There is growing interest within NATO—reflected in the Strategic Concept and in the DCI—in developing power projection capabilities for a wider range of missions than was the case during the Cold War. Moreover, the poor performance of European forces in Kosovo has galvanized European allies to improve their capability to project force outside NATO territory. Some allies, notably the U.K. and France, have made improvements in this area. It is by no means certain, however, that improved power projection capabilities will lead to a greater European willingness to use military force outside Europe in concert with the United States. Indeed, in contrast to the Cold War mission of collective defense, the allied use of force beyond Europe will be a matter of choice rather than obligation.

This chapter examines the attitudes and policies of America’s European allies toward the use of force to protect Western energy security. It focuses in particular on the question of which allies the United States could count on, and under what conditions, to conduct military operations outside Europe to protect energy supplies. The initial section looks at the issue of energy security in a broader transatlantic context. The second section presents a historical overview of the Alliance’s efforts to adapt its organization and forces for military operations beyond Europe. The third section surveys allied attitudes toward energy security and coalition operations, while the fourth section examines political constraints on coalition operations. The fifth section offers some observations about the future of
coalition operations in key energy-producing regions, taking into account the factors that are likely to condition allied decisions to use force outside Europe. The final section draws some implications for U.S. military planning.

ENERGY SECURITY IN THE TRANSATLANTIC CONTEXT

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, NATO has made significant progress in addressing new threats and challenges in the post–Cold War security environment. During the Cold War, NATO’s primary purpose was the defense of Alliance territory against a possible Soviet military attack. Over the past decade, this narrow strategic orientation has given way to a broader interest in projecting security and stability in and around Europe. The Alliance’s new Strategic Concept, approved at the April 1999 NATO Summit in Washington, is emblematic of this new commitment. In the new concept, Alliance leaders declared that NATO’s new role is to extend stability and security throughout the Euro-Atlantic region. They also agreed that non–Article 5 missions (e.g., those not involving direct defense of Alliance territory, such as peacekeeping and humanitarian operations) are now a core NATO mission. Finally, to give substance to these new commitments, NATO leaders approved the DCI, which is designed to improve Alliance members’ ability to project force effectively across the full spectrum of its missions.

Nonetheless, NATO’s transformation remains incomplete. The Strategic Concept does not directly address one of the principal challenges facing the Western allies in the next millennium: threats to common security interests emanating from beyond Europe. Indeed, although the Strategic Concept has given direction to NATO’s post–Cold War mission in Europe, it has failed to resolve the question of NATO’s role outside Europe, especially in preserving security in regions of vital interest to the West, such as the Persian Gulf. The continuing differences within the Alliance surrounding the circumstances under which NATO would use force outside Europe could create strains in transatlantic relations over the next decade.

Although NATO’s energies in the coming years will be consumed by peacekeeping and peace support missions in Europe and by the implementation of a long-term stabilization plan for the Balkans, ensuring Western access to energy supplies is likely to emerge as an
increasingly divisive issue for the United States and its European allies. For the past half century, Europe has imported large quantities of oil from the Persian Gulf and has been a prime beneficiary of the American security umbrella in the region. Paradoxically, however, the United States—which is considerably less dependent on Persian Gulf oil than Europe—has assumed the role of guarantor of Persian Gulf security at considerable expense in national resources and political capital.

In fact, with few exceptions, America’s European allies lack the political will and the power projection capabilities to contribute meaningfully to the defense of the Persian Gulf against regional threats. Whether the United States will be willing to continue to bear a disproportionate share of this burden is questionable. There is mounting concern among senior U.S. military officials and members of Congress about the strains placed on U.S. forces by America’s expanding worldwide military commitments. These expanding commitments are being borne by a force structure that is 35 percent smaller than a decade ago.¹ The added strains on U.S. military readiness from operations in Kosovo have exacerbated this concern.

Rising frustration over unequal sharing of security responsibilities within NATO, as well as the changing nature of the security threats the Alliance will face in the future, led the United States to press its European allies to increase their power projection capabilities. U.S. military commanders have also expressed concern about the growing gap between U.S. and European forces in high-tech military capabilities, which could make it difficult in the future for European countries to fight effectively in a coalition with U.S. forces.² Whether


America’s European allies will heed the call for improving their power projection and coalition warfare capabilities remains uncertain. Most European governments have a strong aversion to NATO’s use of force outside Europe, especially in the absence of a U.N. mandate, and allied governments face stiff domestic opposition to extending NATO’s security responsibilities beyond the European continent.

The fault line between the U.S. and European perspectives on NATO’s agenda and priorities outside Europe could remain dormant for some time as long as there is no major crisis in the Persian Gulf. However, prospects for long-term stability in the Gulf remain uncertain in light of the political, economic, and social strains that afflict traditional societies struggling to cope with the challenges of modernization. Furthermore, both Iraq and Iran are likely to jockey for influence in the region over the next decade, and their rivalry could lead to heightened tension and perhaps conflict. A serious Iraqi or Iranian military challenge to the security of the Arabian Peninsula and access to oil supplies could fracture Alliance unity if Western military intervention were required and if few of America’s allies were able to make a meaningful contribution.

ADAPTING NATO FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS BEYOND EUROPE

The question of improving allied military capabilities to protect critical energy supplies is best understood within the broader context of the historical debate within the Alliance over the sensitive “out-of-area” issue and the new Strategic Concept’s definition of NATO’s future purpose. The United States has had a long-standing interest in securing a greater allied military contribution to the defense of the Persian Gulf. Indeed, U.S. initiatives to promote European cooperation in planning for and conducting joint military operations outside Europe have sparked intense controversy within NATO for more than 20 years.

The Historical Context

The cataclysmic events of 1979 thrust the out-of-area issue into the forefront of NATO’s formal agenda. Following the twin shocks of the
Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the United States pressed its NATO allies to assume more of the burden of improving the Western defense posture in Southwest Asia (SWA).\(^3\) In a major campaign to shift the focus of NATO planning to the Persian Gulf, the United States urged allied governments to (1) increase force levels within Europe to compensate for the diversion of American forces to the defense of SWA; (2) make civilian and military aircraft and ships available to transport U.S. forces from the United States and Europe to the Persian Gulf in an emergency; (3) augment their peacetime military presence in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean; and (4) provide the necessary access, overflight, logistical, and transportation arrangements to support the deployment of U.S. forces in a crisis.

The European allies reacted coolly to American overtures. As a result, the Alliance made limited progress in developing capabilities for out-of-area operations. The U.K. and France made minimal improvements in their rapid-deployment capabilities and slightly increased their naval presence in the Arabian Sea. The United States concluded en route access and logistical support agreements with several European countries, including Portugal, Spain, and Germany, and secured U.K. cooperation in establishing a base on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. Some allies, notably Italy and Germany, agreed to “fill in behind” for U.S. naval forces that were redeployed to SWA by increasing their naval deployments in the Mediterranean and the north Atlantic, respectively. By the early 1980s, several European allies had earmarked hundreds of ships and aircraft to move U.S. forces in a Persian Gulf contingency.

At the same time, European countries balked at undertaking a formal NATO role in SWA and frequently failed to implement military measures that had been agreed to by Alliance political authorities. European countries, for example, rejected any kind of formal association with the United States’ newly created Rapid Deployment Force and rebuffed American proposals for the creation of a NATO rapid action force. Similarly, allied governments resisted formalizing or coordinating multinational planning for out-of-area operations.

