Europe and America
How Will the United States Adjust to the New Partnership?

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THE ISSUE

Europe has changed radically in this decade, and further fundamental changes loom. This Issue Paper explores what these changes mean for the role of the United States in Europe. Specifically, the paper paints a picture of Europe in 2010 and, given that picture, discusses what we may anticipate in terms of U.S. forces in Europe, the U.S. role in NATO, and the attendant costs.

Two propositions, which underpin a recent RAND study that calls for a new balance of burdensharing among the United States (and Canada) and the European partners, provide a framework for this discussion. The first is that the ability to advance U.S. and European interests together depends on the willingness of Europe to take on greater responsibilities. The second is that the United States should genuinely share leadership with the Europeans. These two propositions form the kernel of a new partnership with a Europe that is in flux.

WHAT KIND OF EUROPE CAN WE EXPECT?

Three recent RAND papers proffer views about the Europe of the next decade. They outline, in a speculative fashion, the likely conditions of Europe, Mediterranean Europe and Turkey, and Central Europe and the Balkans in the first decade of the 21st century. Each presents a most likely situation in which Europe, while at peace, will face challenges but will “muddle through.”

The likely scenario for Europe is that it will remain unsettled. It will have shed some of its parochialism and will be more—though uneasily—attuned to global trends. Its experiment with a variety of institutional responses will continue, but will satisfy only in part. Yet a secure, stable, and prosperous Europe will remain vital to American interests and require a continued, albeit modified, American role in Europe. NATO and the EU will both be enlarged, and NATO will remain the key institution linking the United States to European security. The Balkans will continue to require persistent outside involvement. NATO’s relations with Russia are hard to predict.

The scenario for Mediterranean Europe and Turkey is uncertain: A fractured Europe with conflict on its southern periphery is unlikely; a high-growth, low unemployment, smoothly integrating Europe reaching cooperatively across the Mediterranean is even less likely. Most likely is a “muddle-through” scenario, characterized by a growing EU that looks more like southern Europe (even as southern Europe will lose some of its distinctiveness), by weak democratic movements, and by separatist challenges. NATO will grow toward the East. Turkey will remain in

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institutional limbo on Europe’s periphery. And potential turbulence in the Maghreb and the Middle East could affect European interests and behavior.\textsuperscript{4}

The scenario for East Central Europe and the Balkans also eschews the extremes of a fragmented, inward-looking Europe or a strong and cohesive Europe with high growth and low unemployment. Again, the best guess is “muddling along,” with slow growth and high unemployment. Uneven but encouraging progress on reform will occur in East Central Europe. However, civil society in the Balkans will remain fragile, and economic recovery and democratic consolidation will be a long-term matter. There will be progress toward the first tranche of NATO enlargement; a second tranche, however, may not happen until the mid-decade or later. Russia’s transition will be slow and difficult. By 2010, Russia could have established strong democratic roots and be more fully integrated into the world economic system. It will not, however, have regained a foothold in East Central Europe. German influence in Europe will be strong. Turkey’s ties to Europe are likely to be weaker.\textsuperscript{5}

These three assessments of Europe around 2010 form the basis for a sketch of the role of the United States in a new partnership with Europe.

**A NEW BURDENSHARING**

One clarion call does not make a new policy—a realignment such as proposed in the RAND study is not around the corner. Yet new partnership means new burdensharing. The Alliance has always debated burdensharing,\textsuperscript{6} and events are likely to drive Europeans and Americans toward yet another division of responsibilities. New burdensharing arrangements will not be worked out in another “Grand Bargain”; rather, they will emerge through incremental change. Moreover, the strategic global changes in the last decade have created different sets of responsibilities. Reconnoitering the terrain ahead, even speculatively, will increase familiarity with the likely changes to come and smooth the way toward the transition to a new partnership—for which the United States needs to prepare.

**NEW PARTNERSHIP**

The new partnership is likely to be based on a mix of objectives. Many Europeans want the Euro-American relationship to become an association of more nearly equal actors. Many Americans will want the United States to retain its first-among-equals position. The new partnership, once achieved, is likely to be somewhere in between.

