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Military Force and Mass Migration in Europe

Matthew N. Metzel and John M. Lorenzen

ABSTRACT: This article provides historical background for policymakers facing the complex international concern of mass migration. By examining prior American interventions and identifying existing policies that support military responses, planners can begin to develop effective solutions for the current crisis.

In 2016, President Donald Trump addressed the topic of Europe's mass migration crisis: "If you do not treat the situation competently and firmly, yes, it is the end of Europe."¹ These words of caution highlight the growing seriousness of the problem. In 2015, more than 1 million refugees and migrants flooded the southern border of Europe, with another 2.6 million seeking refuge in Turkey.² By the end of 2016, the European Union reported an additional 500,000 illegal border crossings while Turkey struggled to manage 3.5 million displaced civilians from neighboring war-torn states.³ For comparison, Italy and Greece received over 1 million migrants and refugees by sea in 2015, and over 300,000 in the first nine months of 2016.⁴ Compounding this challenge, members of criminal and terrorist organizations have embedded themselves in, and recruited from, vulnerable migrant and refugee populations.⁵

Although the United States supports the European community with diplomatic and economic aid, the cumulative impact of migration threatens to destabilize several member states within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. To achieve strategic objectives for a strong and resilient security posture within the Alliance, US leaders should consider employing limited military means to address the problem of mass migration in Europe.

This article argues the US military should support an overarching grand strategy to assist European allies facing the complex problem of mass migration. While current US policy has emphasized the use of diplomatic and economic support for affected nations, there has been

1 Michel Rose, "Trump Raps Merkel over Migrants, Says U.S. Could Have Good Relations with Putin," Reuters, February 9, 2016.

2 International law defines migrants and refugees differently, but the terms are used interchangeably in reference to Europe's foreign populations. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *The Refugee Convention, 1951*, with commentary by Dr. Paul Weis (Geneva: UNHCR, 1990), 6; Somini Sengupta, "Migrant or Refugee? There Is a Difference with Legal Implications," *New York Times*, August 27, 2015; and "United States European Command Posture Statement 2016," United States European Command (USEUCOM), February 25, 2016, <http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/article/35164/u-s-european-command-posture-statement-2016>.

3 "Fewer Migrants at EU Borders in 2016," Frontex, January 6, 2017, <http://frontex.europa.eu/news/fewer-migrants-at-eu-borders-in-2016-HWnC1J>; and Mehmet, "Refugee Influx to Turkey Sharply Rises," Al-Monitor, November 30, 2016.

4 "Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response: Mediterranean," UNHCR, October 2015, <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>.

5 "Fewer Migrants," Frontex; and Cetingulec, "Refugee Influx."

little discussion concerning the use of the military arm of national power to help address this ongoing crisis. Yet, the examples of World War II Europe (1944–45), Bosnia (1992–95), and Kosovo (1999), highlight the historical value of applying US military leadership, planning, and resourcing as part of a holistic international humanitarian response.

Several key assumptions underpin our argument for increasing US military involvement to support the civilian response to mass migration. First, violence and economic hardship in the Middle East and Africa will continue to drive irregular migration flows into NATO member states, which will outpace the response capacity of European governments and conventional humanitarian relief actors.⁶ Second, Islamic State activity will spike in Europe as the terrorist organization seeks soft targets to detract attention from strategic losses in Syria and Iraq.⁷ Third, terror and criminal organizations will persist in leveraging the migration crisis through displaced civilian populations.⁸ Fourth, European allies will become increasingly hostile toward migrants and refugees due to real and perceived economic and security threats.⁹ Finally, domestic pressure will cause political leaders within the affected nations to look for options beyond civilian response activities.

European Security Environment

The recent surge of migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa has placed an enormous strain on the economic, security, and political stability of several states. The inflows create opportunities for international terrorists to aim *weapons of mass migration* toward Europe by embedding members among the displaced populations traveling from war-torn regions of the world. Germany confirmed 340 cases of Islamic extremists recruiting within refugee centers and Europol reported 300 cases of similar efforts.¹⁰

The European Union's efforts since 1999 to strengthen the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, also known as Frontex, have failed to address several gaps in immigration security and control, including legal obstacles that prevent law enforcement collaboration to determine identities of suspected smugglers.¹¹ Since 2015, migrant-related terror activity in Europe has spiked, damaging the public's sense of domestic safety and injuring an already fragile economy.¹² The resulting distrust

6 Liz Alderman, "Aid and Attention Dwindling, Migrant Crisis Intensifies in Greece," *New York Times*, August 13, 2016.

7 Maamoun Youssef, "ISIS Leader Urges Attacks in Europe, U.S.," CTV News, May 22, 2016.

8 Philip Breedlove, *United States European Command: Theater Strategy* (Stuttgart, Germany: EUCOM, 2015), 2; and Ross and Jovanovic, "Paris Bomber."

