



Is there any chance that Europe, either in common or in terms of individual European nations—in particular Britain, France, or Germany—will recoup its military capability?

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# The Decline of Europe's Military Might

By *Andrew Roberts*

“Britannia’s 19 Ships Can’t Rule a Single Wave” was a recent headline in London’s *Sunday Times*. “France To Cut 34,000 Military Personnel Under A Proposed Six-Year Defence Budget” ran a Reuters headline in August. “In Medium Term, German Defence Budget Will Decline to 32.5 Billion Euros by 2015/16” ran another last November. “UK Armed Forces Smallest Since the Napoleonic Wars” reports London’s *Daily Telegraph*. Meanwhile the NATO “rule” that every member country spends at least 2% of its GDP on defence is now recognized more in the breach than the observance, with Germany running at roughly 1.5%, Italy at 1.2%, and Spain less than 1%. Yet taken as a whole, the European Union has a GDP that outstrips either China or the United States. Never in the field of human conflict avoidance has so little been given by so many for so much.

With the United States spending over 4.2% of her GDP on defence—there are any amount of ways the numbers can be presented, so it’s not impossible to get the figure up to nearly 5%—what becomes very clear is that NATO is something of a European racket. The nuclear umbrella that the U.S. threw over NATO countries under Article Five of its constitution—which states that an attack on one is an attack on all—back in the late 1940s has now become a financial umbrella too, protecting Western European countries from having to stump up properly for their defence to anything like the degree that they would have to if there were no such thing as the USA. President Obama has rightly said—and it’s very rare I ever start a sentence with those

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five words—that it’s high time that Europe becomes an overall “provider” rather than just a “consumer” of security.

A glance at the past shows that at 2.5% of GDP, British defence spending is now at its lowest since 1931, when it was at 2.1% under the so-called “Ten Year Rule” which weirdly stated that the nation wouldn’t be at war within ten years. Fast-forward a decade from 1931 in British history and you’ll appreciate how moronic that rule was. Fortunately, after World War II Britain didn’t take refuge under the umbrella held out by America. She spent an average of 9% per annum of her GDP on defence in the 1950s, with the Korean War and the Suez Crisis, and over 4% during the Cold War in the Sixties, Seventies, and Eighties, where she could just about look the United States in the eye on spending levels.

The rot set in after the fall of Margaret Thatcher, when the demand for a “peace dividend” in the 1990s brought the figure down to 3.5%. Yet even that was better than the 2.5% average seen since the year 2000. In recent years, British defence cuts have been so savage that the United



Kingdom National Defence Association (UKNDA), a group of very distinguished former admirals, generals, and air chief marshals, has warned that the British Government “have reduced our armed forces personnel and equipment to the lowest levels in living memory.” Key capabilities such as Maritime Patrol Aircraft, Theatre Missile Defence, and Carrier-Based Air have been axed altogether. In terms of personnel numbers (including reserves), the most recent IISS publication “The Military Balance” shows Britain as possessing the world’s 31st largest armed forces, behind Spain and Argentina. From being the 4th largest in the world in terms of absolute military spending, Britain is set to slip to 6th by 2017. Britain, which depends on keeping her sea-lanes open for survival in any conflict, has to spend more than most countries simply because she’s an overcrowded island unable to feed her own population from national stocks and agriculture. Yet successive Governments slash defence because it has no political clout in the way that the National Health Service or the public sector unions do.

Vestigial memories of quite how good the Germans are at warfare kept Western policy-makers perfectly happy about their under-performing in terms of numbers and spending until the 1970s: no one wanted to see an autonomously strong German military in the centre of the European continent again, least of all the Germans. They have been model NATO members in many ways—except that today’s spending of around 1.5% of GDP on defence is a wholly pathetic contribution to an alliance that underpins their security as much any anyone else’s. German pacifism of the Sixties has given way to extreme financial hard-headedness, as the German economy struggles to keep much of the rest of Europe, and its euro currency, above water.

