-us-trump-canada-trudeau-trade>]



KORI SCHAKE is the Deputy Director-General of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. She is the author of *Safe Passage: the Transition from British to American Hegemony* (Harvard, 2017) and editor with Jim Mattis of *Warriors and Citizens: American Views of Our Military* (Hoover Institution, 2016). She has worked for the National Security Council staff, the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, and both the military and civilian staffs in the Pentagon. In 2008 she was senior policy advisor on the McCain presidential campaign. She taught Thinking About War at Stanford University, and also in the faculties of the United States Military Academy, The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and the University of Maryland.

Even amidst Change, Europe Still Relies on the United States for Defense

By Barry Strauss

Are there circumstances in which the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will partner fully with the United States? At the moment, they don't. In 2017, for example, only a very few European countries contributed more than 2 per cent to defense, in spite of a 2014 promise to do so. Meanwhile, the United States contributed more than 4 per cent.

True, certain Eastern European states feel the heat from Russia more than does the rest of Europe, but they don't have the heft to be major military allies in the way that Britain, Germany, France or even Italy does. When it comes to Western Europe, neither the financial model of the welfare state nor the culture of the postimperial and post-militaristic (former) Great Powers will permit such a full partnership. A full-bore military is too expensive and impossible to sell to a public that has long since gotten used to butter before guns. Rearmament, moreover, is too difficult to square with elites' pacifism and pride. Seventy-plus years past V-E Day some still fear World War II and besides, they believe they can cajole or pay off potential threats. In any case, regardless of what President Trump says, no one seriously expects the United States to pull back from NATO.

So what might make the Western Europeans change? If Iran were to become a nuclear power and threaten Europe, that might lead to European rearmament. It is possible that violence in Africa might destabilize Europe's southern flank in a way that forces major new European military expenditures. Although it is not easy to imagine China engaging in gunboat diplomacy to protect its investments in such southern European ports as Piraeus in Greece, it is not entirely impossible, as a response, say, to major domestic disorder. The most likely military threat, however, is Russia. Russia, is, after all, a major military power.

An expansionist threat on the part of Russia would certainly gain the Europeans' attention. If the Russians were to conquer Ukraine or the Baltic States, for example, that might make the Western Europeans decide to rearm in a big way. That, however, is a good reason for the Russians to avoid any such steps. Besides which, the Russians have such a profitable relationship with Germany over natural gas that one can't see why they would jeopardize that with military moves.

POLL: What should be the US attitude toward French President Macron's advocacy of new European armed forces?

- ☐ We should welcome the idea that at last Europe takes defense seriously.
- ☐ The idea is interesting, and could enhance NATO and US forces in Europe.
- ☐ The US should stay neutral on the issue; Europe's defense is its own business.
- ☐ The idea of a European military would pose grave problems for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and might undermine the alliance.
- ☐ The notion is absurd, will never happen, and we should ignore it.

So much for external factors; the other issue is domestic culture. Although it is hard to imagine a return to military values in the countries of the European Union or NATO, it was also hard, only ten years ago, to imagine today's European populist movements. Still, it's not entirely clear whose side a revised European militarism would come down on. After all, in France and Hungary, for example, populist leaders express admiration for Vladimir Putin and Russia as much as if not more so than for the United States. Poland and the Baltic States are much more wary of Russia, given their history, but they alone cannot provide America a sufficient alliance, nor would Russia look kindly on a military buildup there. Although not part of NATO, Sweden has been building up its military in response to Russian saber-rattling, and public opinion is becoming more pro-NATO. Sweden's political future is uncertain, at the moment, however, and it is hardly a major military power.

Might the "special relationship" move Britain closer to America, and with more arms? With Brexit dominating the political agenda and with a future Corbyn government a possibility, it doesn't seem likely.

In short, for the foreseeable future, neither NATO nor the European Union is likely to provide the sort of military readiness that the United States would like to see.



BARRY STRAUSS is a military historian with a focus on ancient Greece and Rome. His latest book, *The Death of Caesar: The Story of History's Most Famous Assassination* (Simon & Schuster, March 2015), has been hailed as "clear and compelling" by *TIME* and received three starred reviews from book journals (*Kirkus*, *Library Journal*, *Shelf Awareness*). His *Masters of Command: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar and the Genius of Leadership* (Simon & Schuster, May 2012), was named one of the best books of 2012 by Bloomberg.

Europe Lacks the Will to Defend Itself

By Bing West

The Hoover Institution at Stanford University posed this question—Will NATO Europe fully partner with the United States, or continue to downplay military readiness? The brief answer is that the leading economic powers in Europe have moved beyond national defense into a never-never land of post-military globalism. The liminal leap into self-induced delusion assumes that major conflict will never again embroil the European continent. So there isn't enough money for a credible military force in Europe because there is not the political will. The moral is to the physical as four to one in battle, and Europe lost the spirit to fight long ago.

