

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 32
Number 4 *Parameters Winter 2002*

Article 11

11-10-2002

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Recommended Citation

Robert Wilkie, "Fortress Europa: European Defense and the Future of the North Atlantic Alliance," *Parameters* 32, no. 4 (2002), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2125.

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Fortress Europa: European Defense and the Future of the North Atlantic Alliance

ROBERT WILKIE

“ . . . when the New World in all of its might will come to the rescue of the Old.”

— Winston Churchill, 1940

“France cannot accept a politically unipolar world or the unilateralism of a single hyperpower.”

— Hubert Vedrine,
French Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1998¹

The two disparate visions of those epigrams define the political schizophrenia that passes for the strategic relationship between the United States and Western Europe. Since the end of World War II there has been a constant debate among America’s European allies as to what comes first, being a good Atlanticist or a good European. Despite these contradictory emotions, for 50 years the North Atlantic Alliance has proved to be history’s most resilient military coalition and a foundation for stability on the historically fractious continent.

The premise that informed the postwar order, however, has disintegrated. Europe is no longer threatened by the specter of armored legions racing toward the Fulda Gap. Both NATO and the European Union are expanding into Central and Eastern Europe; indeed, European political and economic integration is almost complete. The United States stands as the most formidable military and economic power since the Rome of Augustus. But contrary to the expected script, America is embroiled in a world conflict not with rampant Leninism but against masked brigands with designs on weapons of mass destruction. The European democracies, in spite of their wealth and optimism, are also on the hit list and can no longer afford to make shortsighted bargains with terrorist states. If the Western allies are to survive the terrorist assault, it is imperative that they create a

new and symbiotic military relationship. Old jealousies that point fingers at American hegemony or European indolence need to be put aside. NATO with its American primacy can provide the strategic framework for operations outside the European theater, while a combination of NATO and European Union members can and should create a military force capable of dealing with contingencies on their own doorstep.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, NATO became an organization in search of an identity, even as it expanded to include states that once stood behind the line from “Stetin to Trieste.” The first warning that NATO’s military structure had become a sclerotic shell of its Cold War self came in Kosovo. Conducted in Europe’s backyard against a low-tech Serbian foe, the conflict stretched Europe’s military resources to the breaking point. Two thirds of the 38,000 air sorties in Operation Allied Force were conducted by the United States. The US Navy and Air Force carried out an even higher percentage of the smart attacks.² The Europeans had difficulty mobilizing, much less deploying, several thousand troops. This was more disturbing given that there are over two million regulars on the muster rolls of NATO’s continental armies. British Defense Secretary (now NATO Secretary General) George Robertson noted, “Deploying a force of even a few tens of thousands, that is less than 2 percent of the total military personnel available to us, stretched our collective resources.”³ It also was apparent that the ability to prosecute joint and combined missions had deteriorated to the point that many of the allies were a danger to each other. There had been little joint training above the regimental level, and this is a trend that continues to haunt European plans for an independent defense capability. The pronounced gap in capabilities was also evident in logistics, airlift and sealift, surveillance and reconnaissance, and communications. Such was the level of American domination, there was actually a fear in some European capitals that congressional reaction in Washington would signal a retrenchment behind America’s ocean barriers, rather than see the United States continue to bear a disproportionate burden of European defense.⁴

The 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States further served to highlight NATO’s desperate condition. The invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (the collective self-defense clause) signaled NATO’s mobilization for war, at least on paper. In reality, the allied response to the terrorist assault

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was reduced to an Anglo-American joint venture in Central Asia. It is not a surprise that British and American forces were the first to engage the terrorists on their ground, since historically these are the two NATO partners willing and able to project significant power outside the alliance on a regular basis. To be honest, several NATO allies have deployed small units to the Afghanistan theater, and during Operation Anaconda the French played a visible role in tactical air operations against Taliban and al Qaeda holdouts. Phillip Gordon of the Brookings Institution points out that there was actually hope hidden in the alliance's meager military action.⁵ The alliance's political unity was impressive, as was the apparent understanding that modernization and military interoperability are essential for full partnership in the remainder of the global campaign, although that unity apparently has come to grief over Iraq.⁶