9 "Unemployment Statistics," Eurostat, August 22, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics; and "Migrant Crisis: Tensions Run High in Lesbos as Refugees Stage Street Protest," *Telegraph*, September 8, 2015.

10 Greenhill, "Weapons of Mass Migration," 11–13; "Germany's New Security Measures: Integration Panic," *Economist*, August 18, 2016; Shehab Kahn, "European Border Agency FRONTX Warns ISIS is Weaponising Refugees," *Independent* (London); Meira Svirsky, "13 Percent of Syrian Refugees Support ISIS: Poll," Clarion Project, November 1, 2015, <https://clarionproject.org/13-percent-syrian-refugees-support-isis-poll>.

11 Nick Mathiason, Victoria Parsons, and Ted Jeory, "Frontex to Get Budget Hike after Refugee Failures," *EUobserver* (Brussels), September 21, 2015; Julian Hatter, "FBI Chief: 'Gaps' Remain in Screening Syrian Refugees," *Hill* (Washington, DC), October 8, 2015.

12 Andrew Higgins, "Link to Paris Attack Roils Debate over Migrants in Hungary," *New York Times*, December 17, 2015; and Tim Hume, Tiffany Ap, and Ray Sanchez, "Here's What We Know about the Brussels Terror Attacks," CNN, March 25, 2016.

is captured in recent opinion polls, where 55 percent of Greeks and 60 percent of Italians believe refugees increase the likelihood of domestic terrorism.¹³ Similarly, 72 percent of Greeks and 65 percent of Italians claim refugees will take domestic jobs and benefits from national citizens.¹⁴ These perceptions have affected European elections, as the subject of mass migration moves to the forefront of international discourse. The political—as well as economic, social, and security—winds in Europe have changed, causing many elected officials to explore options previously ignored.¹⁵

Medical concerns also surround the migration crisis, as displaced populations historically carry a disproportionate percentage of infectious diseases, such as human immunodeficiency virus, and hepatitis. In fact, 21 percent of tuberculosis cases in 2007 came from non-EU migrants.¹⁶ The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control recently stated migrants and refugees have overwhelmed the capacity of several health service providers, creating gaps in medical treatment and records management along Europe's southern border.¹⁷ This challenge has raised concerns from European citizens who question the government's ability to protect the health and safety of the domestic population.¹⁸

Impact of Mass Migration

Turkey, Greece, and Italy represent three NATO member states where migration has affected stability. American military planners should contemplate options to support Allied efforts for coping with the security, economic, and political challenges that have emerged. The following information and analysis provides an overview of some of the challenges, opportunities, and risks that face each nation.

Turkey

Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan are the points of origin for nearly half of all refugees who crossed Europe's borders in 2015.¹⁹ In March 2016, the European Union announced an agreement with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to curb the massive flow of migrants traveling north through Turkey. This pact contained the following key provisions: the European Union would pay Turkey 6 billion Euros to hold approximately 3.5 million refugees and migrants; the European Union would accelerate consideration for Turkey's membership; Greece could redirect migrants to Turkey; and Turkey would be required to

13 Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes, and Katie Simmons, "Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs," Pew Research Center, July 11, 2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/europeans-fear-wave-of-refugees-will-mean-more-terrorism-fewer-jobs/>.

14 Ibid.

15 Erik Kirschbaum and Andrea Shalal, "German Anti-Immigrant Party Beats Merkel in Her Home District," Reuters, September 3, 2016.; and interview with German general officer, September 4, 2016.

16 Tony Barnett et al., *Migrant Health: Background Note to the "CDC Report on Migration and Infectious Diseases in the EU"* (Stockholm: European Center for Disease Prevention and Control, 2009).

17 Flavia Riccardo et al., *Handbook on Using the ECDC Preparedness Checklist Tool to Strengthen Preparedness against Communicable Disease Outbreaks at Migrant Reception/Detention Centres* (Stockholm: European Center for Disease Prevention and Control, 2016).

18 Scott Campbell, "Italian Officials Ban Migrants with Potential Infectious Diseases over Outbreak Fears," *Express* (London), July 8, 2015.