Consequently, the 1980s saw few major improvements in allied expeditionary capabilities or in NATO’s machinery for planning and conducting joint military operations beyond Europe.\(^4\)

The failure of the Alliance and individual member countries to adapt forces, plans, and procedures to the demands of military operations in a high-threat environment outside Europe was made abundantly clear by the meager allied contribution to Operation Desert Storm. NATO’s formal response was limited primarily to defense of NATO’s southern region. Twelve NATO countries contributed forces to the anti-Iraq coalition, and a handful supported air operations against Iraq mounted from Turkey (Spain, the U.K., France, Italy, and Greece). But only the U.K. and France contributed meaningful combat forces, and only with the United States providing the great bulk of strategic lift and initial logistics support for these deployments. The United States provided 75 percent of the combat aircraft, flew 85 percent of the combat sorties, and contributed roughly 90 percent of the ground forces that engaged in the ground offensive.\(^5\)

Events in the early 1990s ushered in a new phase in NATO’s out-of-area strategy. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact removed two chief impediments to an enlarged Alliance role outside Europe: the fear of weakening defenses in Europe and anxiety over being dragged into unnecessary conflicts by the U.S.-Soviet rivalry. In equal measure, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and endemic instability in the Balkans poignantly illustrated how events on NATO’s periphery and beyond Europe could threaten Western security interests.

Together, these developments—combined with the growing perception in the United States that European countries were not pulling their weight—galvanized the Alliance into adapting its strategy, missions, forces, and command structures to the dramatically transformed European security environment.\(^6\) The Alliance’s November

\(^4\)Ibid.


\(^6\)“NATO’s New Force Structures,” NATO Basic Fact Sheet No. 5, Brussels, January 1996.
1991 Strategic Concept called on NATO members to develop the capabilities to deal with a broader range of missions and threats—including the capability to perform crisis management and peacekeeping operations. At the 1994 NATO Summit in Brussels, Alliance leaders approved several changes to NATO’s political and military structures and procedures to enable the Alliance to conduct these diverse missions more effectively and efficiently. They also gave impetus to the growing European desire to bolster the European pillar of the Alliance by endorsing the concept of Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF). When fully implemented, the CJTF will allow a coalition of like-minded NATO countries to use NATO assets and command structures to conduct non–Article 5 operations without the participation of U.S. forces and assets and without the consensus of all Alliance members.7

Throughout the 1990s, NATO continued to improve the way its forces were organized and maintained to react more rapidly to crises in and around Europe. In particular, NATO created more flexible and mobile forces, including the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), and improved coordination, joint planning, and command structures for missions on NATO’s borders and beyond.8 Indeed, the ARRC is envisioned as the Alliance’s main vehicle for carrying out crisis management, peacekeeping, and related stability support operations. These new structures place greater emphasis on flexibility, mobility, and lethality. Furthermore, the reorganization of forces within NATO’s Integrated Military Command structure reflects these force characteristics as well as the growing importance of multinational forces for coalition operations.

In parallel with the Alliance’s formation of more flexible, mobile, and deployable force structures, several allied countries created their own rapid reaction forces and began to develop plans to employ these forces in multinational formations. Foremost among these are the German Crisis Reaction Forces (KRK), the United Kingdom’s Joint Rapid Reaction Force, and the French Rapid Action Force


In addition, the Eurocorps, consisting of units from Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Spain, has undertaken a limited amount of joint training and operational planning for multinational operations and has shared responsibility for command of the Kosovo Peacekeeping Force (KFOR) with other NATO commands. Finally, the WEU’s formation of the European Force (EUROFOR) and the European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR) is a potentially significant development of the EU’s defense capabilities, especially since these forces are clearly designed for North African contingencies, including the preservation of access to energy supplies.

Although the shift in focus away from the Cold War mission of static defense of territorial borders is an important and long-overdue development, its significance for Alliance military operations outside Europe should not be exaggerated. The force enhancements mandated by the 1991 Strategic Concept were designed primarily to improve the capability of allied forces to deal with low-intensity missions and threats on the periphery of NATO territory. Consequently, Alliance force planning has continued to attach a lower priority to improving NATO’s power projection capability for the more distant and demanding military contingencies in the Gulf. For most of the past decade, therefore, only the U.K. and France (and to a much lesser extent the Netherlands) have made tangible improvements in their long-range power projection capability—and even they continue to have serious shortfalls in the critical areas of precision-guided munitions (PGMs), strategic lift, mobile logistics, and deployable command, control, communications, computing, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR).

The Way Ahead

The Strategic Concept approved at the April 1999 NATO Summit in Washington defines NATO’s central purpose as establishing stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Thus, a key unresolved issue confronting the Alliance is the functional and geographic scope of future NATO military operations outside this area: For what

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purposes and where will the Alliance choose to use military force beyond Europe?

The Alliance’s new Strategic Concept opened the door to, but stopped short of, establishing the political, doctrinal, and military underpinnings for concerted NATO action beyond Europe’s borders. It recognizes non–Article 5 contingencies as a fundamental security task of the Alliance and acknowledges that extending stability and security throughout the Euro-Atlantic area can be put at risk by crises and conflicts affecting the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. It also acknowledges that Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including disruption of the flow of vital resources. Finally, the Alliance’s new mission statement urges members to continue adapting NATO’s forces, structures, and procedures to meet the full range of the Alliance’s new missions.

That said, the Strategic Concept, while not foreclosing the option of Alliance power projection operations beyond Europe, does not identify securing access to vital oil supplies as a core NATO mission; similarly, it does not explicitly state that threats to the security of the Persian Gulf could affect the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, although it does indirectly imply it. As a consequence, there is no explicit mandate in the Strategic Concept to prepare Alliance power projection capabilities for major combat operations or for an MTW in the Persian Gulf or in other potentially important energy-producing regions. Equally important, the Strategic Concept is of limited utility in providing specific operational guidance to Alliance force planners. In fact, shorn of its rhetoric, the Strategic Concept is a blueprint for developing the capabilities to meet threats to peace and stability within Europe. It has very little to say concretely about meeting threats to Alliance security interests emanating from beyond Europe, although it does call attention to the growing threat posed by WMD.10

10Of course, improved coalition capabilities for crisis management and “peace support” operations on the fringes of Europe may produce some ancillary benefit, particularly improving the interoperability of coalition forces. However, achieving a higher degree of interoperability and standardization to meet the operational requirements of these specific missions should not be confused with meeting the operational requirements for large and complex combat operations or an MTW in the greater Middle East.
This outcome is hardly surprising given the constellation of political forces surrounding the Summit. The Strategic Concept was a compromise document that papered over fundamental differences between U.S. and European strategic priorities and perspectives in the post–Cold War environment. The United States is increasingly concerned with threats to common Western interests emanating from beyond Europe, especially the proliferation of NBC weapons and their means of delivery as well as threats to energy supplies in the Persian Gulf. Accordingly, the United States believes that the central purpose of the Alliance should be to defend common Western security interests both within Europe and beyond its borders.11

Reflecting this security agenda, the United States has prodded its NATO allies to shift the emphasis in NATO force planning from the defense of territory to projecting stability and security “in and beyond” Europe. From the U.S. perspective, meeting this challenge would require improving allied capabilities to (1) project significant force rapidly at great distances from NATO territory; (2) sustain these forces in high-intensity combat operations with limited access to NATO infrastructure; (3) conduct military operations in the presence of NBC weapons; and (4) operate effectively together as a multinational coalition. There is growing American interest, moreover, in allied development of both theater and national missile defense capabilities to defend allied territory against long-range ballistic missile attack by states that might in the future commit aggression against countries friendly to the West outside Europe. Without these capabilities, in the view of its proponents, states contemplating such aggression may calculate that European countries could be deterred from coming to the assistance of threatened states owing to the vulnerability of their territory to ballistic missile attack. If this were to occur, Europe could risk becoming decoupled from the United States if this vulnerability coerced them into rejecting participation in coalition operations to defend common Western interests.

At the same time, however, many Europeans have rejected this expansive and ambitious conception of the Alliance’s future role. Most European governments are concerned primarily with threats to security within Europe or on its immediate periphery, and their forces (with the exception of the U.K. and France and increasingly Germany and Italy) thus remain focused largely on the defense of borders rather than on power projection capabilities. Furthermore, most allies believe that NATO’s main mission should lie in preserving security, supporting stability, and managing crises “in and around” Europe. For most European governments, parliaments, and publics, this means the Balkans and the Mediterranean but certainly not the Gulf or the Transcaucasus.