The subject of an independent European defense capability is not the product of the late 20th century or the events of 11 September. It traces its origins back to the 1950s with an attempt to launch a European Defense Community.⁷ Indeed, John F. Kennedy urged the NATO allies to build the "European pillar" in the alliance.⁸ Since the early 1960s, the debate has always been whether the pillar President Kennedy mentioned would be built inside or outside of NATO. However, the efforts on either end never reached fruition as European political integration continued in its inchoate state and America remained absorbed in its nuclear brinkmanship with the Soviet Union. At best, American support for European defense tended to be ambivalent. Burdensharing was always a word that emerged in the halls of Congress when American leaders looked at the defense balance sheets or when various Europeans expressed views similar to those of the aforementioned Monsieur Vedrine. However, whenever Europeans make too many noises about security flexibility, Washington tends to pull back for fear that NATO, the crown jewel of American foreign policy, will be damaged and America will lose influence on the continent. For the United States, history is a grim teacher. Repeatedly in the last century America reached across the Atlantic to rescue Europe from itself.

Several American administrations have preferred that the European defense pillar be built inside NATO. At the European Union's 1996 Berlin Ministerial Conference, the Clinton Administration lent its support for the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) with the ostensible objective of redistributing defense costs and military responsibilities for peacekeeping and crisis management among NATO members.⁹ The United States proposed that NATO create two combined joint task forces, each with a distinct composition. The first would use a deployable NATO headquarters for contingencies outside the European member states. This task force would be commanded by an American commander and have a visible American component.¹⁰ The second task force would also use a forward-deployed NATO headquarters, but one dominated by European forces, with the command handed to the ten-member Western European

Union (WEU).¹¹ In the second instance, the United States pledged to contribute such assets as needed.

At the follow-up NATO Summit in Washington in 1999, the Clinton Administration continued to endorse the concept of the task forces but added that it would not support any European Union (EU) moves to “decouple” European defense from NATO or discriminate against NATO members not in the WEU.¹² Turkey, for instance, only an associate member of the WEU and an aspirant to the European Union, protested at being left out of the joint task force decision-making process and threatened to object to reforms (labeled the “Strategic Concept”) the United States proposed on the structure and combat mobility of future NATO units. One year earlier, the US Senate went on record by supporting an amendment to the NATO enlargement resolution, offered by Senator John Kyl, calling on member states to be able to meet new and emerging security threats through the rapid deployment of forces over long distances. The Kyl amendment urged NATO members to be able to operate jointly with American forces in high-intensity conflicts.

Although not articulated by the Clinton Administration, there was trepidation at the acceleration of European defense initiatives in part because of French noises that “neutral” EU countries—i.e., Finland, Austria, Sweden, Ireland—would one day be in line for senior command positions in a future EU defense force. Both Republican and Democratic opinion-makers feared that the neutrals would bring with them a worldview out of cultural and political step with traditional notions of transatlantic security.¹³ The very prospect of a non-NATO commander having access to NATO resources and intelligence prompted then-Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms to send a letter to the *London Daily Telegraph* in which he referred to the EU’s European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as a dangerous and divisive means to check American power and influence.¹⁴

The Washington Summit also introduced the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI). The DCI was designed by the United States to force the alliance to recognize emerging security threats such as terrorism, civil disorder colored by ethnic and religious tensions, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It was also another warning to the Europeans that their infrastructure was in need of immediate revitalization. The DCI addressed five core areas of concern:

1. Mobility and Deployability.
2. Logistics and Sustainability.
3. Effective Engagement across the spectrum from high to low intensity conflict.
4. Survivability—force protection through better intelligence collection, reconnaissance, and air superiority.
5. Consultation, Command and Control—enhanced interoperable communication.¹⁵

The DCI was unanimously accepted by the members. That alone is an admission that the alliance needs reform. The problem with DCI as it is with any

talk of modernization is simple: Do the Europeans have the will to address the deficiencies in their military capabilities? Indeed, with a combined defense budget that equals about 60 percent of that of the United States, NATO's European armies provide only about one third of the alliance's total force.¹⁶ Since the fall of the Soviet Union, NATO's European partners have allowed defense spending to decline by 22 percent. Before the 11 September attacks, only Great Britain, Hungary, Norway, the Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal, and Turkey planned to spend a higher percentage of their gross domestic product (GDP) on defense in the next five years.¹⁷ It is instructive that three of these nations are NATO's newest members, having once stood on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain.

