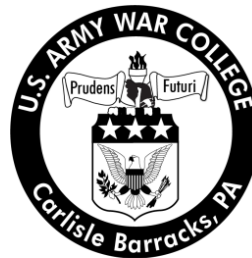


**Civilian Research Project
USAWC Fellow**

Shift Toward Asia: The Impact on
U.S. Policy in Europe

by

Colonel Phillip Ray Cuccia
United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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Shift Toward Asia: The Impact on U.S. Policy in Europe

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Abstract

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In January of 2012, the president of the United States endorsed the Department of Defense directive “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership” as well as the strategic shift in focus toward the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East. The Secretary of Defense made clear that the U.S. “will have global presence emphasizing the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East while still ensuring our ability to maintain our defense commitments to Europe...” This paper examines the effect of the U.S. policy shift toward Asia on the U.S. policy in Europe. It examines the current U.S. policy in Europe along with the current European military budgets, and U.S. resources in Europe. It discusses the projected effect of removing these U.S. resources from Europe and addresses economic and diplomatic trends. It concludes by agreeing with some European studies that Europe needs to contribute more to Europe’s defense and it gives recommendations for future U.S. policy in Europe.

Shift Toward Asia: The Impact on U.S. Policy in Europe

In January of 2012, the president of the United States endorsed the Department of Defense directive “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” as well as the strategic shift in focus toward the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East. In the cover letter to the directive, the Secretary of Defense stated that the U.S. is shaping a Joint Force that “will have global presence emphasizing the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East while still ensuring our ability to maintain our defense commitments to Europe, and strengthening alliances and partnerships across all regions.”¹ With a finite number of resources, we as a nation and we as a military need to look closely at the effects such a strategic shift will have not only in the Asia-Pacific, but also in the remaining parts of the world. This paper examines what that effect could be for U.S. policy in Europe. It examines the projected impact of the strategic shift toward Asia on the U.S. military in Europe. It also looks at the current U.S. policy in Europe, how it is changing, and assesses the effectiveness of that policy. The paper concludes with implications of the current policy, and policy recommendations.

Strategy and Policy

Since this paper seeks to illuminate the future U.S. policy toward Europe, it is important to look at the relationship between strategy and policy. Strategy derives its meaning by orienting on the future. It declares intent and indicates the possible means necessary to attain that intent. However when strategy focuses beyond the near term, it becomes ever more difficult to define exactly what its intent is. This problem is further exacerbated by the conceptual shift from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO’s) current use of the term “military strategy,” or as used in U.S terms, “national

defense strategy” and “national military strategy” to “grand strategy,” or to put it in proper U.S. terms, “national security strategy.” Generally, for most nations, operational plans for military strategy look to the near term and focus on specific situations while grand strategy is reserved for ambitions and goals that are more visionary and aspirational in nature.² While national strategies tend to look 10 years out, the recent trend for influential western nations has tended to extend this period with Britain looking out 30 years.³ However this extended concept is exactly what policy is. Paul Kennedy, along with John Lewis Gaddis and Charles Hill, who have led the grand strategy course at Yale since its creation in 1998, noted that: “The crux of grand strategy lies therefore in policy, that is, in the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and non-military, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long-term (that is, in wartime and peacetime) best interests.”⁴ For the purposes of this study, it will be necessary to use documents concerning national strategy to assess policy.

Issues involving the shift toward Asia-Pacific, a pragmatic approach

One of the most important considerations in assessing foreign policy is the views of the president, the chief architect of policy. An introduction to President Barack Obama’s views on foreign policy may be attained by looking at his October 2002 Chicago speech criticizing the move to war with Iraq. His first sentence gives much insight: “Let me begin by saying that although this has been billed as an antiwar rally, I stand before you as someone who is not opposed to war in all circumstances.”⁵ He explained in the following eight sentences why he does not oppose all wars.⁶ What made the pending war so maladroit in his view was its passionate ideological nature as well as his view that