German politics—which is presently dominated by issues such as the proposal to give every one-year-old a place at a taxpayer-funded crèche—is so antipathetic towards higher defence spending that it’s a sure-fire vote loser even to propose it. The Germans have long been effectively blackmailing the United States into continuing to provide their security on the cheap. It is



now a long-standing, much-loved tradition that every retiring NATO secretary-general delivers a farewell speech in which he says that European countries need to spend more on defence, but frankly until the United States starts to make credible threats there's simply no incentive whatever for Europeans to become net providers of security as opposed to inveterate, addicted consumers of it.

France's history of treating NATO like a revolving door got her special dispensations for decades, but she does at least top the 2% of GDP minimum expected of NATO members, though at 2.2% hardly by much. The French have also been encouragingly proactive in Libya, Mali, and now Syria (the last two of which were former French colonies). Unlike in most Western countries, there's hardly any overlap in France between socialist domestic politics and pacifist internationalist ones. Their nuclear deterrent (the splendidly-named *force de frappe*) has broad cross-party support, and the left-wing Hollande Government seems just as committed to liberal interventionism as was Sarkozy's. Yet 2.2% of GDP is hardly going to see the resurrection of the *Grande Armée*; the latest French strategic review, examining the country's defence priorities for the 2014-19 period, anticipates a 12% cut in defence ministry staff, a severe slowing of the pace at which the air force takes delivery of Rafaele jets from Dassault Aviation, and a freezing of the budget for the next three years at 31.4 billion euros, the same as for this fiscal year.

So is it all doom and gloom for the future of European defence capabilities? "Yes, but" is probably the best answer. The good news is that the Eurozone financial crisis must surely come to an end sometime, perhaps with some countries getting ejected from the system, which would bring some financial relief to France and Germany. More good news is that Mr. Obama's repeated interest in "rebalancing" American interests towards the Pacific Rim might scare European finance ministers into appreciating that the American umbrella might not always be there forever, or at least not to the same ultra-generous degree as before. French willingness to get involved in her former colonies has already proved helpful in Mali in the War against Terror, and

might well be so again. At least Britain does have the UKNDA putting out hard-hitting and well-sourced memoranda that are picked up and generally supported in the media. As memories of the Second World War—which, after all, ended over 68 years ago—fade, the Germans might become more willing to flex their military muscles in a more self-confident way. Similarly, Vladimir Putin’s strategic ambitions, aggression towards Georgia and occasionally the Ukraine, naval building programme and general sabre-rattling (Russia’s military budget increased by 25% in 2012/13!) might encourage Europeans to spend more. Thin gruel in terms of reasons to be cheerful, admittedly, but it’s not quite Munich 1938.

Another positive phenomenon is Poland, whose military budget has grown by 7% this year, placing it higher than Italy, Germany, and Spain in terms of percentage of GDP spent. The Poles are buying a new missile defence system, new ships, better tanks, military training aircraft, 70 helicopters, some unmanned aerial vehicles, and better equipment for their infantry. Their impressive foreign minister, Radek Sikorski, has described Poland’s relations with Russia as “pragmatic but brittle” and war in Europe as “imaginable,” considering Putin’s unpredictability and past behavior. (The last set of Russian military manoeuvres simulated full-scale assaults on Poland and the Baltic states.) If some of the other European countries also increased their budgets by 7%, NATO would not be in its present financial crisis.

The countries of the world that are significantly increasing their military spending—Russia, China, India, Japan, Brazil, the Gulf States—are putting short-term fiscal priorities to one side in order to pursue capabilities that clearly aren’t obsolete in our still-dangerous world, one where threats have historically tended to appear suddenly and without warning. It is hard to think of historical parallels for a great conglomeration of trading nations such as Europe which for decades piggy-backs off an ally without any ultimately negative result.

Is it too much to hope for the day when an American president who understands brinkmanship visits NATO headquarters in Belgium, looks the Europeans in the eyes, and says: “Please could everyone from countries not spending at least 2.5% of its GDP on defence kindly leave the room, and not come back till they are. In the meantime, as far as America’s concerned, Article Five only covers those of us who remain.”