19 Phillip Connor, "Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015," Pew Research Center, August 2, 2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>.

prevent further irregular migration to the EU.²⁰ The agreement has significantly reduced flows, for now, but with uneven implementation, the future prospects of the provisions are uncertain. How long the Turkish government can sustain the added weight of humanitarian responsibility remains unknown, as unemployment reached 12.1 percent in November 2016, and the estimated cost to support migrants exceeds \$500 million per month as of February 2017.²¹ Unfortunately, President Erdogan continues to threaten European leaders with another flow of migrants and refugees in an effort to bolster domestic popularity and leverage further concessions from the European Union.²²

Greece

Greece is another NATO ally hit hard by the effects of mass migration. In 2015, more than 850,000 migrants and refugees illegally entered Greece, most traveling through Turkey and across the Mediterranean Sea.²³ Many migrants either continued northward or returned to Turkey, but over 62,000 remain in hastily constructed holding areas.²⁴ Geography also plays an important role in mass migration to Greece, as this nation serves as a gateway into the rest of Europe under the Schengen Agreement within the Treaty of Amsterdam. Through the agreement, residents may travel visa-free across 26 European nations.²⁵ This pact benefits economic trade, but it also adds a degree of complexity for Greece when dealing with security responsibilities for migrants and refugees. Nonetheless, Greece greatly benefited from the agreement between the European Union and Turkey, as migrant numbers dropped by 79 percent from 2015 to 2016, from 67,000 refugees in January 2016 and 3,500 during August of the same year.²⁶

Italy

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, Italy also grapples with the complex problem of mass migration. Prior to the Arab Spring and the collapse of Muammar Gadhafi's regime, Italy enjoyed a controversial agreement with Libya that kept migration from North Africa within politically acceptable limits. This agreement, under the auspices of colonial repatriation, allowed the Italian coast guard to return migrants to Libya in exchange for annual payments of roughly \$5 billion US dollars. The arrangement proved to be effective, as Italy received just 7,300 migrants from North Africa in 2010. However, following the

20 "EU-Turkey Statement: Questions and Answers," European Commission, March 19, 2016, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-963_en.htm; Alison Smale, "Angela Merkel's Trust in Turkey and Greece on Migrants Comes with Risks," *New York Times*, March 20, 2016; and Cetingulec, "Refugee Influx."

21 Cetingulec, "Refugee Influx."

22 Safak Timur and Rod Norland, "Erdogan Threatens to Let Migrant Flood into Europe Resume," *New York Times*, November 25, 2016.

23 "Greece Data Snapshot," UNHCR, March 29, 2016, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/47259>; and UNHCR, Greece Fact Sheet (Geneva: UNHCR, February 2017).

24 "Fewer Migrants," Frontex.

25 Stephan Keukeleire and Tom Delreux, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 233–34; and "Schengen Area Countries List," Schengen Visa Info, October 20, 2016, <https://www.schengenvisa.info/schengen-visa-countries-list/>.

26 "Fewer Migrants," Frontex; and "Since Alan Kurdi drowned, Mediterranean Deaths Have Soared," UNHCR, September 2, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/9/57c9549e4/since-alan-kurdi-drowned-mediterranean-deaths-soared.html>.

upheaval in Libya in 2011, migration jumped to 30,000 and exceeded 100,000 per year by 2014.²⁷

Unfortunately, the recent agreement with Turkey did not reduce migration to Italy; in fact, numbers increased from 150,000 in 2015 to over 180,000 in 2016.²⁸ A key problem also involves the risk of drowning while crossing the central Mediterranean. The United Nations reported the mortality rate for migrants traveling from North Africa to Italy is 1:42, and that over 4,100 migrants drowned while attempting to reach Europe in the span of just 12 months.²⁹ Even with these tragic statistics, tension between Italian citizens and migrants over the perceived negative effects to citizen safety and economic security has contributed to such behavior, including explosions set off by 300 migrants near Turin, Italy, in 2016.³⁰

History of US Military Support

US military leadership, planning, and resourcing has helped curb the destabilizing effects of displaced populations in Europe during World War II, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and US military capability can just as effectively address today's problem of mass migration. All three examples have similarities to the current crisis that are based on geographic location, forced migration, and ambiguity of the role the US military should have during mass migration crises. Nonetheless, several differences are evident, including the reasons for mass migration, the size of the displaced populations, the migrants' demographics, and the improvements in international and nongovernmental organizations' response capabilities. Notably, the following case studies involve migrants mostly displaced from within Europe's borders, while the current crisis involves migrants and refugees traveling to Europe from the Middle East and Africa.