Therefore, in contrast to growing U.S. appeals to extend NATO’s missions and capabilities beyond Europe, most European governments are quite content with having the means to engage only in low-intensity “stability support operations,” which fall well short of what would be needed to defeat a well-armed adversary—especially one that possessed NBC weapons—in high-intensity combat operations. The narrow European vision of NATO’s purposes is reflected in the missions of the emerging European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), whose primary focus is low-level crisis management, peacekeeping, and peace support operations—the so-called “Petersberg tasks.” In addition, the lack of European interest in developing the capabilities to meet threats to Alliance security emanating from outside Europe is reflected in the tepid allied interest in ballistic missile defenses and continued allied foot dragging in implementing the Alliance’s 1994 counterproliferation program. Simply put, most allies are reluctant to spend scarce resources to deal with what they perceive as a remote threat, especially since such expenditures would almost certainly come at the expense of acquiring the capabilities to deal with threats in Europe’s backyard under the banner of the ESDP.

At the NATO Summit in Washington, the gap between U.S. and European perspectives on the out-of-area issue was bridged through

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mutual compromises and accommodation: The United States was forced to scale back its expectations with respect to the declaration of the Alliance’s new purposes. From a theological standpoint, therefore, the European allies gained American acquiescence to a Strategic Concept that avoids expressing an explicit Alliance commitment to extend its security umbrella beyond Europe. But the European allies had to accept a broader definition of threats to “common interests.” Moreover, they approved a DCI that could lead to significant improvements in allied power projection capabilities for missions lying beyond the defense of allied territory.

The main purpose of the DCI is to improve Alliance defense capabilities to ensure effective multinational operations across the full spectrum of Alliance missions in the new security environment. The DCI responds to four key challenges:

- First, the need to adapt NATO forces so that the Alliance can address the security problems and demands generated by the new strategic environment. The most likely challenges NATO will face in the future are ethnic strife, regional conflicts, the proliferation of NBC weapons, and threats to energy supplies. Most of these threats will arise on Europe’s borders and beyond and will change the character of future NATO military operations. In particular, many future non–Article 5 power projection missions will be smaller in scale than the Cold War mission of territorial defense. They may also be longer in duration, involve multinational operations below division level, and be undertaken without full access to existing NATO infrastructure. To meet these threats and challenges, NATO countries must develop more mobile, flexible, sustainable, and survivable forces to conduct coalition operations beyond allied territory.

- Second, the need to incorporate critical technologies, especially in the area of command-and-control and information systems, and to address the accelerating pace of technological change and the different rate at which allies are introducing these advanced capabilities into their force structures. A major purpose of the

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DCI is to narrow and eventually close the gap that has emerged between U.S. and European military-technological capabilities.

• Third, the need to agree on a common core of allied military capabilities, including the ability to share a much greater volume of battlefield data, coordinate operations, and conduct effective multinational operations across the full spectrum of possible military contingencies. Embedded in the DCI is the notion of a “common operational vision” that will lead to greater standardization of military doctrine, organization, tactics, training, and operational procedures to fully exploit the military-operational benefits of advanced technologies.

• Fourth, the need for all NATO countries to acquire the capability to protect their forces from NBC attacks and to operate on a battlefield contaminated by these weapons.

The DCI reflects these priorities and is aimed at fostering improved allied capabilities in five areas:

• **Deployability.** Despite some of the improvements several allies have made in their power projection capabilities, only the United States is capable of deploying large forces promptly outside NATO territory. To redress this deficiency, the DCI calls for NATO countries to (1) develop modular, self-sufficient force packages that can be readily tailored to the needs of specific missions; (2) better train personnel for power projection operations, especially small-unit operations, and move toward more professional armed forces; (3) procure equipment that is more easily transportable; and (4) improve capabilities for long-range military transport.

• **Sustainability.** Most of our NATO allies lack the structures, stockpiles, flexibility, and interoperability to sustain operations for both peacekeeping and power projection, particularly integrated multinational operations in a high-threat environment. There is a need, for example, to promote closer cooperation among the Alliance’s combat service support and logistics units, especially logistic echelon above corps (EAC), and to achieve greater interoperability and standardization in logistics operations. EAC logistics support will be especially important in future military operations beyond NATO territory because of the special
demands they place on the Alliance’s logistical system, including deployment of port operations units, heavy construction engineer battalions, long-haul or heavy-lift transportation assets, and other combat service support needed for large-scale operations in remote theaters with limited military infrastructure. Unlike the U.S. force structure, most European militaries lack EAC logistics units as well as significant deployable logistic support elements. Similarly, many European allies maintain low stockpiles of critical logistics items, including munitions, fuel, food, and medical supplies.

- **Effective engagement.** Many European allies lack the modern equipment, firepower, and advanced technologies with which to engage an adversary across the full spectrum of conflict. A particularly acute problem is the growing gap between American and European forces in their exploitation of so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) technologies—a problem compounded by the slow pace of European force modernization. Together, these issues have created potentially significant interoperability problems and, more important, would make it extremely difficult for allied forces to conduct fully integrated ground, sea, and air operations. In addition, many allies are limited in the amount of firepower they can bring to bear owing to shortages in PGMs and information systems to exploit these capabilities by achieving full situational awareness of the battlefield.

- **Survivability of forces and infrastructure.** The vulnerability of individual allied countries and Alliance forces to NBC weapons poses a potentially serious impediment to effective coalition power projection operations. There are two key dimensions to this problem. First, the vulnerability of national infrastructure and populations to NBC (or terrorist) attack could discourage countries from participating in or supporting coalition operations. Second, most European allies lack the equipment and capabilities to protect their deployed forces against NBC attack and to operate effectively in a contaminated environment; in particular, most have fallen far behind the United States in achieving the Alliance’s NBC-related force goals, such as protective equipment, wide-area ground surveillance, chemical and biological warfare (CBW) detection systems, and countermeasures against CBW agents. Moreover, many have failed to adapt their doctrines,
force structures, operations, and logistics practices to meet the unique demands imposed by power projection operations in an NBC environment; for example, none of the allies has given its deployed forces “just in time” logistics and self-protection capabilities to avoid presenting lucrative, massed targets. Unless these deficiencies are corrected and the gap is closed between U.S. and European capabilities to project and protect forces in a WMD environment, the Alliance will face serious difficulties in achieving a high level of interoperability among units in multinational formations and in executing a successful military campaign. Moreover, if these problems are left to fester, NATO could see a dwindling number of allied forces available for non–Article 5 operations.

- **Command, control, and communications.** The differing capabilities of Alliance members to exchange information could hinder interoperability and the effectiveness of coalition operations. Indeed, power projection for non–Article 5 operations, unlike the national layer-cake, theater-scale operations that dominated NATO planning and force development for Cold War Article 5 missions, puts much greater stress on both tactical and strategic C3. To ensure military effectiveness in future operations, which are likely to be multinational and quite often involve brigade-size units, NATO will need a joint and combined command-and-control capability. Most important, the Alliance must acquire the capability to collect, process, and disseminate an uninterrupted flow of critical information while exploiting or denying an enemy’s ability to do the same thing. To attain these objectives, NATO will need to field interoperable C3 systems and information assurance capabilities on a much broader scale based on a more common set of standards.14

European capabilities for projecting force in future military contingencies outside Europe must also be evaluated in the context of the EU’s commitment to establishing a common ESDP. At the December 1999 summit in Helsinki, EU leaders announced the formation of a rapid reaction force of 50,000 to 60,000 troops capable of

14The authors are indebted to RAND colleagues John Peters and William O’Malley for their contribution to the discussion of the DCI.
being deployed anywhere in Europe in 60 days for up to one year. How will this force—and the evolving arrangements for NATO-EU cooperation in European crisis management—affect the commitment of America’s European allies to improve their power projection capabilities under NATO’s DCI?