The left-center government in Germany released a Defense Reorganization Plan in 2000 designed to modernize its tank-heavy army. Unfortunately, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's government could not produce the funding to meet its goals because of opposition within its ruling coalition from the Green Party. According to the Congressional Research Service of the US Congress, Germany has sufficient heavy lift only to transport no more than 6,000 men beyond its borders.¹⁸ Obviously, Germany has a domestic political history that is unique, hence the reluctance to speak of moving a large force outside the Federal Republic. But while Germany is the largest and richest European power, its military strength has been so degraded that it is hard to imagine a significant change in its posture short of a dramatic reversal of power in the Bundestag. And without a sizable German contribution, the European defense initiatives may very well founder.

Several years before the United States began to speak of NATO modernization in earnest, the European Union took several concrete steps toward establishing a functioning defense force. A Franco-German Corps was created in 1991 and later "grew" to include 50,000 troops from five EU members. However, the numbers of this Eurocorps were fictitious in that they were drawn from numbers already committed to NATO, and subsequent developments have rendered even this effort extinct. In the same years, upon ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the EU agreed to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with a single transnational official to act as a Secretary of Defense (the office was assumed in 1999 by former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana).

The stumbling block for the EU was always the reluctance of Great Britain to do anything that might interfere with the special relationship London enjoys with Washington. Successive Conservative and Labour governments rejected any proposal that might weaken the continental commitment to NATO by diminishing Britain's influence as America's indispensable link to Europe. As long as the British remained outside, no European defense force would be credible. This attitude changed when Tony Blair entered 10 Downing Street.

In 1998, Prime Minister Blair announced that Britain would support the establishment of a European defense force.¹⁹ This statement was made in conjunc-

tion with a sweeping defense review undertaken by the Labour government that underscored the need not only to modernize Britain's armed forces but to develop an expeditionary capability to permit London to react quickly to regional contingencies. The British defense establishment was painfully aware that NATO's European forces were on the verge of becoming an irrelevancy after the Kosovo debacle. Another such spectacle might march Washington completely out of Europe. Blair understood that NATO could not conduct a Kosovo-sized operation without American participation. Britain also needed to reassert itself, since it stood to lose some influence within the European Union because of its refusal to join the common currency.²⁰ In a speech to the Royal United Services Institute, Blair formalized the shift in policy with an eye to both Washington and to Brussels:

We Europeans should not expect the United States to have to play a part in every disorder in our backyard. The EU should be able to take on some security tasks on our own and we will do better through a common European effort than we can by individual countries acting on their own. To strengthen NATO and to make European defense a reality, we Europeans need to restructure our defense capabilities so that we can project force, can deploy our troops, ships, and planes beyond their home bases and sustain them there, equipped to deal with whatever level of conflict they may face.²¹

Ironically, Britain's about-face coincided with the stated French position on European defense. Next to Britain, France is the only other European nation with the potential and the inclination to project its armed forces abroad. This potential is coupled with a historic vision of France as a great power, plus a defense industry that is among the world's most prolific and advanced. Every French government since Charles de Gaulle established the Fifth Republic in 1958—and subsequently took his country out of NATO's integrated military command—has attempted to maintain a semblance of France's former status by goading the United States and publicly questioning Washington's leadership of the Western world.

France has always been the strongest proponent of European integration as a counterweight to American political and economic strength. The remarkable rapprochement between de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer after World War II was in part the result of the French leader's desire to create a Franco-German alliance that would serve as the European answer to the coalition of *les anglo saxons* in Washington and London.²²

In spite of their pretensions, the French never denied the importance of the transatlantic partnership to Western security. During major crises ranging from Berlin, Cuba, and the Euromissile debate of the 1980s, France stood with the United States. Rhetorically, President Jacques Chirac promoted the European defense capability as a chance to preserve the Atlantic Alliance and ensure that Washington remained tied to the future of the continent.²³ But there should also be no mistake: France views the creation of an independent European security force as the capstone on its drive to see the EU, with France at its heart, as a world

power to be given the same deference afforded the United States. France's strategic perspective is a reflection of the rabid anti-Americanism among Europe's chattering classes. Ironically, as the European Union continues to expand, the sheer number of members may well dilute France's influence on the continent as more centers of power emerge. Should France hold the prospect of EU membership over the heads of NATO's newest partners in exchange for acquiescing in Paris's drive for a diminished American role in Europe, the self-indulgent transparency of such a play would be difficult for even for the French to sustain.