Case Study 1: World War II Europe

The care and repatriation of millions of displaced persons was a monumental challenge during the most devastating war in European history. After Eisenhower took command in January 1944, refugees and displaced persons were treated as a command responsibility, and military units cared for and controlled the refugee camps and installations.³¹ Planning cells were tasked with managing and monitoring support for migration and refugee operations from 1944 through 1945, and their guidance regarding unaccompanied children was adopted with minor changes by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.³² Despite the lack of clear political direction from US and Allied officials, Eisenhower initiated an effort that would eventually

27 "Refugees/Migrants," UNHCR.

28 Steve Scherer, "Record 2016 Pushes Migrant Arrivals in Italy Over Half Million," Reuters, December 30, 2016; and Frontex, "Fewer Migrants."

29 "Since Alan Kurdi drowned," UNHCR.

30 Stephanie Kirchgaessner, "Tensions Run High in Rome's Suburbs as Italy Struggles with Migration Crisis," *Guardian*, July 26, 2015; and Oli Smith, "Migrant Centre Explosions: Violence between Locals and Migrants Shuts Down Italian City," *Express*, November 25, 2016.

31 Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations, Its History and Work 1946–1952* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 3, 15–27; and Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: 1939–52: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 96, 97, 162–67, 450–68.

32 Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 159; and Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Refugee in the World: Displacement and Integration* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1963), 3–4.

provide humanitarian aid for more than 6.7 million displaced refugees and migrants during and after the war.³³

These efforts were possible because Eisenhower agreed with Field Marshal Moltke's statement that plans may amount to nothing, but the process of planning is invaluable.³⁴ Proudfoot explained the Allies had no plan for managing mass migration in 1943, or at least no comprehensive plan that addressed the complexities of displaced populations on the battlefields of Italy. Eisenhower directed his staff to form a Displaced Persons Branch to integrate the lessons learned in Italy as part of contingency planning for the Normandy invasion, Operation Overlord. These plans were finalized and published just two days prior to the invasion and their implementation played a pivotal role in mitigating the suffering of displaced civilians across Europe. A key component of the plans included tailored guidance to account for disparate regional challenges—for example, one appendix focused on migration issues in France, while another addressed refugee contingencies in Belgium. Finally, the migration plans helped inform resource decisions, such as Allied trucks to transport food, supplies, and displaced persons and allocation of military personnel for construction, plumbing, sanitation, and security services for each refugee support center.³⁵

From 1944 through 1945, Allied planners were faced with the challenge of balancing limited means to address a growing number of wartime requirements.³⁶ In one instance, Proudfoot explains, the Supreme Headquarters directed US Civil Affairs units in Italy to feed and to transport migrants on the battlefield, but the units did not have the authority to task the necessary logistical capabilities for their assigned mission. The planners corrected this problem through military-operated support centers across Europe that provided subsistence, lodging, sanitation, medical, educational, and security services for refugees and migrants. The headquarters also assigned combat support capabilities—such as personnel from civil affairs, military police, medical, and transportation units—to operate the centers.

When Germany surrendered in May 1945, Allied forces had provided humanitarian aid to over 2 million displaced civilians. By September of that same year, the number had grown to almost 7 million.³⁷ Law Number 1, which established the principle of “non-discrimination on the grounds of race, creed nationality, or political opinion” likely contributed to the American's successful refugee mission.³⁸ Thus, the headquarters later facilitated training missions for the newly established United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration to transfer the humanitarian mission from military to civilian control.³⁹

33 Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 159.

34 Helmuth von Moltke in Peter G. Tsouras, ed., *The Greenhill Dictionary of Military Quotations* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2000), 364.

35 Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 96–97, 162–63, 167, 191, 450–68, 480–81.

36 Jeffrey Record, *Revising U.S. Military Strategy: Tailoring Means to Ends* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 1–3.

37 Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 96–97; 125–28; 159; 162–63.

38 Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), 148.

39 Holborn, *International Refugee Organization*, 168–69.

Case Study 2: Bosnia

The problem of forced migration in Europe reemerged in the 1990s, after the European Commission recognized the independence of Slovenia and Croatia in January 1992 and Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 1992, and the United Nations and the European community failed to facilitate peace within the Republic of Yugoslavia. As the communist regime crumbled, ethnic fighting began among Muslim Bosnians, Serbian, and Croatian populations, who comprised 44 percent, 31 percent, and 17 percent of the population, respectively.⁴⁰ Because of the violence, the United Nations' peacekeeping forces in Bosnia were unable to provide humanitarian relief to thousands of displaced civilians.⁴¹ Between 1992 and 1995, an estimated 97,000 people were killed during the Balkan conflict and over 2.3 million civilians were driven from their homes.⁴² This disruption caused significant concern for NATO officials due to the negative impact on the security posture of member states in the region, and the US military responded once again.⁴³