Since the end of World War II, the arc of governance in Western Europe has steadily spiraled toward democratic socialism. The social welfare state achieves and retains power when a majority of voters believe that the state is the proper arbiter of material comforts as well as security. A minority of malodorous capitalists is tolerated because they create the wealth the state distributes to the majority. Inside the US, this model of democratic socialism is gaining momentum in "blue" states such as California and Connecticut. The problem is that more government spending leads to slower (or negative) economic growth.¹ Per capita income in the US is \$60,000, vs. \$41,000 in the European Union. So if democratic socialism is the reason for less military readiness, Europe's neglect of its military would be understandable. There simply wouldn't be enough money to go around.

Europe, however, has ample funds to provide for the common defense. The EU GDP is \$19.9 trillion, compared to the US with \$19.4 trillion.² Government spending as a percent of GDP is 38% in the US and 46% in the EU.³ So the European Union could easily afford to match the US in defense spending. The fact is the EU has no intention of doing so because it chooses to believe there is no credible threat. And if one does arise, well, there's always America to stand in. That's the way it's been since 1945, and that's the way Europe collectively sees the future.

Let's look back for a moment. In the midst of the Cold War in 1980, the Soviet Union was threatening to invade Poland. West Germany's allocation to defense was then 3% of its GDP, compared to 5% in the US. President Reagan responded to the Soviet threat by increasing defense to 6.5% of GDP, while West Germany decreased its defense spending. Today, the US devotes 3.5% of GDP to defense, and Germany, the economic giant of the EU, allocates 1.2%.

Why? Because as the bellwether of Europe, Germany's worldview or *Weltanschauung* seems to that of a comfortable, overly complacent burgher. In 2005, then chancellor Gerhard Schroeder authorized a natural gas pipeline to Germany controlled by Russia's Gazprom Corporation. Today, Schroeder is chairman of Rosneft, a Russian oil company⁴ and Russia will soon control 50% to 75% of Germany's consumption of natural gas.⁵ Germany does business with Russia because it's good for business. Why should America expect other European nations to act differently?

In summary, the US in 2017 devoted 3.6% of GDP to defense, while European nations averaged 1.5%.⁶ The Trump administration did elicit from NATO Europe a pledge to spend 1.6% of its GDP on defense⁷ Germany refused to meet that pledge.

There is no way out of this basic arithmetic. NATO Europe will not fully partner with the US. In Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, Europe sent token forces, about 10% to America's 90% on the frontlines, not 50-50. That's just how it is and how it will be.

Granted, the only thing worse than fighting with allies is to fight without them. Europe will continue to downplay military readiness. That is still acceptable if our allies have the will to just show up for the fight. There's a place on the line for troops willing to do battle, even if their training and equipment are shoddy.

It's much more disturbing if the lack of military readiness reflects a European arc toward passivity.

- 1 Jeffrey Dorfman, "More Government Equals Less Growth, The Facts Are In," *Forbes* (December 10, 2013).
- 2 Kimberley Amadeo, "World's Largest Economies," *the balance* (December 18, 2018).
- 3 See "Country List Government Spending to GDP," *Trading Economics* and "What is the Total Government Spending in percent GDP," <http://.USGovernmentSpending.com>.
- 4 Jim Geraghty, "Worried about Russia? Then Keep an Eye on Germany's Former Chancellor," *National Review* (July 11, 2018).
- 5 Reality Check team BBC News, "Trump: How much of Germany's gas comes from Russia?" *BBC* (July 11, 2018).
- 6 Jonathan Stearns, "NATO Members Post New Defense-Spending Increase," *Bloomberg* (March 15, 2018).
- 7 Niall McCarthy, "Defense Expenditures of NATO Members Visualized," *Forbes* (July 10, 2018).



BING WEST is an author and former assistant secretary of defense for International Security Affairs during the Reagan administration. He is a graduate of Georgetown and Princeton Universities where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and served in the marine infantry in Vietnam. He is the best-selling author of nine books on military history and travels frequently to war zones. His latest book is entitled *One Million Steps: A Marine Platoon at War* (2014) and *Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War* (2013).

Discussion Questions

1. Will NATO Europe fully partner with the United States, or continue to downplay military readiness?
2. Will there ever be a pan-European military, and how would such a force affect trans-Atlantic relations?
3. Why would Europe want a new military force when most European countries belong to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?
4. Is the idea of a European military aimed at the United States?
5. How can countries that cannot meet NATO defense spending requirements possibly fund an entirely new military project?
6. Would a European military alliance without North American involvement be feasible?

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Janne Haaland Matlary and Magnus Petersson, eds., *NATO's European Allies: Military Capability and Political Will* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). <https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137034991>
- Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Beyond NATO: A New Security Architecture for Eastern Europe* (Brookings Institution Press, 2017). <https://www.brookings.edu/book/beyond-nato>
- "Europe" in The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance: The Annual Assessment of Global Military Capabilities and Defence Economics* (2018). <https://www.iiiss.org/publications/the-military-balance/the-military-balance-2018>



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The Growth of Chinese Power and Influence

Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

Strategika

Strategika is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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Hoover Institution, Stanford University
434 Galvez Mall
Stanford, CA 94305-6003
650-723-1754

Hoover Institution in Washington
The Johnson Center
1399 New York Avenue NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-760-3200