In December 1998, Britain and France issued at St. Malo the Joint Declaration on European Defense that balanced the competing worldview of each country. The French argued for an autonomous European defense force without the need for NATO assets. The British emphasized the unbreakable connection between NATO and the EU. The British also argued that the EU not duplicate existing NATO functions but create the necessary structure for strategic planning, intelligence collection, and independent strategic lift.

In December 1999, the EU convened a summit in Helsinki to lay the foundation for the European Security and Defense Policy. The member states announced their formal decision to seek an autonomous military capability, "and where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises."²⁴ An obvious avenue for EU military action would be Africa, where France, Spain, and in some respects Great Britain have important national and cultural interests and may not be willing shoulder the burden alone. The members were quick to point out that the proposed rapid reaction force would not be duplicative of NATO processes or missions.

The Helsinki conferees announced several "Headline and Capability Goals" that the EU should be able to meet by 2003. The first was to be able to deploy, within 60 days, 15 brigades (up to 60,000 troops) for the purpose of performing the so-called Petersburg tasks (crisis management, humanitarian and hostage rescue, and peacekeeping).²⁵ This European Rapid Reaction Force, roughly equivalent to a conventional corps, would be self-sustaining for up to one year and require an additional 100,000 soldiers for rotational purposes. In the simplest terms, Europe wants an expeditionary capability.

The headline goals assumed that critical infrastructure needs would be met by having ready up to 500 aircraft and 15 ships. The ESDP requires its own EU-centered security bureaucracy, and three institutions have been created in Brussels to meet those requirements: the European Military Staff, the European Military Committee, and a Political and Security Committee. It was recommended that EU member states dispose of their prohibitively costly conscript armies built along the mechanized Cold War model and transition to more mobile light forces with an enhanced special operations capability. This request is problematic in some countries like Germany that tend to use conscription to address social maladies, e.g. youth unemployment and services for the elderly.

The following November, at a Defense Capabilities summit, the EU updated its military requirements to include an additional 85 ships and 100,000 troops.²⁶ This summit also noted that the EU was deficient in heavy air and sea-lift and should immediately embark on the procurement of the A400M Airbus and troop transport helicopters as well as the Boeing E-8 JSTARS air-to-ground surveillance system.²⁷ The force is lagging behind the United States in refueling aircraft, helicopter transports, and engineer, communications, maintenance, transportation, and general logistics units. While most European countries have generally met their commitments for ground forces, there is significant concern about their overall readiness and training as well as their dual-hatted assignments to both the EU and NATO.

The headline goals on their face were inchoate in that the EU requires an expeditionary capability but made no specific provisions for a European naval force, other than to say that Europe needed ships. Without a maritime component, the EU is landlocked and of limited utility outside the continent. In 2001, the Chiefs of the European Navies proposed a European Maritime Fleet as the capstone to an interoperable joint force. According to Admiral Cees van Duyvendijk, Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Navy:

We are disappointed about the emphasis that is apparent in the European Headline Goal. The current situation in the world clearly proves that in the first phase of the conflict the flexibility of maritime forces is the biggest enabling factor in responding to the emerging crisis. This has to be firmly imbedded . . . not as a stand-alone element but as an integrated component of the overall capability.²⁸

The naval chiefs propose a fleet expeditionary force that is “separable but not separate from NATO.”²⁹ There are already several models for non-NATO cooperation in place, such as the British/Dutch Amphibious Force and the Spanish/Italian Amphibious Force (both brigade strength). As with the land component, there is a serious deficiency in strategic sealift, command and control, intelligence, and joint headquarters and doctrine. The Europeans are also in need of seagoing oilers and fleet replenishment vessels. The European navies (Britain and France being notable exceptions) have traditionally relied on multi-layered logistical support from the United States.