US military leaders arrived late to the Bosnian conflict, mainly because senior military and political leaders viewed the situation as a European problem.⁴⁴ Warren Zimmermann, former US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, blamed America's reluctance on the "Vietnam syndrome," while General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned against committing forces in the Balkans without a clear political end state.⁴⁵ However, heightened media attention on the escalating violence in Bosnia, coupled with the United Nations' inability to stabilize the region, pressured Washington to accept a more prominent leadership role.⁴⁶

Once NATO agreed to the UN request for military assistance, US military leadership took center stage and provided much needed direction and motivation to enforce the terms of peace agreed to under the Dayton Accords.⁴⁷ In November 1995, US General George A. Joulwan, Supreme Allied Commander, visited the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' headquarters for a personal assessment of the humanitarian situation in Bosnia.⁴⁸ He also directed NATO staff to develop detailed plans, including a time-phased repatriation effort, to best support peace objectives outlined by the United Nations Security Council.⁴⁹ Finally, to show his commitment to the success of this operation, Joulwan proposed a collocated command group consisting of NATO and United Nations' personnel.⁵⁰

40 Sadako N. Ogata, *The Turbulent Decade: Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), 50–51.

41 Ibid.; and Walter E. Kretchik, "Military Planning before Operation Joint Endeavor: An Initial Assessment," in Robert F. Baumann, George W. Gawrych, and Walter E. Kretchik, *Armed Peacekeepers in Bosnia* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2008), 69–94.

42 Steven Woehrel, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Current Issues and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013), 2.

43 Kretchik, "Military Planning," 63 and 67; and Ogata, *Turbulent Decade*, 104.

44 Joyce P. Kaufman, *NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict and the Atlantic Alliance* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 217; Ogata, *The Turbulent Decade*, 53; and Kretchik, "Military Planning," 68.

45 Robert F. Baumann, "From UNPROFOR to IFOR," in *Armed Peacekeepers*, 38.

46 Ogata, *Turbulent Decade*, 102.

47 Woehrel, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

48 Ogata, *Turbulent Decade*, 106.

49 Ibid., 106–7.

50 Ibid.

As in World War II, US military planning played a critical role in supporting the problem of mass migration in Europe. Similar to Eisenhower's planning team, Joulwan's staff sprang into action within the Supreme Headquarters.⁵¹ These planners led the development of what would become Operation Joint Endeavor, and provided guidance to the NATO-led peacekeeping force that would enter Bosnia in December 1995 and transfer the mission to the European Union in 2004.⁵² Furthermore, US Army Europe and V Corps planners also played a significant role in developing a detailed campaign plan that included a large sustainment force capable of supporting the complexities of an international humanitarian effort under the terms of the Dayton Accords.⁵³

Resourcing US military forces in Bosnia became a point of contention within American domestic politics in the 1990s. Many leaders worried about becoming involved in a European affair with no vital US interests, while others warned of joining an effort that had no clear exit strategy.⁵⁴ However, heightened media attention in the summer of 1995 caused US officials to act by employing military means to help stabilize Bosnia and provide much needed humanitarian relief to millions of displaced civilians.⁵⁵

By September 1995, US ground forces in Europe began training for peacekeeping operations, and by late December, American military units entered the war-torn region of Bosnia as part of a NATO-led peace Implementation Force.⁵⁶ Resourcing this operation extended past American political projections, as US forces continued to deploy to Bosnia from December 1995 through 2004, until being replaced by forces from the European Union.⁵⁷ For all the challenges surrounding logistical and security demands in the Balkans, US military resourcing proved to be a critical component of a holistic international response to the largest forced migration crisis in Europe since the end of World War II.

Case Study 3: Kosovo

In 1999, Europe witnessed yet another large-scale forced migration event.⁵⁸ Like Bosnia, Kosovo's migration crisis was a product of failed diplomatic talks between members of the international community and Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic. Most of the disagreements centered on the Yugoslavia's response to Kosovar separatists.⁵⁹ Fearing another Bosnia scenario, the international community quickly intervened to pressure Milosevic to accept a cease-fire agreement between the Serbs and Kosovars.