# Impotent Europe

*By Angelo M. Codevilla*

In 1945, demurring from Roosevelt and Churchill's consignment of Poland permanently to Soviet hegemony, Charles de Gaulle wrote in Vol. III of his memoirs that it is imprudent to foreclose the possibility of any nation's renewal because "the future lasts a long time." Nevertheless, while it is impossible to say whether another Europe in another era will acquire significant military capacity, we can "bet the farm" that *this* Europe won't, because it has become intellectually, morally, and politically incapable of it.

*This* Europe differs substantially from the one that emerged from World War II, which the Hoover Institution's Peter Duignan and Lewis Gann described magisterially in *The Rebirth Of The West*. That Europe armed itself against the Soviet Union because it was committed morally to Christian civilization and politically to the nationalism it had inherited from the 19th Century. Catholic statesmen set the tone of that relatively potent "*Europe des Patries*"—France's de Gaulle and Robert Schumann, Germany's Konrad Adenauer, and Italy's Alcide de Gasperi. The Franco-German treaty codified it in 1963.

The U.S. government bears some responsibility for replacing that Europe with a congenitally impotent one. In 1956 The Soviet Union had threatened war against Britain and France for their military assertion of their ownership of the Suez Canal. The U.S. government joined the Soviets in condemning them. This, combined with U.S. support for the Arab revolt in France's Algerian *departements* (and America's 1954 abandonment of France in Indochina) helped convince the British and French that they should divest themselves of their overseas territories and of the conventional forces they had used to hold them.

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Beginning in 1961, the Kennedy Administration began to constrain Britain's and France's nuclear forces. Kennedy withdrew cooperation from the Skybolt project, which would have extended the life of Britain's bombers. Then it pressured Britain to scrap its missile-firing submarines in favor of purchasing American ones. At the same time, it discouraged, denigrated, and derided France's own wholly indigenous nuclear force, often in scatological terms. This undercut support for such forces in Europe.

In 1962, under the not-so-secret agreement that ended the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy withdrew U.S. intermediate range missiles from Britain, Italy, and Turkey, discrediting the European leaders who had staked their reputations on their importance. This happened as the Administration replaced America's commitment to strike the Soviet Union should it ever invade Europe with the highly unpopular vow to fight such an invasion on European ground. This set off the *Atlantic Crisis* ably chronicled by Robert Kleiman's 1964 book of that name.

The Kennedy Administration's refusal to uphold the West's right of access to all of Berlin, and its acquiescence in the maintenance of the Berlin Wall, completed the discrediting of post-war Europe's leadership and opened the door to a new leadership with wholly different priorities. Whereas in 1959 Germany's Socialist Party had made a historic commitment to the West, by

1962 it was leading Europe in pressing for disarmament and concessions to the Soviets. By 1961 the sense that the U.S. would not resist the Soviet Union—and the U.S. government's urging—led Italy's governing coalition to include the Communist party's proxies.

Within a decade, the turnover of Europe's elites was well nigh accomplished. As Plato pointed out, any polity is the "writ large" version of those who set its tone. The "generation" that has occupied the commanding heights of European government, economics, and above all of culture, since roughly 1968 largely fulfilled the ambition of "hegemony" that Antonio Gramsci had outlined in his *Prison Notebooks* (1929-1935). That "hegemony," far more totalitarian than anything Lenin imagined, rests on Machiavelli's insight that the seizure of power over language and other cultural standards can be made irreversible.

That is why Europe's ruling class does not worry about the region's economic problems, never mind its demographic ones. Although native populations in free fall are being replaced by persons who are less immigrants than occupiers, and the region's bloated public sectors are surviving only by pauperizing those outside, the ruling class is confident that no alternative threatens it. Though few can imagine how Europe's current way of life can be sustained, fewer yet entertain politically incorrect thoughts about changing it.

On the contrary, Europe's cultural elite seems preoccupied with further entrenching its Gramscian hegemony. As usual, France is in the lead. Jean-Marie Guehenno's *The End Of The Nation State* (1993), arguably this generation's most influential intellectual product, argues that modern Europe has developed a political model superior to that of the nation state and a cultural one superior to that of the Christian religion—"an ensemble of rules with no other basis than the daily administered proof of its smooth functioning," and "a religion without god" based on "a world of rituals" that "represent in the world of things what priests do in the world of gods." "Ritual prevails over metaphysics."