British Defense Secretary Geoffrey Hoon, in testimony before the House of Lords Select Committee on Defense, expressed Whitehall’s interpretation of Helsinki. Hoon noted that Britain viewed the European Rapid Reaction Force as a tool to be used when NATO (read the United States) does not wish to be engaged.³⁰ The British have given every indication that they regard NATO as Europe’s primary military alliance and NATO as the first recourse in the event of any crisis. They also expect to use NATO’s assets to support the European initiative, thereby linking future ventures to a permanent NATO/EU partnership.

The Bush Administration has echoed Britain’s concept of ESDP. In a joint statement issued with Prime Minister Blair a month after he took office,

President Bush welcomed ESDP as long as the European Rapid Reaction Force was an adjunct to NATO and used primarily when NATO chose not to be involved.³¹ Later in 2001 President Bush issued a joint statement with German Chancellor Schroeder, elaborating on the particulars of the NATO/EU agenda. The President remarked:

The United States welcomes the European Union's European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), aiming at making Europe a stronger, more capable partner in deterring and managing crises affecting the security of the Transatlantic community. This involves:

Developing EU capabilities in a manner that is fully coordinated, compatible, and transparent with NATO;

The fullest possible participation by non-EU European NATO members in the operational planning and execution of EU-led exercises and operations, reflecting their shared interests and security commitments as NATO members;

Working with other EU members to improve Europe's capabilities and [enabling] the EU to act where NATO as a whole is not engaged.³²

So we are faced with an incongruous set of circumstances. The European Union is gaining in power and influence as it seeks to bring the entire continent under a quasi-federal system—a system that already has a common parliament, currency, agricultural policy, and courts. Yet as the EU's economic power has increased, so has the preeminence of the United States as Europe's leading military force. As a result the question for the future will be this: How do we manage the strategic relationship between the two most powerful forces in Europe? How do we create the US-EU strategic partnership that as of 11 September 2001 must face the reality of staring down aggression outside of its traditional arena while there is such a marked imbalance in the relative strengths of the United States and its European partners?³³

The Europeans must take the first step if a new arrangement is to be molded. America will insist that NATO's primacy be maintained in accordance with the ESDP declaration that EU defense forces will be used where the United States does not wish to be engaged. NATO's psychological and emotional value is embedded deep in the American political system. Successive Democratic and Republican administrations have reaffirmed the centrality of NATO to America's relationship with Europe while warning against the military and cultural decoupling of America from Western Europe. However, NATO's new missions may also require a revision to the North Atlantic Charter to permit operations outside the European theater and the commencement of operations when no member state has been attacked or directly threatened.

Britain's conversion on ESDP was due in part to America's reaction to the situation in the Balkans and the notion that the United States had finally accepted the

late Colonel Harry Summers' admonition that "great nations" do not become involved in "little wars."³⁴ The EU must accept NATO, in its whole, as its partner in any future negotiations with the United States over security issues. The United States must also point out for the Atlantic Community that the West's security objectives and the military missions that will support them have changed since the Cold War. Apart from the political necessity of military cooperation, NATO's existing command structure—i.e., SHAPE or the Combined Joint Task Forces as envisioned in ESDI, can immediately integrate into or assist the EU military staff and command in future operations. The integrated staff should promote and train in joint crisis management and contingency planning. There should also be regular interaction between NATO and EU diplomats at the defense and foreign policy levels.

As with alliance military technology, the interoperability of command systems and nomenclature is essential. NATO nations also have formalized an intricate system of multinational officer liaison exchanges at the combat arms and general staff levels, and so should the EU and NATO establish a regular officer and diplomatic liaison system at the highest levels.

Since NATO assets will be used in European operations for as far into the future as we can see, operational command should be handed to a European officer of commensurate standing within NATO. Even the French Defense Minister, Alain Richard, has conceded, "In all probability this [operational commander] will be the Deputy SACEUR if the operation falls on NATO assets and capabilities."³⁵ The French also point out that the converse should be true—if the operation does not involve NATO assets, then a commander from the member state with the greatest interest in the operation should be chosen.

Although trade is not normally regarded as a national security issue, it is essential to regard it as such if the NATO/EU partnership is to work. Policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic should ensure that there is an open technology and arms trade among the partners. Multilateral trade regimes should be negotiated to ensure the protection of classified technologies, but the emphasis of governments should be on compatibility of systems and cooperative ventures among industries. There needs to be a fundamental restructuring of the European defense industrial system.