However, as reports of genocide reached the international community, the UN Security Council authorized a NATO air campaign against Serb military targets to begin in March 1999. Milosevic responded by forcing more than 800,000 Kosovars to flee their homes for the safety

51 Kretchik, "Military Planning," 60.

52 Woehrel, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2–3; and Kretchik, "Military Planning," 61.

53 Kretchik, "Military Planning," 71; and Woehrel, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

54 Baumann, "UNPROFOR to IFOR," in *Armed Peacekeepers*, 38.

55 Kretchik, "Military Planning," 68–69.

56 Ibid., 72.

57 Woehrel, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 9.

58 Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*, 132.

59 Ibid., 131–33.

of bordering nations.⁶⁰ The ensuing migration undermined the security posture of several bordering nations and placed enormous strain on allied resolve—for example, 100,000 refugees flowed into Macedonia, creating a domestic political crisis that required international intervention.⁶¹ Meanwhile, another 100,000 Kosovars fled to Albania and 27,000 to Montenegro.⁶² The international community would once again turn to the US military for much needed leadership, planning, and resourcing to help address the problem of forced migration in Europe.

US General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, answered the international community's call for a leader who would provide the purpose, direction, and motivation necessary to address the growing crisis in Kosovo. Early in the conflict, Clark warned politicians in Washington that NATO bombings would become a race against time since Milosevic would likely increase violence against the Kosovars in response to NATO air strikes.⁶³ Unfortunately, Clark did not communicate this warning to leaders within the United Nations, who were surprised by the tens of thousands of migrants who overwhelmed the small refugee camps located in Albania and Macedonia.⁶⁴ This communication failure contrasted sharply with the partnership experienced during the Bosnia conflict, and seems odd given the repeated warnings by Milosevic concerning his political weapon of choice in Kosovo.⁶⁵

Although US military leaders miscalculated the size and scope of forced migration in Kosovo, they moved quickly with NATO allies to plan a detailed crisis response effort for the economic and political strain on flailing border states.⁶⁶ Specifically, Supreme Headquarters planners faced several synchronization challenges that included late-arriving logistical requests from the United Nations, as well as accusations of encroachment into the oversight responsibilities of UN humanitarian officials.⁶⁷ Simultaneously, military planners juggled several domestic political concerns within the affected border states—for example, the Macedonian government viewed Kosovar refugees as a security threat and officially opposed the NATO air campaign, which they believed caused a spike in migration activity.

In contrast, Albania was generally supportive of NATO military operations and openly received Kosovar refugees because of their shared ethnicity.⁶⁸ Fortunately for the Alliance and the international community, Milosevic sued for peace within a matter of months, allowing military leaders to turn their attention to developing plans for a NATO-led peacekeeping force shaped by the previous campaign in neighboring Bosnia.⁶⁹

The US military played a pivotal role in the Alliance's ability to resource a well-organized humanitarian operation, especially along

60 Ibid., 132.

61 Ibid., 154–55.

62 Ogata, *Turbulent Decade*, 144.

63 Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*, 151.

64 Ogata, *Turbulent Decade*, 145.

65 Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*, 133, 149–50.

66 Ibid., 149–50 and 166–67.

67 Ogata, *Turbulent Decade*, 147–51.

68 Ibid., 146.

69 Ibid., 143.

the Macedonian and Albanian borders. Sadako Ogata, the UN's high commissioner for refugees, admitted that NATO forces provided a more efficient system of support to migrants than did her own organization.⁷⁰ During this crisis, the Alliance's leaders wisely chose to tap the enormous potential of military logistical capabilities that provided 4,600 tons of food and water, 2,600 tons of tents, and 1,600 tons of medical supplies to affected nations between March and June of 1999.⁷¹

Analysis of American Efforts

In each case study, US military leadership served as a pillar and catalyst for effectively addressing the migration crisis. Although Eisenhower, Joulwan, and Clark each faced disparate challenges, they recognized the destabilizing effects that refugees and migrants had on the security posture of the affected nation-states. All three military leaders served as the commander of allied forces in Europe, which provided the organizational structure and command authority necessary to oversee a multifaceted, international operation. Two of the three leaders seized the initiative by studying the impact of migration on security and stability operations and by directing planning teams to develop and coordinate a holistic, integrated response. However, different levels of success resulted from variations in leadership style and the authorities that each leader had in committing the necessary resources.

US military planning served as the second pillar for success, highlighting the importance of communicating the commander's intent and synchronizing logistical requirements associated with the complex demands of mass migration. Each planning group factored a range of geographic and ethnic considerations into their analysis and dispersed limited resources across long lines of communication to achieve their stated objective. Of the three staffs, the planners during World War II arguably faced the most difficult task of fighting Axis powers in Europe while simultaneously providing humanitarian support for over 6 million refugees.