Saddam Hussein posed no imminent and direct threat to the United States or to his neighbors. The intellectual historian James Kloppenberg, in *Reading Obama*, states the President is 'a man of ideas' and compares him to many of the founding fathers as well as Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Kloppenberg also argues that the source of Obama's ideas on political, social and diplomatic thought is similar to the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey. Obama's speech attacking the dogma of the Bush administration concerning the war in Iraq provides compelling evidence to support Kloppenberg's claim. According to Kloppenberg, Obama detests absolutism and he is quite comfortable with pursuing policies that test and probe while gaining incremental progress rather than those seeking to validate a universal truth. As the world is uncertain, Obama has pursued this pragmatic approach. In March 2008, his national security advisory team recommended "pragmatism over ideology" to serve as his compass. As the president addresses foreign policy on a case-by-case basis, purposefully and deliberately examining the merits of each case, he addresses strategic guidance the same way.⁷ Obama told NBC News in 2011 "When you start applying blanket policies on the complexities of the current world situation, you're just going to get yourself into trouble."⁸ In light of these views Obama has, as a matter of course, pursued a cautious, reactive foreign policy.⁹

An important aspect of Obama's diplomacy is that he is completely comfortable with complexities in an ever growing situation where power is becoming more spread out. He has elevated the importance of the G20 with respect to the G8. This was done to anticipate global power shifts before they become fully realized as well as to offer the rising powers a larger stake in managing what he terms the 'global commons,' that is,

diplomatic issues that transcend the abilities of individual nation-states and must be addressed collectively.¹⁰ In this vein, the President is trying to accord greater respect to its creditor China, which is capitalizing on export earnings, and to mollify its sensitivities concerning its placement at the head table. He also took special note of India and even called for its admission as a permanent member to the UN Security Council.¹¹ The new policy of rebalancing toward Asia may give the impression that the U.S. seeks to counter China, and this perception presents potential risks. Some officials in China see the focus in the Asia-Pacific as a U.S. effort to divide China from its neighbors and keep China's forces in check.¹² Such impressions could lead to China strengthening its anti-access capabilities and being more assertive on its territorial claims. This impression could also result in the U.S. receiving less cooperation from China on issues dealing with Iran and North Korea. In addition, if China sees the U.S. as trying to counter it, it could have risks for U.S. economic interests. China is the second-largest trading partner of the U.S., its third-largest export destination, and largest holder of U.S. government debt. Any further decline in the already challenged U.S.-China relations could lead to China being less willing to negotiate on major decisions relating to the global economy.¹³ While some speculate that the new policy is a result of the U.S. perceiving China as a threat, it is important to know what are the actual threats the U.S. is facing.

Threats that Inform the New Guidance

To put the whole question in perspective about how the U.S. shift toward the Asia-Pacific will affect policy in Europe, we have to look at the current main threats to the United States. In context with obvious outside threats such as Iran and North Korea, we must take into account that over the next ten years, our military will be getting smaller as we draw down from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.¹⁴ According to a recent

study conducted by the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, at the University of Washington, Seattle, the most pressing threat to U.S. security is the line of various asymmetric threats such as cyber-attacks. The two greatest tangible asymmetric threats to the U.S. are non-state terrorist groups and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The second greatest threat to U.S. security is instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The world cannot afford to have an unstable, nuclear-capable Pakistan. The third greatest threat is the rising military aspirations of Iran, which are causing many of its neighbors to react. We also must take into account that Korea continues to demonstrate its aspiration for power in the east.¹⁵

In order to have an effective strategy, the United States must recognize and address all of these threats while simultaneously downsizing and rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region. While it will be essential to develop a clear and strong set of policies to deal with Asia it will be even more important to clearly state the expectations of our allies.¹⁶