The F-100 Spanish frigate is a classic example of the possibilities that exist on this front. The Spanish have taken their *Aegis*-class program and developed with Lockheed and Spanish firm Izar an interoperable anti-missile program that has the potential of making Spain a strategic partner with the United States.³⁶ Spain recognized and seized the political initiative to specialize in the air defense and anti-missile field, and addressed the type of critical need that both the ESDI and the DCI recognized as fundamental if the European states are to be reliable military partners. Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar recognized that both the alliance and ESDI are in danger if the European members continue to field 20th-century technology accompanied by 20th-century land battle doctrine. This two-tiered imbalance can be redressed only through trade and investment.

The NATO/EU relationship must also factor-in a changed relationship with Russia. The 9/11 attacks on the United States reverberated in the Kremlin. The United States should seize the opportunity and use NATO as the vehicle to bring Russia into the Western world. The Russians have dropped most of their objections to NATO enlargement and are now in active military cooperation with the NATO command. They also need NATO technical cooperation to manage Soviet-era stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction as well as assistance in intelligence on and surveillance of Islamic extremists along Russia's porous southern borders. The EU has an opportunity to advance the value of its security program by promoting European/Russian defense cooperation and serving as a bridge for follow-on economic and technical assistance from Brussels. In many respects, the greatest change in the strategic environment for the 21st century may be the addition of Russia to the Euro-Atlantic community.

The Europeans must also close the credibility gap. The posturing of the Brussels leadership regarding the size and goals of the ESDP and its progeny, the European Rapid Reaction Force, has to be seen as more than political gamesmanship. The Europeans cannot presently meet the goals they established for themselves for mutual defense, even though they have chosen to concentrate on peacekeeping and humanitarian missions that are at the lower end of the military risk continuum. Currently there is no deployable capability for the European Rapid Reaction Force. If the ESDP is to become a reality, then European defense budgets and modernization programs need to be undertaken immediately. The United States and the European Union should insist on the Strategic Concept becoming a reality. The British already have conducted a Strategic Defense Review that has changed the composition and focus of their armed forces. Each NATO/EU state needs to do the same. The St. Malo agreement is a good framework for EU members to follow on both the political and military fronts.

To conserve resources there is no practical reason that each major European nation should have, for example, a field artillery school or an air defense artillery school. They should pool their resources and create joint specialty schools where officers and soldiers can train in a multinational setting. Thought should also be given to promoting specialization to reflect the changed nature of warfare in the 21st century. Instead of promoting traditional mechanized combat arms, emphasis should be given to special warfare, psychological operations, asymmetrical warfare, information warfare, and civil affairs, all of which are essential if the EU is serious about its peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions. This of course requires a fundamental reassessment as to what the new threat environment is and how force will be used to address it.

President Reagan's fundamental axiom was "trust but verify." A variation on that theme is necessary with regard to America's approach to its European allies. America must certainly encourage its NATO and EU partners to move forward with the plans laid down for ESDI and ESDP. But make no mistake—the

European Union has the potential to become a strategic rival to the United States. It already has embarked on an independent foreign policy. The EU, in general, opposes missile defense more stridently than does Vladimir Putin. It also has attempted to establish itself as a broker in the Middle East, where it is often at odds with the United States on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well on the continuing hostility between the United States (and Great Britain) and Iraq. Brussels' foreign policy arm has engaged in a series of negotiations with anti-American regimes in the Middle East that place it in opposition to American interests, even at a time when American lives are on the line. Accordingly, Washington will have to watch European security advances closely, as befits a great power.

Dire predictions that a more vigorous European security initiative will permanently separate the Atlantic allies, however, seem to be misplaced. This perspective denies the economic, historic, and cultural bonds that tie the United States to most of Europe. In addition, several of the more influential members of the NATO/EU coalition—particularly Britain, Spain, Denmark, and the Netherlands, not to mention the newest members of the alliance—will not consent to the sundering of the NATO partnership. It also remains to be seen if Europe will sacrifice elements of its social welfare system in order to finance the military capability they envision in the rapid reaction force.