Nevertheless, each of the planning teams faced its own set of unique challenges—for example, the planners in 1995 operated under a severely compressed timeline for developing the right-sized peacekeeping force in Bosnia, while those in 1999 focused on hasty expansion of refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania. In 1945, planners developed training programs for UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration personnel to assume civilian control of the migrant crisis, while the military focused on enforcing security zones of separation between warring ethnic groups to set the conditions for UN aid to the Balkans. Ultimately, each planning staff succeeded in developing the flexible guidance necessary to communicate the commanders' intent while synchronizing humanitarian relief for millions of displaced civilians.

US military resourcing, especially logistical resourcing, serves as the third pillar of success for addressing mass migration in Europe. All three case studies demonstrated a weakness in nonmilitary response efforts to cope adequately with the massive logistical requirements.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 151.

⁷¹ "NATO's Role in Relation to the Conflict in Kosovo," NATO, July 15, 1999, <https://www.nato.int/Kosovo/history.htm>.

Military planners' recognition of resourcing mistakes made during operations in Italy greatly influenced Allied humanitarian efforts following Operation Overlord. Close coordination between the military leadership and members of the UN helped establish clear lines of responsibilities for distributing humanitarian aid within designated safe zones. And, the willingness of military planners to offset the logistical shortcomings of several humanitarian organizations in Kosovo helped stabilize the populace and allow for an orderly transition from military to civilian oversight.

Recommendations

Based upon a complex set of challenges surrounding Europe's problem of mass migration, senior leaders should consider employing US military leadership, planning, and resourcing to strengthen the security posture of NATO. To this end, the US European Command publicly announced its intention to work with US interagency partners, while monitoring the refugee crisis.⁷² However, there has been little concrete progress on addressing the existing gaps in European response efforts, or in designing integrated civil-military contingency plans for a future spike in mass migration.

Military leaders must seize the initiative to strengthen the security posture of NATO. Recently, a senior US military leader explained that limited assets must be focused on the mission of deterring Russia, while the European Union addresses the migrant crisis.⁷³ Although this is a reasonable position, considering the high-risk threat of a revanchist Russia, historical case studies highlight the value of employing US military capabilities to counter the destabilizing effects of forced migration. It is also worth considering that humanitarian and deterrence missions in Europe are not mutually exclusive, but rather interdependent and essential for achieving a strong and resilient NATO alliance. Metaphorically speaking, it is important to keep a sharp eye on the opponent's queen during a chess match, but it may be the lowly pawn that creates a checkmate. The decision to apply US military means to the problem of mass migration is certainly a political one. However, developing options and contingency plans to address likely security threats is the role and responsibility of military leaders.

The US European Command should consider establishing a planning team focused on studying the problem of mass migration in Europe. Once established, this planning cell should develop a range of options in coordination with host nation officials, the United Nations, and other humanitarian organizations. Under most circumstances, the US military would not lead humanitarian relief operations, but bilateral or multilateral planning efforts could bridge the civil-military divide and enable government and nongovernment agencies to understand unique military capabilities. More importantly, these planning efforts increase the probability of saving lives while simultaneously stabilizing the security posture of several European allies. Multilateral planning is a low-cost, high-payoff activity which would increase understanding

⁷² "U.S. European Command Posture Statement 2016," US European Command, February 25, 2016, <https://www.eucom.mil/media-library/article/35164/u-s-european-command-posture-statement-2016>.

⁷³ Interview with military leader, September 29, 2016.

and readiness without detracting from a necessary focus on more conventional deterrence activities.

Putting plans into action requires resourcing, and there are several limited ways that the US European Command could approach this challenge now, which would establish a baseline for larger-scale contingency operations should the need arise. Congress already funds combatant commanders to perform humanitarian operations through the Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid appropriation. The annual requests for such funding could include estimates for supporting mass migration contingencies. Planners could also leverage the capabilities of reserve forces through the use of Active Duty for Operational Support funding.⁷⁴ This option would allow military leaders to keep active component units focused on deterring Russia, while simultaneously building individual and unit readiness in the reserve components through operational employment overseas. Finally, planners should consider including requests for specified capabilities as part of their annual integrated priority list to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in support of the program objective memorandum.⁷⁵

The following recommendations for providing US military support to Turkey, Greece, and Italy are based on a net assessment of several gaps in existing capabilities. These recommendations should not be considered comprehensive, but rather serve as a starting point for further research, analysis, and bilateral and multilateral planning. It is worth noting that in February 2016, NATO sent a maritime group to patrol and report suspected migrant smuggling activity in the Aegean Sea as part of a security request for assistance from Turkey, Greece, and Germany.⁷⁶ NATO forces also contributed maritime forces for Operation Sea Guardian in November 2016 to support the European Union's antimigrant smuggling efforts in the central Mediterranean Sea.⁷⁷ The following information highlights the value of providing additional support capability.