Assessing the Guidance to Shift Priority to the Pacific

In the January 2012 document, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defense,” the administration launched its rebalance toward Asia. In the President’s cover letter to the strategy, he announced: “Indeed, as we end today’s wars, we will focus on a broader range of challenges and opportunities, including the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific.”¹⁷ This document laid the structure for the shift toward Asia and stated explicitly that there would be shifts in resources to the Asia-Pacific, and implicitly that those resources would come from Europe and other regions. In the introduction of the strategy, it stated: “This strategic guidance document describes the projected security environment and the key military missions for which the Department

of Defense (DoD) will prepare. It is intended as a blueprint for the Joint force in 2020, providing a set of precepts that will help guide decisions regarding the size and shape of the force over subsequent program and budget cycles, and highlighting some of the strategic risks that may be associated with the proposed strategy.”¹⁸ While addressing the Global Security Environment, the document states: “*we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region*” (emphasis in original document). It continues: “the United States is also investing in a long-term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to serve as a regional economic anchor and provider of security in the broader Indian Ocean region.” In addition, it makes clear what the outlook toward China will be by stating: “Over the long term, China’s emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect the U.S. economy and our security in a variety of ways. Our two countries have a strong stake in peace and stability in East Asia and an interest in building a cooperative bilateral relationship. ... The United States will continue to make the necessary investments to ensure that we maintain regional access and the ability to operate freely in keeping with our treaty obligations and with international law.”¹⁹

This new guidance is significant because it specifically intends to reshape the DOD future priorities, activities and budget. While it is a blueprint for the joint force of 2020, this guidance also seeks to derive savings through thoughtful strategic considerations. It resulted from President Obama’s April 2011 initiative to identify \$400 billion in “additional savings” in the defense budget as part of a long term effort to attain \$4 trillion in deficit reduction over the next 12 years. As a result, Secretary of Defense Panetta ordered a fundamental review to adhere to the President’s guidance. The new strategy guidance document emphasizes several times that it is designed to implement

the (May 2010) National Security Strategy. However, the review leading up to the new strategy had no congressional mandate and took place outside of the usual method of defining U.S and DOD strategic guidance, including the Quadrennial Defense Review (QRD) and defense strategy.²⁰

The guidance is clear about what areas in the world would receive more attention and hence resources. It calls for leveraging advanced technologies, smarter use of the total force to include the reserve element, and some reliance on partner capabilities.²¹

The New Guidance and the U.S. Alliance System

The new guidance calls repeatedly for building U.S. allied and partner capacity while extensively using the word “partnership” throughout the document.²² Currently the U.S. has a global alliance system consisting of over 60 nations. The U.S. and its partners account for nearly 80% of the Global GDP and more than 80% of the world’s military spending. Even so, with imminent budget cuts to the U.S. military and many of its partners, the U.S. is forced to look again at spending in all sectors to include military spending on its allies. In this regard, NATO immediately comes to mind. It is the most capable military alliance in the world and recently NATO-led operations in Libya have proved its worth. The mission in Libya included an arms embargo, a no-fly zone, and an aerial interdiction among others efforts. NATO conducted 21,662 sorties of which 8,140 were strike sorties. The success showed the effectiveness of European contributions to NATO and the confidence the U.S. has in Europe’s ability to provide for its own security.²³

The University of Washington’s, research-study analyzed the U.S. alliances with NATO, Australia and New Zealand (ANZUS), other alliances in the Asia-Pacific, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), the North American

Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and Israel. The authors concluded that concerning the alliance system, the U.S. should:

- “- Reduce the number of US NATO troops in Europe;
- Reduce the number of troops in South Korea;
- Maintain the same level of cooperation framed by the Rio Treaty;
- Increase cooperation with Asia-Pacific allies (Australia, Japan, Philippines);
- Increase transparency in cooperation with China;
- Maintain strong ties with Canada under NORAD;
- Maintain support of Israel.”²⁴

However, simply reducing the “number of US NATO troops in Europe” and attaining the ends of saving defense dollars will not guarantee the results in the area of security the U.S. is seeking without considering the views of our European allies and dialoguing with them in an effort to minimize the negative effects of troop reductions. In order to understand the depth of the potential problem in reducing physical resources in Europe we need to understand how Europeans view the situation.