These abstractions become concrete. France's Minister of education, Vincent Peillon, explains in his book *The French Revolution is Not Over* (2012) that the educational establishment's job is to "invent a Republican religion." The schools must be a "new church with its new ministers, its new liturgy and its new tablets of law." No need to guess whose wealth and power this religion serves.

It is impossible to imagine how thoughts about military defense of a nation's common good might fit into minds that reject the very notion of nations, of objective good and evil, and whose concrete concerns are limited to enhancing their own hegemony.



# Where Have All the Warriors Gone?

*By Josef Joffe*

Europe used to be a continent of warriors, but no longer is. For about 2000 years, Europeans excelled at massacring one another, and then with mounting efficiency and furor as the two world wars have demonstrated. They were also a race of conquerors, sailing forth from the 15th century onward to occupy the four corners of the earth. In the process, they invented the arsenal of modern war from the crossbow to the U-Boat, from mass to gas warfare. No more.

Above all, the warrior culture is gone, and with it, the values that celebrated duty, honor, manliness, self-sacrifice, and what Tocqueville called the “poetical excitement of arms.” For all its über-modernity, the United States still has such a culture, rooted mainly in the South, including Texas. Among the Europeans, the British and the French, ex-imperial powers both, retained at least remnants of this culture, but it is dwindling as well. A recent data point is the resounding defeat David Cameron suffered in the House of Commons when he called for a war resolution against the Assad regime. Not to be outdone by their archrival, more than two-thirds of the French said “*non*” to participation. If President Hollande went to the National Assembly, he, too, might go down.

More significant is the creeping demise of Europe’s armies. The UK’s regular forces are to shrink to their lowest size in 150 years. The French government wants to cut 30,000 over the next six years. The Germans, fielding more than 600,000 when divided into East and West, are down to 185,000—and falling.

By themselves, these numbers don’t mean much, not in an age when mass warfare seems passé. But smaller will not be more beautiful, given dwindling defense budgets. Even two years

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ago, NATO Secretary bemoaned the fact that the European members had cut their spending by \$45 billion, which is the size of the German budget. And with the end of the Afghanistan venture, more cuts are coming. The French, once trailing only the British among the big E.U. countries, want to reduce to 1.3 percent of GDP. By comparison, the U.S., never mind the sequester, is spending 4.4 percent.

Such trends do not foreshadow meaner and leaner armies, for these are highly capital-intensive. The Europeans are cutting faster than they are buying into useable, that is, mobile forces, such as transport and tanker aircraft, supply and fighting ships, longer-range bombers and tactical helicopters, stand-off weapons and battlefield surveillance. Not to put too fine a point on it, Europe's armies are being compressed into mini-Cold War formations, minus the thousands of heavy tanks once deployed to lunge across the North-German Plain.

To put it more harshly: European nations cannot fight a war beyond their borders, neither singly nor in combination, given their competitive rather than complementary procurement. When they last did fight in Libya, they ran out of ammunition in short order, having to hit up the U.S. for ordnance and battlefield surveillance. So much for a continent whose potentates (Napoleon, Hitler) once went all the way to Moscow and Cairo, not to speak of North America in the 18th and Africa in the 19th centuries.

Historians scratch their heads. The population of the EU-27 exceeds America's by almost 200 million. Its GDP comfortably outstrips the American one. Europe's riches are the puzzle, not the answer. The explanations come in a grab bag. The two world wars have extinguished the fires of nationalism and hence the will to grandeur. From some 60 million dead, the Europeans have drawn the conclusion that, short of self-defense, there is little worth fighting for. Life under America's strategic umbrella has taught the Europeans how *dulce et decorum* it is to outsource even self-defense.<sup>1</sup>

Their lost colonial wars have taught them that force doesn't buy anything, except blood, sweat and domestic revulsion. Those who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan had the lesson refreshed a few decades later. Last, but certainly not least: the warfare-welfare squeeze. Since the War, Europe has rewritten its "social contract" in favor of welfare and redistribution. Give or take a few points from country to country, 30 percent of GDP are now devoted to a rich array of transfers. The United States hasn't exactly been idle on this front, but with a decisive difference. The U.S. spends three times more as a fraction of GDP on defense than its European brethren.