Similarly, the United States will have a mix of objectives for the new partnership. Washington will see it, at least in part, as a way to offset shrinking U.S. forces within the NATO area and that of Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries, and a way to transfer greater responsibilities to—and correspondingly diminish the U.S. input into—the Balkans, particularly Bosnia Herzegovina. Washington will see the new partnership as opening the way for Europeans to do more in Europe, freeing the U.S. to engage its energies—and deploy its forces—elsewhere where allied forces are less capable. Finally, in crisis situations Washington will look for European support in areas such as the Gulf.

Taking the RAND scenarios as a point of departure, the figure sketches how such a new burdensharing arrangement might look. It lists three broad, likely contingencies—ranging from peace through crisis to conflict—and indicates whether responsibilities are likely to be borne mostly by the United States, mostly by Europeans, or by a mix of both, and how this differs from the current division of labor. The blocks denote the totality of resources committed to an issue, including military forces, economic assistance, and diplomatic engagement. The chart does not attempt to lay out a comprehensive picture of U.S.-European relations. Rather, it focuses on those areas where the roles of Europe and the United States are likely to differ in the next decade from the way they are today. Given that Europeans bear greater responsibilities in the scenario foreseen for 2010, the direction of change in all cases is toward more European burdensharing.

**THE STRUCTURE OF EUROPE**

The structure of Europe will differ significantly in the next decade. Currently, the focus is on enlargement of the two key institutions that shape Europe—the EU and NATO. In this decade, Europe has tackled its agenda with familiar sets of members; 12 for the EU (15 since the recent accession of Austria, Finland, and Sweden to the EU as full members), and 16 for NATO. However, the next decade will see a very different pattern. Both the EU and NATO will be operating with a considerably larger mem-

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\textsuperscript{4}P. 7989.

\textsuperscript{5}P. 7992.

\textsuperscript{6}The process has been likened to a bazaar, in which those present are in continuous negotiation about cost and price in order to get what they want. See Harlan Cleveland, *NATO: The Transatlantic Bargain*, New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
### Tasks in Peace

- **Show flag, force presence, prevent conflict in:**
  - Norwegian/Barents Sea
  - Baltic
  - North Sea
  - Adriatic
  - Black Sea
  - Mediterranean
  - The Gulf

- **Keep sea lanes open for Middle Eastern oil and Maghreb energy for Europe**

- **Stabilize Balkans**

- **Keep lid on Greece-Turkey disputes; help resolve Cyprus issue**

- **Manage border disputes**
  - Baltics-Russia
  - Ukraine-Russia
  - Ukraine-others
  - Italy-Slovenia
  - Bosnia-Croatia-Serbia

- **Political Issues**
  - Democratic reform in Russia, East Central Europe
  - Gibraltar
  - Northern Ireland
  - Basque separatism

- **Economic Issues**
  - Strengthen global economy
  - Strengthen EU
  - Unemployment
  - Market economies in East Central Europe, Russia, and CIS
  - Immigration
  - Trade with rogue states

- **Security Issues**
  - Strengthen enlarged NATO
  - Help Russia play constructive role
  - Turkey's relation with EU
  - Manage conflict in greater Middle East

### Tasks in Crisis

- **Cyprus dispute**
- **Maintain peace in Balkans**
  - Evacuation from:
    - Balkan troublespots
    - CIS turbulence
    - Maghreb
    - South of Sahara

- **Humanitarian aid south of Sahara**
- **Maintain flow of energy supplies**
- **Algerian implosion**
- **WMD threat**
- **Missile defense**
- **Coping with fundamentalism in Egypt**
- **Threats against Israel**

### Tasks in Conflict

- **Assist Israeli defense**
- **Keep Suez open**
- **Contain and terminate Greece-Turkey conflict**
- **Iranian aggression in Gulf**
- **Deal with fighting in the Balkans**
- **Settle conflicts in Caucasus, Caspian Sea areas**

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**Possible Burdensharing Arrangements**
bership. Projections vary, from 25–26 for the EU and 23–24 for NATO (Larrabee) to a more tentative, smaller number (van Heuven). Would-be members striving to secure various degrees of representation and influence will surround both organizations. The United States will thus operate on a larger and more complex organizational terrain.