The European View of the Shift to the Pacific

The published U.S. guidance in the document, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership” has left many in Europe wondering what the U.S. policy in Europe will be in the future. Indeed the European capitals do not have much to consider when looking in the Global Leadership strategy. There are only a few pertinent comments. One paragraph mentions Europe, stating: “Europe is home to some of America’s most stalwart allies and partners, many of whom have sacrificed alongside U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Europe is our principal partner in seeking global and economic security, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.”²⁵ European leaders

could also look at the reference to NATO for more insights. While complimenting most European countries for being security producers rather than security consumers, the guidance states that: “Combined with the drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan, this has created a strategic opportunity to rebalance the U.S. military investment in Europe, moving from a focus on current conflicts toward a focus on future capabilities. *In keeping with this evolving strategic landscape, our posture in Europe must also evolve.* As this occurs, the United States will maintain our Article 5 commitments to allied security and promote enhanced capacity and interoperability for coalition operations. In this resource-constrained era, we will also work with NATO allies to develop a ‘Smart Defense’ approach to pool, share, and specialize capabilities as needed to meet 21st century challenges.”²⁶ It was most likely this paragraph that prompted European leaders to ask U.S. leaders “what the U.S. will do in Europe?”²⁷

To gain clarity, Europeans have listened attentively to announcements by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Defense Panetta, with respect to U.S. military interests in Europe. In 2011 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton provided a written argument in an article titled “America’s Pacific Century” for reorientation away from Afghanistan and Iraq and towards Asia-Pacific. Although the argument was for reorientation away from Afghanistan and Iraq, reorientation away from Europe was implied by the article’s treatment of Europe with respect to Asia. Europe is substantively mentioned only three paragraphs from the end, in references that it is “vitally important,” “home to most of our allies,” and “partners of first resort.”²⁸ In the article, Clinton states “By virtue of our unique geography, the United States is both an Atlantic and a Pacific power. We are proud of our European partnerships and all that they deliver. Our

challenge is to build a web of partnerships and institutions across the Pacific that is as durable and as consistent with American interests and values as the web we have built across the Atlantic. That is the touchstone of our efforts in all these areas.”²⁹ In a 2 June 2012 speech at the 11th Annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Panetta stated that “This strategy makes clear... that while the U.S. military will remain a global force for security and stability, we will of necessity rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region. We will also maintain our presence throughout the world.”³⁰ Panetta had already pointed out in his speech that “All of the U.S. military services are focused on implementing the president’s guidance to make the Asia-Pacific a top priority.”³¹ Through European eyes, the prospects of a robust U.S. presence in Europe are dim as Panetta went on to state that “This strategy makes clear that the United States military, yes, it will be smaller, it will be leaner...”³² It is not difficult to see why some European leaders would feel abandoned with U.S. leadership stating that U.S. forces will get smaller and concurrently focus on the Asia-Pacific.

But even after scouring the U.S. leadership statements on the issue, leaders from European capitals are uncertain about U.S. intentions and what the future U.S. policy will look like. It is clear, however, that the U.S. is pointing to Europe to take a greater lead in its own security matters.

Some European officials, particularly French, however, are not too concerned. After the decision to reduce ground forces in Europe, one senior French official noted that it was not a surprise and “If some American troops leave Europe, it won’t create any political problems.”³³ He went on to say “We don’t need a massive presence of U.S. troops. After all, we don’t see Russia anymore as an enemy or an adversary, but even

as a partner, if a difficult one.”³⁴ A second senior French official was skeptical about European nations being prompted to increase spending on European defense as they should because “no one feels a threat from inside Europe.”³⁵ However he cautioned that in addition to the U.S., the only two NATO countries that had the ability to project substantial military force in defense of NATO interests were France and Britain. He explained that these two nations made up 70% of the projection capacity of Europe and both were cutting back.³⁶

However, Eastern European NATO nations, former Warsaw Pact countries in particular, do not view Russia the same way that France and other western NATO countries see that former soviet country. To them Russia is still a threat and the prospect of the U.S. decreasing its physical resources in Europe, for any reason, is a serious proposition. Implementation of the new U.S. strategy will certainly have an impact.