The structure and capabilities of the ESDP, as well as its relationship with NATO and non-EU NATO allies, remain a work in progress. At this juncture, it is an open question whether EU members will be able to muster the political will and resources to achieve real military capabilities, given declining defense budgets, demands for increased social spending, the divergent foreign policy interests and perspectives of EU members, and an unwieldy EU bureaucracy that lacks the experience and culture for dealing with military and security issues. Indeed, many observers fear that the EU will miss its goal of fielding the rapid reaction corps by 2003 or, as one U.S. official has lamented, use “smoke and mirrors” and other accounting gimmicks to reach its “headline” goals. Similarly, many U.S. officials worry that the ESDP could lead to a wasteful duplication of NATO assets, alienate NATO members who are not members of the EU, and create competing defense structures that will complicate a coordinated NATO and EU response to future crises. If this were to occur, the EU’s new structures and procedures would weaken NATO, and the ESDP would be a “Potemkin” force dependent on U.S. and NATO capabilities for all but the most minor tasks.

Although it is too soon to draw any definitive conclusions concerning the impact of the ESDP on allied power projection capabilities pending the resolution of these and other issues, several preliminary observations seem in order:

• First, the European rapid reaction force is being designed explicitly to handle the so-called Petersberg tasks of crisis man-

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agement, peacekeeping, and humanitarian operations within Europe. Although the Petersberg mandate embraces a full spectrum of operations, up to and including peacemaking operations of the kind the Alliance conducted against Serbia, its emphasis is on the low end of the spectrum (peacekeeping and humanitarian operations). To date the connection between the DCI and the ESDP remains fuzzy, leading some observers to worry that NATO could become a two-tier alliance in which European countries handle light peacekeeping duties in a benign environment while leaving serious military operations to the United States and NATO.

• Second, the European rapid reaction force will consist of lightly armed ground forces. Although it will probably have strategic transport and naval units assigned to it, it is unlikely to be structured to deploy significant air and ground forces over long distances. Nor is it likely to have the infrastructure and logistics base to sustain these forces in high-intensity combat operations for a prolonged period. Further, as long as some countries retain conscription, it will be difficult to deploy these forces in high-threat environments.

• Third, it cannot be taken for granted that the capabilities European allies might acquire to implement the ESDP will necessarily contribute to the DCI; in fact, there is potential for tension to arise between implementation of these two initiatives. As previously noted, the main purpose of the DCI is to improve the Alliance’s ability to conduct effective multinational operations across the full spectrum of Alliance missions. To be sure, strengthening the ability of European allies to conduct low-end peacekeeping operations, either within an Alliance framework or outside it when NATO as a whole is not engaged, will contribute to that goal and thus lead to more equitable burden sharing within the Alliance. For example, the European strategic lift that would be used to transport EU peacekeeping units to a European trouble spot would also be available to ferry European ground forces to the Persian Gulf. Nonetheless, the focus of the DCI is clearly on improving allied power projection and allied capabilities to fight together effectively in coalition operations with the United States. In other words, except for a small set of modest contingencies, where assets for the DCI and the ESDP may over-
The military capabilities needed to carry out their different missions appear to be largely incompatible.

- Fourth, the EU’s pursuit of the ESDP, especially if strong institutional links are not established between the EU and NATO, could come at the expense of the DCI and the ability of Alliance members to contribute in a more meaningful way to coalition military operations outside Europe. This is likely to be the case for several reasons:
  - European defense budgets are declining, and resources for DCI programs, many of which are expensive, will now face competing claims from the ESDP. Many European governments will find it difficult to resist the temptation to utilize existing forces for the ESDP rather than create new capabilities. Moreover, it will be easier for many countries to mobilize public support for increased defense spending in support of an EU enterprise than for bolstering capabilities for military operations outside Europe that are unpopular.
  - Many of the forces and assets that will be required for the ESDP already have NATO commitments. If these forces are restructured for ESDP-related tasks, and especially if EU planning for these missions is not done in close cooperation with NATO’s defense planning process, the ESDP could weaken rather than strengthen NATO. Indeed, unless full transparency and formalized institutional links are established between the EU and NATO, a situation could arise in which forces that are “dual hatted” could face conflicting guidance from EU and NATO defense planners.

None of this is meant to suggest that development of the ESDP is bad for NATO; to the contrary, if it is managed correctly and improved European capabilities are developed within NATO, the ESDP could strengthen NATO and transatlantic ties, since forces and capabilities that are developed for EU-led operations will be available to NATO as well. Likewise, the EU’s failure to realize its ambitions for a common ESDP could fuel sentiments at home for U.S. disengagement from Europe. In short, a weak Europe that is incapable of shouldering its fair share of security responsibilities poses a far greater threat to healthy transatlantic relations than a strong Europe that, when NATO decides to opt out, can lead peacekeeping and crisis manage-
ment operations in Europe, even if they are on a small scale. That said, the ESDP, if it becomes a reality, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for achieving a more equitable distribution of risks and burdens within the Alliance and for closing the gap in capabilities and missions between the United States and its European allies. If Europe and the United States are to establish a more mature and equal partnership, the DCI and related efforts to improve the power projection capabilities of European militaries must not be sacrificed at the altar of the ESDP.

Whatever the EU does regarding the ESDP, there should be one set of military forces between the EU and NATO, and the goals of both organizations should be compatible. In short, the EU military force that is created should be capable of performing more ambitious tasks than just low-intensity peacekeeping. The Europeans, moreover, will need to harmonize their force structures with NATO’s implementation of the DCI to ensure consistency between NATO and EU developments.

In sum, the DCI provides a framework for improving allied power projection capabilities and the capability of the Alliance to conduct effective and integrated multinational operations. The extent to which the allies realize these improvements will depend on several issues: Do the allies have the political will and resources to implement the DCI at the same time the EU is moving ahead with the ESDP? Even if they overcome many of the military constraints on


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To date, the allies have achieved mixed results in implementing the DCI that was approved in April 1999. According to a recent Department of Defense report on the implementation of the DCI, the Alliance has made progress in some but not all of the program’s five areas. Plans to improve Alliance logistics and C³ capabilities are well under way, but efforts to enhance capabilities in the other three functional categories are lagging behind. As one senior Pentagon official informed Congress, however, implementing the DCI requires increases in defense spending and a reallocation of resources across the Alliance—especially for force restructuring—that many allied governments have resisted. Of particular concern is Germany, which recently announced its plans to cut defense spending by $10 billion over the next four years and whose forces require significant restructuring. The prospect that these defense budget cuts will be rescinded is dim, and the German Ministry of Defense, which has championed increased spending and force restructuring, appears resigned to the fact that any DCI-related force enhancements will need to be made through reprogramming of existing defense spending allocations. See Catherine MacRae, “DOD Reports on Progress of NATO’s Defense Capabilities Initiative,” Inside the Pentagon, March 16, 2000.
coalition operations, is the Alliance likely to approve a NATO military operation in regional conflicts that threaten Western energy supplies? How much consensus is there within the Alliance on this mission? To what extent do the allies see the Persian Gulf, the Caspian, and North Africa as regions for NATO military involvement? What are the key political constraints on coalition operations? Which allies can the U.S. rely on the most to conduct such operations? In what contingencies would these allies be prepared to use force to protect energy supplies, and under what command arrangements?

THE ALLIES AND MILITARY OPERATIONS OUTSIDE EUROPE

The history of the U.S.-European dispute over NATO military operations outside Europe, especially in preparing for high-intensity conflict, reveals several trends:

• First, progress in developing allied military capabilities for such missions has been slow and uneven: After 20 years of U.S. cajoling, only a handful of NATO allies can bring significant combat forces to the table in U.S.-led coalition operations in a Persian Gulf MTW. Moreover, British and French motivations for participating in these operations are largely political, raising questions about how far and how fast both are prepared to go in improving their power projection capabilities. For the most part, they see developing the military capabilities for these missions as the entry price for protecting their equities in the region and, especially in the case of the U.K., maintaining transatlantic ties. By contrast, several European countries possess the capabilities to make a more serious contribution to military operations in North Africa.