Turkey would likely benefit from targeted US military support to address issues of protection, health services, and infrastructure development in support of the 3.5 million refugees and migrants located within its borders.⁷⁸ The US Army Corps of Engineers could, for example, help train Turkish military and civilian agencies in constructing temporary aid stations, schools, and sanitation facilities, using construction materials paid with funds from the existing agreement between the European Union and Turkey. In addition, US military physicians could provide technical training and support to help prevent the spread of communicable disease and treat the growing number of women and children with health-related issues.⁷⁹ Once a resolution is established in Syria and Iraq, civil affairs experts could assist the Turkish government in developing repatriation plans for future implementation.⁸⁰ Regardless

74 Gary Morris, (deputy director, Army Reserve, Program Analysis and Evaluation, Office of the Chief, Army Reserve), email message to author, February 17, 2017.

75 Ibid.

76 US Army Europe, civil affairs operations officer, email message to author, December 8, 2016.

77 Ibid.

78 "Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis: Turkey," UNHCR, November 2015, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224>; and Cetingulec, "Refugee Influx."

79 Cetingulec, "Refugee Influx."

80 Trump, "Remarks by President."

of the support package developed, US military planners should consider a range of options to help prevent Turkey from becoming an increasingly autocratic and unstable member of NATO.

Greece could benefit from US military training and assistance for improved security screening activities. In 2015, several terrorists entered Greece claiming to be migrants, but they later conducted deadly bombings in Paris and Brussels.⁸¹ Increased intelligence support and coordination could reduce the risk of future attacks against NATO member states. US military engineers could also assist with infrastructure development to improve hastily constructed holding areas that currently contain over 62,000 refugees.⁸² Targeted US military medical support could also help curb the spread of communicable disease in the region, while reducing the government's reliance on the success or failure of the fragile agreement with Turkey.

Finally, although Italy has relatively stable economic and security positions in Europe, the Italian government could benefit from US military means. Training opportunities and support packages could include maritime rescue capabilities to reduce the staggering number of migrants lost at sea. Unmanned aerial reconnaissance support could assist Frontex efforts to develop appropriate security responses by identifying high-risk watercraft crossing the central Mediterranean and identifying suspected smuggling activities. The US military's medical expertise in gynecology, obstetrics, and pediatrics could prove helpful to the more than 59,000 refugee women and children already located in Italy.⁸³ Finally, civil affairs personnel could play a role in managing administrative functions and communication efforts within large refugee holding areas.

Conclusion

US political leaders should consider employing military leadership, planning, and resourcing to achieve the strategic objective of a strong and resilient security posture in NATO. Although the United States continues to assist allies and partners by providing billions of dollars in aid, there is no substitute for applying all of the elements of national power when dealing with the complex challenges of mass migration. Options for action or inaction include intersecting lines of risk within the larger question of European security. The case can be made that too much, or too little, involvement could interfere with long-term US interests; however, it seems prudent to develop options for senior leaders to consider as part of a comprehensive strategic assessment of the migrant challenge in Europe. In the end, the United States must do what it has always done in response to a crisis that involves its European allies—America must lead.⁸⁴

81 Andrew Higgins, "Link to Paris"; and Chris Graham et al., "Sources Say Ibrahim El Bakraoui Was on US Counterterrorism Watch List before Paris Attacks," *Telegraph*, March 26, 2016.

82 "Migrant Crisis," *Telegraph*; and "Tension Grows, Refugees on Chios Burn Down Refugee Pre-fab Shelters," *National Herald*, October 10, 2016.

83 "Asylum Seekers Monthly Data," UNHCR, October 18, 2016, http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/asylum_seekers_monthly; and Sarah Crowe and Chris Tidey, "Record Numbers of Unaccompanied Children Arrive in Italy," United Nations Children's Fund, October 18, 2016, http://www.unicef.org/media/media_92928.html.

84 Cheryl Pellerin, "Mattis: U.S. Remains Committed to NATO as Alliance Transforms," Department of Defense, February 14, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1083279/mattis-us-remains-committed-to-nato-as-alliance-transforms>; and Trump, "Remarks by President."

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