ENLARGEMENT

For both the EU and NATO, enlargement will complicate decisionmaking. A further difference is likely: The continuing drive toward European integration will accentuate a feeling of “Europeanness.” This will feed a sense that Europe should, wherever possible, handle its own political and security problems. In fact, the decisionmaking process with respect to European security will be very different in the next decade from what it is today. This year, NATO has added two more institutions alongside the traditional North Atlantic Council (NAC). One is the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council, established in May 1997 by the Founding Act between NATO and Russia. The other is the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, launched by NATO countries and 27 Partnership countries at Sintra in Portugal on May 30, 1997. The explanatory language of the constituent documents of these two councils notwithstanding, the only thing that is clear at present is that the NATO decision process will have not only a different structure in the next decade, but also a different dynamic. New NATO members and aspiring members will crowd the stage. They will not always work in harmony, and the temptation for log-rolling will be there. Thus, NATO enlargement, and the presence of a European caucus within NATO, will require greater dexterity on the part of the United States to exercise its influence, when it wishes to do so.

FORCES

The projected partnership will raise the issues of how many forces the United States will have in Europe, their mix, and their location. By 2010, the U.S. force presence in Europe will have declined further. Technological advances and budget pressures will be the drivers of this decline. So will changes in military strategy, as the United States works its way toward Joint Vision 2010. The emphasis will shift away from maintaining fighting units of divisional strength, toward smaller and more selective units. The Army and Air Force will decline proportionally more than the Navy, as land forces are reshaped toward new Army After Next concepts and quick reinforcement from the continental United States (CONUS) by air assets becomes increasingly preferable to forward basing. But even the Navy will experience its share of contraction in installations and forward-based infrastructure.

The forces that remain will no longer be concentrated in Germany. They will be based more selectively, taking advantage of opportunities afforded by both an energetic PIP program and NATO enlargement, and in continuing response to endemic instability in the Balkans. With fewer forces stationed in Europe than at present, the United States will relinquish its presence in a number of areas. As the figure suggests, the United States is likely to reduce, if not abandon, its force presence in the Baltics (assuming no Russian threat), the North Sea, the Adriatic, and, to some extent, the Mediterranean.

SPECIALIZATION

Throughout most of Europe, the United States will in the next decade need specialized military capabilities more than the ability to field entire fighting units. In Europe, the requirement will be to enhance stability, a task that increasingly will require anticipating potential disruption. On Europe’s periphery, the tasks will be peacekeeping and crisis management. In Europe, U.S. forces will be needed most for those tasks for which they are uniquely qualified, whereas European forces will carry out tasks that they are more capable of. Thus, U.S. contributions will naturally be at the higher end of the technological spectrum. Allies, meanwhile, will be better positioned to provide ground forces, although—as the Bosnia case suggests—there will be a political premium on U.S. ground forces. Only outside of Europe, as in the Gulf, will the United States be likely to be ready to deploy a full-fledged, multipurpose force, even though that force is likely to come mostly from CONUS.

WMD AND MISSILE DEFENSE

The United States will continue to lead when dealing with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile defense. Even in the next decade, Europeans will have little disposition and limited means to tackle these issues on their own. But as they come to accept that they are perhaps even more at risk than the United States, they will gradually lose their present intuitive aversion to thinking about these possible threats. This will drive them to look for U.S. help. The implication is that the United States must be prepared to provide such help. However, the roles of military presence, territorial defense, and peace-
keeping can be handled by European countries that are prepared and can do so closer to home.

NATO

New partnership arrangements will have profound implications for NATO. The force strength of NATO countries has been declining as some countries—such as France, the Netherlands, and by 2010 quite possibly also Germany—move to professional armies. By the next decade, however, the quality of European forces is likely to have improved. Moreover, NATO enlargement will constructively trigger force modernization of the new NATO members and will add both territory and forces to SACEUR’s potential command.

Within NATO, U.S. force reductions will not necessarily reflect any reductions in U.S. responsibilities. However, since these responsibilities are shared by our allies, they will be met by a greater European role. This increased role will also be reflected by a greater European presence in what will be a drastically reduced number of NATO commands. The possibility that France may by 2010 have rejoined NATO in full and the to-be-expected admission of a number of countries to NATO membership point to a larger European role in NATO command structures. Moreover, additional European members of NATO will add their weight to alliance consideration of future enlargement.

The reworking of NATO’s Strategic Concept will also lead to adjustment in positions. The United States will have to make room for European commands, although command responsibilities for U.S. forces in the Mediterranean will remain in U.S. hands. Furthermore, we may well see geographic relocation of NATO command centers. For practical reasons, SHAPE will be reluctant to abandon Mons, but in the next decade the rationale for its being so far west has lost strength. With a reduced U.S. force presence, colocating EUCOM with SHAPE becomes more attractive.