• Second, what progress has been made was due primarily to U.S. pressure and the resulting European fears that failure to meet U.S. expectations could erode the U.S. commitment to NATO and the transatlantic relationship. There is little evidence to suggest, in light of the Alliance’s reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, and Saddam Hussein’s blatant challenge to the U.N. sanctions regime in Iraq, that most
European countries have fundamentally changed their strategic orientation toward the Persian Gulf. Simply put, only U.S. leadership and pressure have brought about changes in the allied perspective on the out-of-area issue.

- Third, external events have had a much greater impact in shaping European attitudes toward the use of force beyond Europe than official communiqués articulating NATO’s purposes. This suggests that the Alliance has been in a reactive, ad hoc mode and has not evolved a more forward-looking strategic outlook based on a larger geopolitical vision of the Alliance’s future.

The past, of course, may not necessarily be a prologue to the future. At least in the short term, the Strategic Concept, implementation of the DCI, and the EU’s development of real military capabilities will likely lead to improved allied capabilities for a broader range of non–Article 5 missions in and around Europe, particularly with continued prodding from senior U.S. government officials and pressure from Congress. How far and how fast the allies will move in this direction remain uncertain, however, except perhaps for the British and French. On the basis of current trends, the evidence is mixed if not contradictory. Clearly, several positive developments have occurred in the past few years in allied willingness and capability to participate in U.S.-led coalition operations:

- Several NATO countries have often contributed forces to U.S.-led multinational operations. The most frequent participants in these coalitions were the U.K., France, Turkey, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. On average, five NATO partners participated in U.S.-led multilateral operations that were not sanctioned by the U.N., and seven to eight NATO allies contributed to U.N.-authorized operations.

- Although defense spending in European countries is stagnant or falling, many allied governments, with the notable exception of Germany, have thus far resisted draconian defense budget cuts. In general, European governments have been able to satisfy popular demands for a “peace dividend” by retiring antiquated equipment, closing bases and downsizing Cold War infrastructure, and, in the case of the U.K. and France, reducing expenditures on nuclear weapons.
A number of countries—notably Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain—have plans to eliminate or reduce conscription (which constrains the ability of European governments to send troops abroad) or increasingly rely on volunteers for the rapid reaction units they have created to carry out non–Article 5 missions.

Major force structure changes have taken place (in the U.K. and the Netherlands) or are under way (in France, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Greece). In each of these countries, albeit to varying degrees, forces are being reconfigured to perform the full spectrum of NATO missions, with increased emphasis on meeting the operational requirements of crisis management, humanitarian, and other peace support operations.

The scope of German military commitments has slowly expanded, culminating in the deployment of German combat forces to the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in the former Yugoslavia and in the participation of German forces in Operation Allied Force in Kosovo. Germany has embarked on a major restructuring of its armed forces that will improve German capabilities to carry out new NATO and EU missions. The German public’s acceptance of the use of German combat troops outside Germany is one of the most significant developments in German security policy since the end of the Cold War.

Under the aegis of the ESDP, the EU is well on its way to developing autonomous military capabilities to conduct EU-led crisis management and peacekeeping operations in Europe when “NATO as a whole” is not engaged.

The European defense industry appears poised for a major round of streamlining and consolidation. Increased transatlantic defense mergers and joint ventures may even be possible, especially in light of the United States’ recent reforms of its export

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control process and defense trade policies. Progress in these areas could pave the way not only for closer transatlantic armaments cooperation but also for the more efficient use of defense resources to support European force restructuring and modernization.

If these trends continue, it will be increasingly difficult for many allies—including the U.K., France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey—to opt out of non–Article 5 operations, especially those within Europe, by claiming that they lack the capabilities to make a significant contribution. In other words, future decisions by allied governments to participate in U.S.-led NATO operations beyond Europe will be conditioned to a much greater extent than in the past by strategic and political considerations. What does an examination of these key influences suggest about which allies are likely to contribute forces to protect energy supplies and under what circumstances?

As previously noted, the Strategic Concept shifts the focus of Alliance defense planning from fixed territorial defense against invasion to crisis management and other non–Article 5 missions. Nonetheless, for operations beyond Europe there is neither Alliance consensus on interests, aims, and policies nor a common assessment of regional challenges and appropriate responses. Moreover, the thinking of most European countries differs from that of the United States with respect to the problem of energy security. Consequently, there is no consensus within the Alliance on the mission of ensuring access to energy supplies. For the foreseeable future, it is therefore unlikely that the Alliance will define the Persian Gulf, the Caspian, and North Africa as specific areas of NATO responsibility. The key reasons for this outlook are as follows:

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Most Europeans are less concerned than the United States about the likelihood and potential consequences of oil supply disruptions. In the European view, even if oil interruptions were to occur, they would likely be of limited duration and the long-term effects on oil price and availability would be manageable. Rather than invest substantial resources in developing power projection capabilities to combat threats that they believe are unlikely or of limited consequence, European governments generally prefer other measures—including diplomacy and economic engagement and the stockpiling of oil reserves—to alleviate concerns over energy security. Most European governments, moreover, believe that the energy security “problem” is not really a matter of access, since even rogue states sell oil on the international market. Unless other compelling national security interests are at stake, there is no basis for the belief that European governments would be prepared to go to war solely over the price of oil, even if prices escalated sharply, because they could well assume that market forces will eventually restore equilibrium.

Some European countries believe that both Iraqi and Iranian conventional and NBC threats, including the threat of long-range ballistic missile attack, have been exaggerated and that the United States has overreacted to efforts on the part of both countries to reconstitute their military capabilities. Other European allies, while in general agreement with U.S. assessments of Iraqi and Iranian military threats, are more pessimistic than the United States that Iranian and Iraqi NBC ambitions can be thwarted and tend to be more pragmatic in dealing with the NBC problem in the Gulf; for example, many are more willing to accept the possibility that ridding Iran and Iraq of their NBC weapons is an unrealistic objective. In addition, many Europeans show greater understanding of Iran’s security concerns and are thus more tolerant of its NBC ambitions. Consequently, many European governments are uncomfortable with what they see as an excessive U.S. preoccupation with NBC proliferation and fear that overly aggressive efforts to counter Iranian and Iraqi military capabilities will raise tensions and distort the West’s security policy in the region. One important manifestation of these divergent perspectives is the greater willingness of some European countries (e.g., France) to support lucrative energy deals with Iran and Iraq even though the revenue
generated from these projects could be used for NBC weapons development as well as conventional force modernization.

• There is a lingering fear, which finds expression in European warnings about a “global NATO,” that the United States seeks to turn NATO into an arm of its global national security strategy and in so doing will drag Europe into conflicts that do not affect its vital interests.21 Most European countries, for instance, are not especially worried that Iran and Iraq will use NBC weapons against NATO territory or NATO forces engaged in peacekeeping operations, and most are not planning to fight high-intensity wars in an NBC environment. Accordingly, most European governments prefer to rely primarily on deterrence and nonmilitary means to combat the NBC threat and will be far more reluctant than the United States to spend scarce resources to deal with this challenge.

• European governments generally do not see regional threats in military terms. Most believe that internal instability, rather than external aggression, poses the greatest challenge to the security of the Gulf Arab states as well as major energy producers in other regions. In particular, many European governments feel that the United States has paid too little attention to Saudi Arabia’s economic problems and the resulting potential for political and social turmoil in the Kingdom; more broadly, they believe that the United States places too much emphasis on the military dimensions of regional security, arguing that diplomatic, economic, and political engagement is the most effective strategy for coping with the real challenges confronting the Gulf states.