Will Europe recoup its capabilities? The trends and the data say "no." And why should Europe do so? There is no strategic threat on the horizon as far as the eye (and satellites) can see. In spite of all the hoopla about "pivoting" and "rebalancing," the Europeans know that the U.S. cavalry will ride to the rescue if the threat re-materializes. In locales farther beyond, *both* Europe and the U.S. are losing their appetite for intervention because wars of order have proven costly and futile. It may well be "Sweden" for the rest of Europe. A mighty player and the scourge of the Continent in the 17th century, Sweden is now as aggressive as a reindeer, foreshadowing Germany's metamorphosis into a Greta Garbo power ("I want to be alone."). Russia, Iran and China are watching attentively.

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1. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* is a famous line from the Odes (3.2) of Horace. Roughly translated: "It is sweet and right to die for your country."

# A Linguistic Analysis of Europe's Crumbling Martial Spirit

*By Josef Joffe*

We know that Europe, including the two ex-imperial powers France and Britain, have been cashing in their “peace dividends” since the last Russian soldier left Central Europe in 1994. The large powers used to spend between 5 and 3 percent of GDP on defense; that share has now come down to as low as 1.4 percent (united Germany). There is little chance that this fraction will go up; indeed, all keep cutting away at their armed forces (Germany is down from a peak of 500,000 to 180,000).

This note tries to offer a very indirect explanation of what the author regards as underlying cultural change—no more than a loose hypothesis based on content analysis. This analysis looks at the declining frequency of key concepts such as “duty,” “honor,” “glory,” “my country,” “Vaterland” in the literature of various Western countries. The data are culled from a search of Google Ngrams, since World War II.

The assumption is that language reflects consciousness, culture, and self-perception. The tally reveals a marked drop in the use of such keywords everywhere, suggesting that Europe's old warrior culture is waning. With it, one must assume, comes a decline in the willingness to use force as tool of statecraft, hence to provide the appropriate means. The following numbers indicate how the frequency of these key terms has shrunk in the corpus of books scanned by Google.

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**Glory** (English): down by one-half since 1945.

**Gloire** (French): roughly the same reduction.

**Duty** (English): down by one-third

**Vaterland** (German, “Fatherland”): down by one-third.

**My Country** (English): down by one-half

**Staatsräson** (“reason of state,” German): down by one-half.

**Patriotism** (British English): down by one-third.

One should not build any towering theoretical edifices on content analysis, but discourse—what ideas are transmitted—does matter. (By the way, “glory” in U.S. books shows a decline, as well, though not as pronounced as in Europe.) There seems to be a secular change that is fairly immune to peaks and troughs in the temperature of the Cold War. The downward sloping lines are steady.

Why so? The problem of causality, of course, is that the strategic threat to Europe has declined *pari passu*, at least since the last gasp of the Cold War, which was the deployment (and dismantling) of INF almost a generation ago. We don’t know how Europe will react if the strategic threat rematerializes. Reality does impinge on consciousness. But there is no such threat as far as the eye (and space-based sensors) can see. For the time being, the cautious conclusion has to be that Europe, the continent that once conquered the four corners of the world, will not soon assume the role of a strategic actor again.

# The Arc of Decline in Europe's Military Capabilities

*By Williamson Murray*

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the decline in European military capabilities has been precipitous, but to a certain extent understandable. The three major European powers with the tradition of being great military powers, Britain, France, and Germany, responded in different fashions to the disappearance of Soviet military power from Central Europe. Any resurgence of European power will inevitably come from these powers, or it will not come at all, and the latter is far more likely than the former.

In effect the collapse of Warsaw Pact military power removed the existential Soviet threat that had been hanging over the Germans since the end of the Second World War. Not only was Germany reunited at no military cost—although at enormous economic cost—but the Germans for the first time in their history realized the obvious: namely that Poland represented a wonderful buffer state between them and the Russians. Moreover, the Poles, occupied for 45 years by the Russians, were and are more than happy to take on the role of serving as the protector of Germany's eastern frontier from potential Russian aggression. Secure on all of its frontiers, the Germans have fallen into the illusion that war could not possibly occur in Central Europe, especially since they started the two major world wars of the twentieth century. But now that they have given up that aspect of their strategic policy, they no longer see the need for any serious military capabilities. And given the fact that there is no apparent threat in sight, German disarmament seems to make sense, as did that of the British in the 1920s.