Regardless of any hidden motives European leaders might have, 11 September 2001 altered the correlation of forces. For the foreseeable future, our attention will be focused outside of Europe. We must take the chance that the Europeans are serious about their own defense. If the Europeans want to be viewed as an equal, they will have to match their capabilities to their rhetoric. America should demand that they pull their weight in the fight against terrorism, because the combined economic and military resources of the United States, NATO, and the EU might be required for victory. It is not lost on some in Washington that America currently has 100,000 soldiers in Europe, many of whom are doing nothing more than throwing rocks in the Rhine. America has to rethink the way it does business in Europe when there is a global war being waged, and that means restructuring the current European force. One should also ask, What strategic sense does it make for the United States to have an American Army with more generals on the European continent than it has rifle company commanders there?

The proving ground may actually be where European pride came to grief in the 1990s—the Balkans. Peace in the Balkans is at the top of the Brussels foreign policy agenda. Before the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York, the Bush Administration had begun the gradual withdrawal of American forces from the region, and American forces were gradually giving way to allied troops in operations in Macedonia. The EU must now be painfully aware that it will have to backfill the American military and logistical presence in order to show the international community that it has the capability to deal with matters on its own doorstep. But in order to be successful in the region, the EU will for the foreseeable future still have to rely on command, control, communications, intelligence,

and logistical support from the alliance. The benefit for NATO and the United States is that these operations might force the more prosperous continental states—Italy and Germany—to accelerate military transformation and increase the percentage of their GDP allocated to defense.

Still, there are those on both sides of the Atlantic who believe that the European Union, as an old-fashioned socialist bureaucracy, is “fundamentally unreformable” and also culturally hostile to the United States, therefore making military cooperation impossible. Margaret Thatcher makes just such an argument in her book, *Statecraft*.³⁷ On the military side, her argument has merit: European defense is an idea in search of itself. It currently amounts to a paper army with paper resources, and its battlefield is a desktop in Brussels. The paucity of command and control assets and high-readiness units is potentially debilitating, as is the scarcity of high-end air units and precision weaponry.

In sum, the onus for the successful transition of the Atlantic Alliance to the grim realities of the 21st century is on the Europeans. For six decades they have prospered under the American nuclear umbrella and behind our trip-wire conventional presence on the continent. If they will transform their enormous economic power into a credible modern force, they might finally satisfy those such as the French Foreign Minister, who have been embarrassed by the continent’s strategic impotence, and an America that can no longer justify a one-sided commitment to the old order. The terrorist threat proves at least one thing: the military status quo is a dagger aimed at the heart of the Western democracies. We need to reform now and manage a new and more robust transatlantic relationship, or we all may face the specter of being executed in detail.

NOTES

1. Interview with French Minister of Foreign Affairs Hubert Vedrine, *Liberation* (Paris), 24 November 1998.
2. G.A.S.C. Wilson, “The European Rapid Reaction Force: A Transatlantic Issue,” *Proceedings* (March 2002), p. 75.
3. Speech by George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defense, “The Way Forward on European Defense,” The New Statesman Conference, London, 8 September 1999.
4. Terry Terriff, et al., “European Security and Defense Policy After Nice,” *Briefing Paper 20, The Royal Institute of International Affairs* (April 2001), p. 1.
5. Phillip Gordon, “NATO After September 11,” *Survival*, 43 (Winter 2002), 1-3. It was never envisioned that Article 5 would be invoked because of an attack on the United States by forces other than those of the Soviet Union. It also should be clear that NATO has complied with American requests for assistance, including deployment of AWACS, movement of standing naval forces to the eastern Mediterranean, shared intelligence, blanket overflight rights, and aid to states threatened by terrorists because of their support of the United States. The Standing Naval Force Mediterranean is conducting active surveillance of air and sea traffic along the approaches to the Suez Canal, shipping routes to the Aegean Sea, and the waters off of Cyprus, Syria, and Israel. It is protecting and monitoring vessels with hazardous cargoes and patrolling choke-points.
6. *Ibid.* Gordon also notes that the NATO leadership has impressed upon Russia its common interests with the West and as such has spurred the transformation of her attitude toward the alliance and its prospective expansion. Although there is certainly credit to be spread around, it has been the budding personal relationship between Presidents Bush and Putin that has reminded the Russian leader of his country’s historic and cultural ties to the West and that a coordinated response is needed to combat a common enemy.
7. Peter van Ham, “Europe’s New Defense Ambitions: Implications for NATO, the US, and Russia,” *The George C. Marshall Center Papers, No. 1* (April 2000), pp. 1-2. The European Defense Community was superseded by the Western European Union that at the time of its creation included NATO and non-NATO members.