• European governments generally believe that the United States relies too heavily on military force to resolve security problems. Thus, while some European governments might under some circumstances contribute militarily to the defense of Kuwait or Saudi Arabia against an unprovoked Iraqi or Iranian attack, they would be more cautious in responding militarily to more limited and ambiguous Iraqi and Iranian provocations. Moreover, with the exception of the U.K., most European governments are

21 For two critical European perspectives, see Kamp, “A Global Role for NATO?” and Heisbourg, “New NATO, New Division of Labour.”
deeply attached to the principle that their use of force, especially for non–Article 5 missions outside alliance territory, should be authorized by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and based firmly on international law. They are also more inclined than the United States to pursue political and economic measures to safeguard Western interests in the region. In short, the United States is prepared to contemplate the threat or use of force under a much wider range of circumstances than its European allies and is more inclined to undertake military operations unilaterally if necessary.

• Most European countries believe that U.S. policies in the Persian Gulf erode rather than enhance energy security. In particular, they have serious reservations about the U.S. policy of “dual containment,” which seeks to isolate and punish Iran and Iraq as a means of influencing their behavior. European governments instead favor a more conciliatory policy of engagement, which emphasizes positive inducements rather than “sticks” to promote cooperation with Iran and Iraq and encourage their integration into the international community. In the European view, the most effective way to moderate Iranian and Iraqi behavior and to ensure Western access to Gulf energy supplies is to develop strong ties with Iran and Iraq through expanded trade, dialogue, investment, and commerce. The European predilection for engagement with Iran has been reinforced by the recent success of the reform movement in moving Iran toward greater democratization and openness with the West. More fundamentally, European governments, with the exception of the U.K., do not share the stated U.S. goal of eliminating Saddam Hussein.

• Preserving energy security in the Persian Gulf would require a substantial increase in European power projection capabilities as well as improvements in the ability of European forces to operate in a WMD environment. Most allies are reluctant to commit substantial financial resources to make these improvements owing primarily to declining defense expenditures, the economic

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imperatives of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), and burgeoning social demands on tight budgets.

- The different energy-producing regions are not all of equal importance to each member of the Alliance. Virtually all the allies see the Caspian as tangential to their core security and energy concerns, and none, with the possible exception of Turkey, is likely to become a major consumer or distributor of Caspian oil. Southern members of NATO see North Africa as at least equally important to their interests as the Gulf.

POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS ON COALITION OPERATIONS

Domestic and international political constraints are also likely to limit the availability of European forces for major military operations outside Europe. First and foremost, European governments generally face strong domestic political opposition to NATO military involvement in regions beyond Europe. Although they may take the notion seriously that NATO should extend security and stability throughout the Euro-Atlantic region, European publics are extremely wary of embarking on major combat operations in far-flung places beyond Europe. To overcome this opposition, European governments will have to convince skeptical publics that vital national or Western interests are at stake and that all diplomatic efforts to prevent conflict have been exhausted.

Second, the Strategic Concept papered over rather than resolved the “mandate” issue—i.e., whether NATO can undertake military action without a U.N. mandate. Most European governments would strongly prefer to have collective NATO military action outside Europe legitimized by some broader international mandate (e.g., the U.N. or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]). In the absence of such authorization, some NATO countries may limit or refuse participation in coalition operations.

For the foreseeable future, it is therefore doubtful that there will be much public support in European countries for sending military forces outside Europe (other than on humanitarian or low-risk peacekeeping operations) except in very special circumstances. These conditions include a perception of a serious threat to vital national or Western interests; a UNSC mandate for military operations;
strong U.S. or EU leadership; and broad regional and international support for Western military intervention. While many NATO countries will support participation in low-risk peacekeeping and humanitarian operations within Europe, few are likely to contribute forces for major combat operations outside Europe, especially if these military commitments have the potential to become prolonged and costly.

Accordingly, European participation in coalition operations outside Europe will be circumscribed by numerous political constraints that will create wide disparities in the willingness and ability of European NATO members to contribute to energy security. Because of the fissures that would result from efforts to gain North Atlantic Council (NAC) approval of an Alliance military operation in the Gulf, allied military action is likely to be undertaken by so-called coalitions of the willing, as was the case during Operation Desert Storm. The key question, therefore, pivots on the conditions under which individual allied countries would be prepared to participate in military operations outside Europe as members of a multinational coalition. European countries are likely to subject decisions to participate in such coalitions of the willing to five key tests:

- The interests at stake are of sufficient importance to warrant the use of force.
- The political objectives of military operations are clear and public support is sustainable at the level of anticipated military casualties, collateral damage, and length of combat.
- There is a coherent and viable military strategy to achieve success.
- The costs and risks of military intervention are judged to be tolerable.
- The coalition is likely to be successful in achieving its objectives.

Clearly, these questions cannot be answered in the abstract, as much will depend on the nature of the threat, the specific contingencies where force might be required, and whether the United States exercises strong leadership. Nonetheless, as indicated in Figure 3.1, several general conclusions can be drawn:
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RAND

MR1245-3.1

MTW (prolonged oil cutoff)  SSC\(^a\) (limited threat against Saudis)  U.S. only (allied interests not at stake)

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\(^a\)SSC = small-scale contingency.

Figure 3.1—Allied Participation in Coalition Operations

- **Major theater war.** In response to large-scale, unprovoked Iraqi or Iranian aggression against key Gulf states, the United States can probably count on the U.K. to commit significant air, ground, and perhaps naval forces. If the UNSC has sanctioned Western military intervention, France is also likely to make a sizable contribution of combat forces, while other allies are likely to provide modest combat forces, combat support, combat service support, and basing/overflight rights. Without the UNSC’s imprimatur, the military involvement of all allies, except Great Britain, is far more problematic.

- **Smaller-scale contingencies.** There is likely to be far less consensus on allied military participation in limited conflicts where the nature of the threat and the interests at stake are more ambiguous. In these scenarios, many of which are outlined in Chapter Two, the United States can probably depend only on the U.K. for a serious military contribution, with or without a UNSC mandate. In the absence of such a mandate, however, other allies, with the possible exception of France, are likely to rebuff...
U.S. appeals for participation in coalition operations. In short, the United States will probably do most of the heavy lifting in the military contingencies it is most likely to confront in the Gulf over the next decade.

**United Kingdom**

As the strongest U.S. ally, the U.K. is likely to participate in combat operations beyond Europe if there is a threat to important Western interests, even in the absence of a U.N. mandate. The U.K. is the most outward-looking among the U.S. European allies and shares the U.S. strategic approach to NATO transformation. The U.K. is, in addition, restructuring its forces to operate beyond Europe. Future British governments, regardless of their political complexion, will place a high priority on maintaining and strengthening the U.K.’s “special relationship” with the United States. The U.K. also has abiding historical, political, and economic interests in the Persian Gulf, which are reflected in the emphasis that its *Strategic Defence Review* (SDR) places on developing the capability to project and sustain power in the Gulf and elsewhere. In short, the British will likely sustain their investment in high-quality armed forces trained, equipped, and structured for power projection and are likely to continue to make steady progress in rectifying the most serious deficiencies they face in their power projection capabilities.

**France**

France is likely to participate in combat operations beyond Europe if a clear threat is posed to vital Western interests. France is also investing substantially in improved expeditionary capabilities. Unlike the British, however, the French would press aggressively for a U.N. mandate; without one, French participation is far less likely.

France has a long tradition of defending its overseas commitments and interests when challenged, and the French have embarked on a program to create a credible power projection capability. Moreover, the French have extensive interests in the Arab world that would weigh heavily in any decision to use force in the Gulf, and the assertion of French power beyond Europe resonates in a country that seeks to play a larger role on the world stage. In particular, the
French have an important stake in Algerian gas and a historic commitment to the defense of Tunisia that could figure in energy-related military actions (e.g., security of the trans-Mediterranean pipeline). Indeed, gas supply is now the leading French concern in Algeria, and the French have been quietly keen on exploring the potential for U.S. participation in any Algerian contingencies. Because of France’s proximity to Algeria, French power projection capabilities, although limited, could play an effective role.