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For the British and the French the journey has been a bit longer. Both initially maintained the illusion after 1990 that they were great military powers with some ability to project military power beyond their borders. Both participated with division-sized forces and air units in the 1991 Gulf War and their efforts represented far more than simply showing up to be seen at the side of the Americans. However, in the second war against Saddam's Iraq the British found it far more difficult to cobble together a division to support the drive on Basra. The French, of course, sat on the sidelines, perhaps wisely, as the United States destroyed Saddam's regime, but then had not a clue as to what it should put in the place of the evil Ba'athist regime.

But over the past two decades we have seen a steady decline in the out of area capabilities of these two powers. The French are still capable of reacting to the ill-trained Islamic murderers in central Africa as long as they have American logistical support. For the British the major cuts they have made in their military capabilities have made short-term economic sense, but once-lost capabilities are hard to reconstitute. Most important, they have virtually no ability to project military power. Simply put, they could not replicate the Falklands Island campaign of thirty years ago, which resulted in such a devastating victory over the Argentine military forces.

Nevertheless, the traditions of all three nations and their past history suggest that they are indeed capable of putting together serious military forces, if the national will were to demand a rebirth of military strength. However, for most Europeans, just as with the British and French in the early to mid-1930s, there appear to be no serious strategic threats on the horizon. Thus, without the will to rearm, it is highly unlikely that the Europeans, led by Britain, France, and Germany, will make any effort in the future to reconstitute military forces that are useful for something beyond looking good on parades.



Nevertheless, there are dangerous possibilities in the external world that most in Europe are unwilling to consider. Unfortunately history has a nasty way of wrecking the comfortable assumptions of those who believe that they live in a world ruled by law and order. A massive collapse of the political order in the Middle East—a real possibility—where most of their oil originates, might awaken Europeans and their leaders to the dangers surrounding the comfortable gated community of the European Union. Would they respond to such a possibility? Perhaps. But far more likely in such a case would be hand wringing and Monday-morning quarterbacking by the Europeans of those nations which might step in to protect their interests. After all it is well to remember the wretched, pusillanimous response of the European powers to the events in their own backyard during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, when they had real military capabilities.

# A Cautious Perspective on European Militarism

*By Ralph Peters*

Never say, “Never!” While Europe will continue to pare down its militaries and shirk most of its practical responsibilities for years to come, long-term developments may surprise us all. Europe is the continent that has exported, by far, the most death and destruction, and it may not be such a bad thing for the rest of the world to get a breather from the decidedly mixed blessing of Europe's attentions. But what happens when the world comes to Europe? Combine economic cancer in Europe's south and economic anemia in much of the north with record unemployment and ever-fiercer racism (except among elites, of course, who can insulate themselves), then toss in Islamist militancy and terror, and “democracy” may surprise us: The first wave of demagogues has already struck the political shores. A future militarization might not be for export, but a quasi-militarization of societies...which, of course, can lead, eventually, to cross-border squabbles. While I believe that this issue's three featured essays make cogent, accurate arguments—and I do not mean to predict any of the above developments—I'd just be cautious of assuming, “Once a pacifist, always a pacifist.” The last great age of European pacifism was, of course, between the world wars (“Why die for Danzig?”). Societies can pivot with bewildering speed—and we do well to recall, in this terror-obsessed age—that the greatest single massacre of the last quarter century was not in the Middle East, or Africa, or in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. It was at Srebrenica, in Europe.

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# Why Europeans Deserve More Credit Than We Give Them

*By Kori Schake*

The cosseted safety most Europeans feel since the end of the Balkan wars inclines them away from the need for effective military forces. The “Swabian housewife” model of thrift and narrow interests that Chancellor Merkel exemplifies for Germany is both what Europe is becoming and what it wants to become. It’s enough to make an American nostalgic for the days when the prime minister of Luxembourg could arrogantly declare “this is the hour of Europe, not the United States.” The European Union no longer even believes it has the power to affect choices of existing members—undemocratic politics in Hungary, corruption in Bulgaria—much less shape the international order.