8. Francois de Rose, *NATO at Fifty: Perspectives on the Future of the Alliance*, ed. Susan Eisenhower (Washington: The Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 1999), p. 199.
9. Karen Donfried and Paul Gallis, "European Security: The Debate in NATO and the European Union," *Congressional Research Service Report to Congress* (25 April 2000), pp. 1-4.
10. Ibid.
11. The WEU is composed of Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. It was intended to give Europe an independent military capability, and it did participate in the early stages of the Balkan crisis, drawing on NATO assets. Its cumbersome command structure made it nearly inoperable, and it is in the process of being fully assumed into the EU.
12. Madeline Albright, "The Right Balance Will Secure NATO's Future," *The Financial Times*, 7 December 1998. Secretary Albright referred to her "three Ds" in this article, "the triple dangers of decoupling (of European and NATO decisionmaking), duplication (of defense resources), and discrimination (against non-EU/NATO members)."
13. In 2000, the first Chief of the European Defense Staff was a Finn, who immediately announced that the European Rapid Reaction Force would not be a subsidiary of NATO.
14. Letter from Senator Jesse Helms, *The London Daily Telegraph*, 28 December 2000.
15. Carl Ek, "NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative," *Congressional Research Service Report to Congress*, 22 May 2001, pp. 2-3.
16. Wilson, p. 75.
17. Ek, p. 4.
18. Paul E. Gallis, "NATO: Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress*, 31 August 2001, pp. 23-24.
19. In general, Karen Donfried, "European Security and Defense Policy: The British Dimension," *Congressional Research Service Report to Congress*, 7 October 1999.
20. Van Ham, pp. 3-5.
21. Speech by Tony Blair, "NATO, Europe, and Our Future Security," NATO 50th Anniversary Conference, The Royal United Services Institute, London, 8 March 1999.
22. Richard Nixon, *Leaders* (New York: Warner Books, 1982), pp. 40-80, 133-68. See also Phillip Gordon, "The French Position," *The National Interest*, No. 61 (Fall 2000); and Charlemagne, "A Big Country Directoire for Europe," *The Economist*, 22 March 2002.
23. Van Ham, pp. 6-9.
24. Donfried and Gallis, pp. 4-5.
25. These tasks were named after the German city where they were first enunciated.
26. Joris Janssen Lok, "Promoting a European Maritime Initiative," *Jane's Navy International*, 12 December 2001.
27. Ibid.
28. Wilson, p. 75.
29. Terriff et al., p. 3. By the end of 2001, the EU had failed to sign the agreement to purchase the A400M because of budget problems in Italy and Germany.
30. Testimony of Geoffrey Hoon, Secretary of State for Defense, before the Select Committee of Defense of the House of Lords, on the subject, "The Common European Policy on Security and Defense" (London: HMSO, July 2000).
31. Joint Statement of President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, US Department of State, "Washington File," 23 February 2001, internet, <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01022365.htm>, accessed 10 September 2002.
32. Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on a Transatlantic Vision for the 21st Century, Office of the White House Press Secretary, 29 March 2001.
33. Robert E. Hunter, *The European Security and Defense Policy: NATO's Companion or Competitor?* (Washington: RAND, 2002), p. 175. Hunter notes that the EU reacted immediately after the assaults on the United States. It attacked terrorist financing, shared intelligence, and provided law enforcement assistance through Interpol.
34. Harry Summers, Jr., *The New World Strategy* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1995), p. 176.
35. Quoted in Hunter, p. 151, n. 3.
36. Juan Carlos Campbell-Cruz, "Spain Wants to Play Big," *Proceedings*, March 2002, pp. 77-79.
37. Phillip Webster, "Thatcher: Britain Must Start to Quit EU," *The Times*, 18 March 2002. The former Prime Minister advocates a British retreat from the common defense and security policy in the name of closer ties to the United States, including requesting British membership in the North American Free Trade Association with America, Canada, and Mexico. Mrs. Thatcher and a significant number of Tory "Euroskeptics" view EU membership as fundamentally incompatible with the traditional notions of British sovereignty.