At the same time, however, the French are opposed to an expansion of NATO’s role beyond Europe, largely because they see such a focus as strengthening NATO—and U.S. domination of the Alliance—at the expense of the EU. Indeed, in contrast to the United States, the French believe that NATO’s role in non–Article 5 operations outside Europe should be subject to a UNSC mandate. The French maintain that there is sound basis in international law for this position—notably Chapter VIII of the U.N. Charter—and that to flout it would set a dangerous precedent.

**Germany**

Germany has broken the post–World War II taboo on the deployment of German forces outside its borders. For historical, cultural, and political reasons, however, the German public is still skittish about German military operations beyond Europe. Moreover, the survival of a future German government, if that government is ruled by a Social Democratic Party/Green Coalition, could be threatened by German military action abroad that is unpopular at home. Simply put, German combat operations outside Europe will remain politically sensitive for many years to come and could sow serious divisions in the German body politic.

These considerations will impose important constraints on the scope of Germany’s military commitments beyond Europe. Germany will continue to proceed cautiously and incrementally in improving its power projection capabilities and in removing inhibitions on the use of German forces outside German territory. Over the coming years, Germany will therefore remain most comfortable participating in non–Article 5 peacekeeping and humanitarian operations within Europe.
Indeed, throughout the Alliance debate last year on the Strategic Concept, Germany sought to limit the geographic scope of non-Article 5 operations—a stance reflecting the government’s sensitivity to public neuralgia about NATO’s role as a “global policeman.” In addition, by restricting the scope of NATO’s out-of-area operations, Germany hopes to avoid provoking a negative Russian reaction. German forces are, moreover, largely configured to defend German territory and have a limited capability for power projection. As part of the defense review concluded in the spring of 2000, however, German forces are likely to undergo a significant downsizing and restructuring that will give them a greater power projection capacity.

Other factors will also push Germany to participate in military operations beyond Europe’s borders, including the Gulf. Berlin will feel pressure to remain in step with its European partners, especially if there is an ESDP dimension to European military operations in the Gulf or if European forces are deployed in multinational formations that include German forces. Historically, Germany has sought to avoid isolation within the Alliance, and even the new postwar generation of more assertive and independent German leaders will feel the impulse to be “good Alliance citizens.” In addition, the German government will be highly sensitive to the transatlantic aspects of coalition operations in the Persian Gulf and the impact that a decision to sit on the sidelines would have on U.S.-German relations in particular and U.S.-European relations in general.

Faced with these conflicting pressures, future German governments are likely to participate in coalition operations when (1) Germany perceives a serious threat to German or Western security interests; (2) the United States is exerting strong leadership and other allies, especially the U.K. and France, are in solidarity with the United States; and (3) there is strong international, regional, and domestic support for coalition operations. Of crucial importance to Germany will be whether the UNSC has authorized coalition operations and whether such operations are justified by international law. Thus, Germany will aggressively pursue a UNSC mandate for such operations should it decide to participate. If efforts to secure U.N.

endorsement fail, however, German participation in military operations in the Persian Gulf would be highly questionable, and Berlin would cast about for other ways to offer its support.

Italy

Italian participation in combat operations beyond Europe is possible if there is a major threat to important Western interests, but only if sanctioned by a U.N. mandate. U.S. or NATO use of Italian bases in such operations would depend on several factors. If there is a European consensus to act, Italy would probably provide overflight rights and access to bases. Such access would be operationally important for North Africa and logistically important for the Gulf. Moreover, if the United States did not enjoy access to Suez, the burden on airlift—and regional allies to support airlift operations with bases—could increase enormously for Gulf contingencies. Sigonella rather than Aviano would be of central importance in this contingency, and the political constraints are much lower there.

Nonetheless, Italian involvement in military operations outside Europe should not be taken for granted. While Italy favors an expansion of NATO’s role and is developing smaller, more modern, and better-trained armed forces for use in non–Article 5 contingencies, the focus of Italian security policy is the western Mediterranean and southeastern Europe. Moreover, although Italian participation in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations in these areas enjoys widespread public support, the deployment of forces in a hostile environment outside Europe would be far more controversial. Indeed, there is no consensus among the Italian public on American use of Italian bases to conduct military operations against Iraq. Continued U.S. and NATO use of Italian bases, for example, still arouses controversy among left-wing elements in the Italian political spectrum, many of whom see NATO as a Cold War relic and therefore question the expansion of its missions. In sum, the Italian government would face a politically difficult decision to support Western military action outside Europe.

\[24\text{Ibid.} \]
Netherlands

The Dutch are likely to participate in coalition operations in the Gulf, but only under a U.N. umbrella and only if they perceive a significant threat to Western security interests. The Dutch contributed combat aircraft during Desert Storm and have strongly endorsed an expansion of the Alliance’s missions. Indeed, during the debate on the Strategic Concept, the Netherlands argued that NATO preparedness to undertake non–Article 5 missions should be explicitly recognized as a core function of the Alliance.

In addition, there is strong support among the Dutch public for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations abroad, and the 1993 Defense Priorities Review shifted the emphasis of Dutch defense planning from the defense of NATO territory to the creation of more flexible and mobile forces suitable for rapid reaction and peacekeeping missions. Nevertheless, the Dutch, like most other members of the Alliance, have serious reservations about extending NATO’s reach beyond Europe, and it is unlikely that a political consensus will emerge to restructure Dutch forces for high-intensity combat operations outside Europe.

Spain

Like many other European allies, Spain is restructuring its military forces to increase its capability to contribute to multinational power projection missions. That said, Spain is unlikely to field forces capable of making a serious contribution in the Gulf. Spain’s contribution to North African contingencies could be significant, however, and Spain could be a leading advocate for energy-related intervention to the south if its own gas supplies were threatened. Spanish bases could be very important for airlift and long-range strikes in Gulf contingencies (as in the use of Moron Air Base during the Gulf War; Rota could also be important for Middle Eastern airlift). The existence of a European consensus to participate with the United States will be the critical factor in determining Spain’s approach and contribution.

\(^{25}\text{Ibid.}\)
Turkey

Turkish support for coalition combat operations in the Gulf is unlikely unless Turkish territory or important Turkish interests are directly threatened. There are strong historical and political constraints against military involvement in the Middle East, especially within the Turkish military. Moreover, Turkey will be highly sensitive to the impact of any participation in Gulf contingencies on its relations with its regional neighbors in the Middle East and its access to energy. At the same time, the growing strength of Turkish nationalism, underscored by the strong showing of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in the April 1999 elections, makes use of Turkish facilities even more problematic, except when clear Turkish national interests are involved.

The outlook for Turkish participation will also be conditioned by other factors, including the growing centrality of energy access in Turkey’s own security and prosperity. This reality could encourage a more interventionist approach on Ankara’s part, especially in the case of direct, cross-border aggression (as in the Gulf War). In less clear-cut scenarios, Turkish civilian and military leaders will likely wish to avoid making enemies among suppliers and will be wary of actions that could threaten the security of, or revenue from, regional pipelines. Turkey will also be wary of taking any actions that could exacerbate the Kurdish problem or lead to the creation of a de facto Kurdish state in Northern Iraq.

In short, the readiness evinced by former Turkish President Türgut Özal during the Gulf War to allow the United States to use Turkish territory to launch attacks against Iraq is likely to be the exception rather than the rule. In the future, Turkey is likely to impose strong constraints on the use of its facilities, especially the air base at Incirlik, except in contingencies where Turkish interests are clearly threatened. It would therefore be unwise for U.S. military planners to assume that Turkish facilities will automatically be available in Middle Eastern or Persian Gulf contingencies.

FUTURE COALITION OPERATIONS

NATO’s new Strategic Concept establishes a “road map” for extending stability and security throughout the Euro-Atlantic area. Many
allies accept the need to develop improved capabilities for crisis management and humanitarian operations in Europe and to assume more of the military burden of meeting these challenges. Areas beyond Europe, however, fall outside this consensus.