But we Americans exacerbate this crisis of confidence in Europe by constantly harping on their inadequacies (as Secretary Gates did so abrasively in his farewell). It is true that European governments will not spend for defense what it would take for them to keep pace with the technological and operational innovations occurring in U.S. forces. But a better metric of their value would be whether they could defeat enemies they would conceivably fight. And here we don’t give Europeans nearly enough credit.

Europeans have fought twelve long years alongside us in Afghanistan. They were willing to intervene in Libya—Norwegians and Swedes, not just British and French. The French did good work in Mali, showing a model of successful limited intervention. Europe has at least seven of

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the world's ten most capable militaries. And they have long experience of retaining combat power on limited budgets—something the American military has not demonstrated any great ability at. Instead of complaining that Europeans are not doing what we are doing, we might try our hand at doing what they are doing well.

# The Use of European Military Power

*By Gil-li Vardi*

It would be far fetched to argue that Europe, whether under the umbrella of the European Union or through the independent action of nation states, would ever return to early 20th century levels of expenditure on defense. Yet European states, particularly Great Britain and France, have never completely relinquished military power, or the willingness to deploy it in service of their strategic interests. Most recently, France intervened militarily to support its allies in Mali. Great Britain has persistently served as a prominent partner in U.S.-led military coalitions, not least through its significant involvement in Iraq. Most interestingly, perhaps, Germany has been slowly but gradually developing its military capabilities, with the ongoing support of the international community. The question is therefore less whether Europe will possess significant military power; it is already a military player through the armed forces of some of its members. Rather, one should ask how, and under what conditions, this power—even if not as considerable as it was historically, or compared to the U.S.—will be brought to use.

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# Europe's Faded Military Glory

*By Bing West*

In June of 1940, General Weygand, the French supreme military commander, placed blame the French Army's speedy disintegration upon the school teachers "who have refused to develop in the children a sense of patriotism and sacrifice." Two world wars, both resulting in inter-European industrial-level slaughter, contributed to the decay of "patriotism and sacrifice" across Europe. The United Kingdom, threadbare and battered in Basra and Sangin, was the last to succumb.

No European nation will rearm either physically or morally. Europe is unable to balance or sustain revenue inflows by capitalist growth and outflows to socialist transfer payments. There are no resources to support credible military forces, and no will to employ them. NATO is a necessary geopolitical institution, not a credible military force.

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# The Five Reasons Why Europe Will Remain Militarily Limited

*By Victor Davis Hanson*

Five reasons explain why Europe is not investing in defense at adequate levels, and all these factors would have to change if the major European states were to rearm. And that scenario is unlikely to occur.

One, the Cold War is over and there is no existential threat on the horizon remotely resembling the former Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact that would prompt European military readiness comparable to the prior postwar period.

Two, the United States, and its contributions to NATO, subsidize the protection of Europe; America supplements the logistics and supply needs of the French and British militaries.

Three, the EU in general, and most European nations in particular, insist on redistributive socialist systems that reflect public sentiment that a dollar invested in national defense is a dollar robbed from social programs.

Four, Britain and France are nuclear and assume that fact eliminates the possibility of anything approaching World War I and II in Europe. European nuclear arms provide an adequate level of strategic deterrence that makes it unnecessary to deploy large conventional forces in Europe, or to fear an economically dominant Germany.

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Five, the soft-power ideology of the EU believes war is aberrant, and can be prevented through diplomacy, sanctions, embargoes, and the UN without resort to fossilized concepts like deterrence and military readiness. Large militaries in this view only encourage military adventurism abroad and thus destabilize the global order.

None of these considerations are likely to change much, and so we should expect Europe to remain largely militarily unimpressive.