COSTS

A greater European role within NATO also suggests a greater proportional sharing of common costs, if the projections on which this paper is based hold true. The issue of sharing costs in the alliance will be, as it traditionally has been, intimately connected with the politics of the alliance. However, the cost issue will probably not stand in the way of further NATO enlargement. Also, a proportionally greater European voice and role in the alliance suggest an accompanying proportional increase in cost sharing by Europeans. The level of such costs will depend on many variables, two of which are key: the state of the global economy and the potential of a Russian or other threat. With respect to both of these issues, the United States will remain a major factor.

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

By early in the next decade, Partnership for Peace will have created a firm and extensive network of military and political-military cooperation. It will serve as a precursor to further addition of new members to NATO. By 2010, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council may well have become the preferred venue for addressing major questions of European security, with the NAC retaining the still crucial but less pressing task of looking after common defense. However, just what relationship will exist at that time between the NAC and the EAPC is speculative; it will depend heavily on intervening state practice and will remain situation-specific. On this issue, the United States will retain a potentially decisive influence.

There is no reason that the United States should not, by 2010, retain influence within the alliance commensurate with what it exercises today. But the chart does suggest the possibility that, in certain areas and with respect to certain issues, Europeans will be in the lead, perhaps even without U.S. participation. The proviso, however, is that the European members of NATO—within NATO, the EU, or otherwise—have arrived at enough commonality of analysis, policy, and resource commitment to make independent European action within NATO a reality. Thus, what is merely scripted today could become a reality tomorrow.

BOTTOM LINE

Exactly what tasks the United States will undertake in Europe a decade from now, and what tasks the Europeans will prefer to handle themselves—and in what mix—will be situation-specific and hard to predict. As a general rule, however, European countries will play a larger role than they do today. Thus, the chart not only indicates lead European roles in the North Sea, the Baltic, and the Adriatic, but also a lead role in stabilizing the Balkans, on political issues such as Gibraltar and Basque separatism, and—out of area—in interventions south of the Sahara. Europeans will play a greater role in the next decade in managing border disputes such as between the Baltic countries and Russia, Ukraine and Russia, and the Balkan
states, as well as in Cyprus and Northern Ireland. But on
the geographic margins of Europe toward the east and
southeast—and beyond—the U.S. role will remain
paramount. As the chart suggests, in a new partnership
arrangement certain areas and issues that have attracted
U.S. involvement will now be handled primarily by
Europeans. This will satisfy American preferences to be
involved only when major U.S. interests are at stake. At
the same time, the new burdensharing will respond to the
desires of Europeans for a leading role on their own
continent.

The chart also shows, however, that as we move from
peacetime toward conflict, the U.S. role will gain in signifi-
cance. This altered balance will respond to an American
wish to take the lead on issues regarded as vital American
interests in Europe. Moreover, faced with conflict, Europe
will turn to the United States. There will be a renewed
European search for enhanced security through coopera-
tion with the United States in the face of a greater threat.

Such a sliding scale of shared responsibilities and
adjusted burdensharing looks reasonable on paper.
However, it will be hard for the United States to put into
practice. There exists a deeply rooted instinct in American
military thinking—demonstrated time and again in
wargames—to operate unilaterally. This tendency persists
despite abundant declaratory policy to work in an alliance
context. Decades of military cooperation with NATO have
created solid habits of cooperation in familiar crisis set-
tings. But faced with new, unfamiliar challenges, there
will be a resurgence of the instinct to go it alone. It is time
to recognize, however, that the imagined luxury of unilat-
eral action no longer exists.

This quick survey of the new balance of burdensharing
in the next decade demonstrates the worth of real part-
nership. It will be a partnership in which there will be a
proportionally greater European contribution, new pat-
terns of decisionmaking, and a new allocation of roles and
tasks. As it has been through the decades, NATO will be
the organization in which its members shape, adjust, and
rework a complex bargain, in which the inputs and bene-
fits of each member toward common security are constant-
ly assessed, discussed, and renegotiated.

Finally, if Europe again faced a threat, such as from
the East or from WMD combined with missile technology,
Article V of the NATO Treaty would come into play.
Were that to happen, an alliance that is already in the
habit of real partnership would be in a solid position to
meet the threat.