Differences within NATO over strategy, policy, and interests in the Gulf, Caspian, and North Africa will likely preclude an Alliance consensus on joint military action to protect energy supplies. To some degree, these constraints will be shaped by the particular circumstances surrounding the threat. Indeed, according to one recent study, several trends underscore this point. First, more allies contribute a proportionately greater share of more diverse military assets in contingencies closer to home. Second, European countries have shown a distinct preference for participating in crisis management and peacekeeping operations rather than in MTW or major combat. Third, participation has varied greatly in both size and breadth from situation to situation.

The Persian Gulf

Unlike the Caspian and North Africa, most allies agree on the importance of preserving security in the Gulf and share a common interest in maintaining access to Gulf energy resources. Nonetheless, as previously noted, views differ over the nature of regional challenges to Western interests and the most effective means for responding to these threats. In addition, some allied countries, especially Germany and France, are adverse to a formal NATO role in the region.

Thus, a consensus within NATO has yet to crystallize on a common response to Saddam Hussein’s challenge to the U.N. inspections regime in Iraq and his continued development of NBC weapons—both of which, at least from a U.S. perspective, constitute a clear threat to Western interests in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, sharp differences among the allies on policy toward Iran and Iraq underscore the absence of a common conception of interests and aims that could provide a solid underpinning to cooperation on power projection operations.26

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26Heisbourg, “The United States, Europe, and Military Force Projection.”
In the future, the prospect of joint allied military action in the Persian Gulf is therefore likely to arouse intense controversy within NATO. This is likely to be the case even under the best of circumstances—namely unprovoked, large-scale Iraqi or Iranian aggression that is clearly perceived as a serious threat to Western security interests and has been subjected to UNSC action and censured by the international community. Under these conditions, the U.K., France, Italy, and the Netherlands are likely to contribute combat forces, while German and Turkish participation would be more questionable. However, in the event of more ambiguous challenges, where the threat is less serious and allied interests are not perceived to be directly involved, the willingness of the countries above to participate in coalition operations is far more problematic. The United States could probably count only on the U.K. across the full spectrum of coalition contingencies, regardless of whether a coalition of like-minded countries is operating under a UNSC mandate.27

North Africa

A few southern members of the Alliance—notably France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal—have a strong interest in maintaining peace and stability in the Maghreb and in preserving access to the region’s oil and, especially, gas resources. However, the interests of other allies, including the United States, are far less engaged. It is doubtful, for example, that any U.S. administration would be prepared to commit combat forces in Algeria or Libya in response to a cutoff of their energy supplies to southern Europe. That said, the United States might have difficulty turning aside a European request to intervene—or, more likely, provide assets for a European-led intervention.

In any event, those European countries that depend most heavily on North African oil and gas imports are skeptical of NATO military involvement in the region. Their preferred long-term strategy is to use political and economic instruments rather than military force to thwart the primary threats emanating from the region, including mi-

gration, terrorism, and Islamic fundamentalism. Consequently, they see this as a task best left to the “soft power” of the EU. Likewise, in a crisis, they are likely to see safeguarding North African energy supplies as a task for the future EU Rapid Reaction Force or possibly a European-led CJTF. France would oppose NATO military involvement in North Africa. In short, southern European countries are unlikely to urge NATO to plan and prepare for operations in the Maghreb. Accordingly, in response to a serious disruption of North African natural gas exports to southern Europe, the United States (and other NATO members) might face requests to approve the formation of an EU-led CJTF, to allow such an organization to use NATO assets, or to provide this coalition with essential combat support (C^4ISR).

The Caspian

With the exception of Turkey, the European allies see the Caspian as peripheral to their security. None would deem the independence of any of the major energy-producing states or continued access to Caspian energy as vital Western interests. Furthermore, while some European countries seek access to the region’s energy resources, Caspian oil and gas do not play a major role in their energy diversification plans.

It would be extremely difficult for NATO to devise a common approach to security challenges in the region because of divergent views and threat perceptions. Most European countries do not see the Caspian in military terms and are likely to stress the use of “soft power” to cope with regional problems. Moreover, many NATO allies harbor serious fears that projecting force into the region would provoke a hostile Russian reaction. Put simply, the United States, assuming it decided that preserving access to Caspian oil was a vital interest, would face strong resistance to NATO military operations in the region. Only Turkey and possibly the U.K. might be willing to participate in such an operation.28

Indeed, if the United States or NATO were so inclined, the opening of the Caspian region to outside influence presents new opportunities for greater security cooperation with Turkey. Energy security figures importantly in Turkey’s national security calculations. Ankara wants energy security to be part of an improved strategic relationship with the West and is eager to expand its influence in the Caspian region.

Turkey is therefore well positioned to play a unique role in facilitating Western power projection into the Caspian (and the Gulf) and is moving toward developing an independent power projection capability. Indeed, if the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline becomes a reality, the United States and its other NATO allies may face the prospect of deepening Turkish military involvement in the Caspian region that could result in a de facto or de jure Turkish commitment to defend oil pipelines. Under these circumstances, the possibility cannot be ruled out that Ankara might seek NATO cover and/or U.S. and NATO military assistance to fulfill these commitments.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PLANNING

For nearly four decades, beginning with the Suez Crisis in 1956 and culminating most recently in the West’s divided stance against Iraqi belligerence in the Persian Gulf, NATO has failed to develop and implement a coherent collective approach to security problems in SWA. The failure to achieve an Alliance-wide consensus on security measures in the region and a formal commitment to collective military planning and operations reflects differences not only between the United States and Europe but also among the Europeans themselves. Indeed, in some cases intra-European differences, be they political, geographic, or historical, have been as pronounced as, if not more pronounced than, transatlantic divisions.

NATO’s failure as an institution to develop a common approach to the defense of SWA does not stem primarily from a lack of common interests or the absence of serious threats to those interests. Both Europe and the United States share a strong common interest in secure oil. Furthermore, over the past 20 years the West has confronted several significant threats to regional security, including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and Saddam Hussein’s repeated challenges to post–Desert Storm UNSC resolutions.
In each of these situations, the Alliance was able to reach a fragile consensus on a politically acceptable resolution to avoid cracks in NATO unity. However, these solutions were weighted toward the lowest common denominator and thus fell far short of addressing the West’s strategic vulnerability in SWA. From the European perspective, success was defined primarily in terms of limiting damage to transatlantic relations rather than producing major improvements in Alliance power projection capabilities for military operations outside Europe.

Amid the fault lines that have emerged in the Alliance debate on the out-of-area issue, the predominant view among European allies has been that military planning and operations for non–Article 5 missions beyond Europe should be conducted through bilateral and multilateral arrangements outside the Alliance framework. It was precisely for this reason that allied governments rebuffed the U.S. effort in the early 1980s to formalize a NATO out-of-area strategy for SWA—a view that was affirmed repeatedly over the past two decades and that is unlikely to be challenged for the foreseeable future.

The reasons for European opposition to an institutional role for NATO in SWA are deeply rooted in Europe’s political consciousness and are therefore unlikely to change in the security environment the Alliance will confront over the next decade. A key factor is lack of domestic support for the use of force outside Europe. European governments also fear that NATO military operations outside Europe would undermine the Alliance’s cohesion, European efforts to develop an independent voice in defense matters, and European freedom of action. Some European allies, notably France, are concerned that extending NATO’s security commitments to SWA would perpetuate U.S. domination of the Alliance. Finally, a NATO role in the Gulf is hampered by persistent U.S.-European disagreements over the most effective means of protecting Western security interests and by divergent policies and perspectives on regional security issues.

Moreover, even if the United States consults closely with the European allies and is sensitive to European concerns, decisions by individual allies to commit combat forces in coalition operations to defend energy supplies will depend largely on the nature of the contingency and judgments about the costs, benefits, and risks of mili-
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In short, the United States will continue to encounter resistance from most European countries (with the exception of the U.K. and France) to improving their long-range power projection capabilities for high-intensity military operations outside Europe. As a result, while some European forces are likely to perform more effectively in a future Gulf war, it is unrealistic for the United States to depend on NATO’s European members to pick up a significantly larger share of the burden of defending Western security interests in the Persian Gulf.