# Why Defend Yourself When You Get a Sheriff For Free?

*By Bruce S. Thornton*

The nations of Europe, whether considered singly or collectively as the European Union, are not likely to build up their militaries anytime soon. The most obvious reason is they do not have the money. The EU is still struggling with the recession. Unemployment is stuck at 12%, economic growth is sluggish, and the simmering sovereign debt problems afflicting the southern Mediterranean countries, including France, have only been mitigated, not solved.

Yet even in flush times, the high costs of generous social welfare transfers preclude any increase in military spending significant enough to make France, Germany, or England a credible global military power. All their recent participation in military operations, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Libya and Mali, have taken place with European forces, superb as they are, dependent to some degree on the United States, which has had to provide the transport, intelligence, ordnance, and the bulk of the manpower required to make those operations a success.

But we must remember Napoleon's dictum that in war, morale is to material as three to one. Quite simply, Europe has sheltered beneath the U.S. military umbrella for nearly seven decades. A U.S.-dominated NATO has provided for Europe's defense, and America's ability to project force globally has meant that U.S. taxpayers have financed the modicum of order necessary for Europe's economies to function globally. For example, the EU imports about 14 percent of its oil from the Middle East, much of it passing through the Straits of Hormuz. Take away the U.S. Fifth Fleet, and keeping the straits open becomes highly problematic for the EU.

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More importantly, after World War II the EU nations have made a virtue of their necessary dependence on U.S. military power—which also has freed up the revenues that allow Europe to afford their generous social welfare programs—by means of a “postmodern” foreign policy based on the dubious nostrums of moralizing internationalism. Having presumably been schooled by two world wars to eschew the zero-sum interests of nationalist loyalties, the EU touts “supra-national constraints on unilateral policies,” as Oxford University’s Kalypso Nicolaides puts it, in order to create an interstate Kantian community of “autonomous republics committed to relating to each other through the rule of law.” Such a “security community” favors “civilian forms of influence and action”—the much-celebrated “soft power”—over military ones, and will attempt to create “tolerance between states” and to “move beyond the relationships of dominance and exploitation with the rest of the world.” Its guiding principles will be “integration, prevention, mediation, and persuasion.” In short, a means of creating global order that avoids the gruesome messiness of collective violence, and the unforeseen consequences and unavoidable collateral damage that are tragic contingencies of every war.

Such a philosophy conveniently rationalizes the failure to build up the military power necessary for backing up such gratifying idealism whenever the EU countries have had to deal not with each other, but with murderous states like Milosevic’s Serbia or Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Like Jimmy Stewart in John Ford’s *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*—the idealistic champion of law and reason instead of violence who in the end needs John Wayne and his gun to kill the bad guy—the EU nations, from the Balkans in the nineties to Libya a few years ago, have had to rely on the U.S. to back up its fine phrases with old-fashioned, mind-concentrating violence against ruthless aggressors.

Finally, the collapse of civilizational morale among the European elites and evident in flat birth-rates, self-loathing appeasement of disaffected Muslim immigrants, rejection of religion, and

commitment to nothing much beyond maintaining *la dolce vita* life-style, it is hard to identify the unifying beliefs that would demand a vigorous military, and for which Europeans would be willing to kill and die. After all, that is what militaries do. But the question since Homer has been, for what will one kill and die? I doubt most Europeans are willing to die for the EU bureaucracy in Brussels, or forego social welfare transfers to finance the means to kill bad guys elsewhere.

Given that it is unlikely that Europe will lose the low-cost, for them, protection of the U.S. military any time soon, and given that much of the identity of EU *bien pensants* is predicated on their conception of themselves as more sophisticated and civilized than crude, trigger-happy American cowboys addled by religious superstition and the work ethic, Europe will see no need to spend the money necessary to make them militarily more influential and self-reliant. To borrow Robert Kagan's metaphor, Europe will remain content to be global shopkeepers as long as America is willing to be the global sheriff.

## Suggestions for Further Reading

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## Discussion Questions

1. Which European country will have the most powerful military in 20 years?
2. Are there any chances that we will see a real pan-European defense force?
3. Are the forces of tension within the European Union likely to result in partial break-up of the alliance accompanied by nationalist rivalries among former and current members?
4. Is the viable European-American military alliance of the last seven decades largely finished?