The Impact of the Strategic Shift on U.S. Global Strategy

Clearly, how the U.S. evolves over the next 20 years will be one of the most important variables in the future design of the international order. Although the economic decline of the U.S. in relation to the rising powers is evident, the future role of the U.S. in the international system is much more difficult to assess. Internationally, the dominant role that the U.S. formerly enjoyed has steadily decreased since the 1960’s but the decrease has sped up since the turn of the century with the rise of China’s standing in the global economy. Even so, the U.S. has remained among the most innovative and flexible countries in the world. It is home to only five percent of the world population yet it accounted for 28 percent of the global patent applications in 2008 and is home to almost 40 percent of the world’s best universities. Demographically, the

trends in the U.S. are favorable when compared to other advanced and some developing nations. The diverse nature of U.S. power suggests that the U.S. will most likely remain “first among equals” among the other great powers in 2030 due to the preeminence of its range of powers even as its influence diminishes.³⁷

Some U.S. scholars believe that if Europe has felt slighted by some of the decisions in the U.S. Global leadership guidance, then it just has to absorb the knock to its prestige, adapt to the new environment, and focus on its own economic rehabilitation. As Indyk and his colleagues write in *Bending History*, “if the United States would have to accept a diminished role as ‘first among equals’ so too would Europe have to adjust by making room for the emerging powers to take their seats at the table, whether it be in the G-20, the International Monetary Fund, or an eventually enlarged Security Council.”³⁸

Many great powers understand the current trends and realize how they relate to the U.S. position in Europe. While addressing the Center for High Defense Studies class at Rome on 18 January 2013, the Japanese Ambassador to Italy, Masaharu Kohno stated that “those security environments on the European front and the Asian front are interconnected.” He explained that while the U.S. was shifting gears to rebalance toward Asia, he detected that Russia too was shifting gears from Europe toward its Asian front. He pointed out that this interconnectedness is important. The alliance system developed differently in Europe than it did in Asia during the Cold War. The U.S., Canada and European nations formed NATO to deal with a common threat. The alliance system that developed in Asia was always bi-lateral between the U.S. and the individual Asia-Pacific countries. Kohno pointed out that Japan and other Asian

countries' security concerns are similar to those of Europe. They are concerned about nuclear proliferation and maritime security against pirates. He concluded that European concerns are Japan's concerns and Japan's concerns should be Europe's concern.³⁹ The documents and speeches concerning the policy of the U.S. shift toward the Asia-Pacific are mirrored in Ambassador Kohno's talk. The U.S. policy seems to be making the statement that more is expected from its European counterparts in the areas of security. Therefore, some policy change with Europe must take place if the U.S. is expecting more from Europe than in the current relationship.

The U.S. Congress is very well aware of the risks associated with such a position. In a March 2012 Congressional Research Service report, the authors stated "Increasing the relative importance of the Asia-Pacific in U.S. policy could conceivably diminish U.S. capabilities in other regions. In particular, in an era of constrained U.S. defense resources, an increased U.S. military emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region might result in a reduction in U.S. military presence or capacity in other parts of the world, which in turn could increase risks for the United States in those other regions."⁴⁰

Current U.S. Policy in Europe

So what is the current U.S. policy in Europe? According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, during a speech on the U.S.-Europe Global Partnership at the Brookings Institute, the U.S. continues to seek a closer working relationship with Europe to accomplish shared goals. After addressing the common NATO goals set forth in Brussels in 2009, Lisbon in 2010, Chicago in 2012, she pointed out that beyond NATO there may be no better example of the partnership between the U.S. and Europe than the cooperation in holding the Iranian government accountable for its illicit nuclear program. She acknowledged that on a wide range of global security issues the U.S. is

more closely aligned with its European partners than ever before. In addition she stated that the U.S. is modernizing its defensive capabilities across Europe to protect against 21st-century threats and that the U.S. is maintaining its largest permanent military presence outside of the U.S. there, while simultaneously upgrading ballistic missile defenses there in order to protect against threats from outside the continent.⁴¹ She also addressed the new strategy, stating that “Our pivot to Asia is not a pivot away from Europe. On the contrary, we want Europe to engage more in Asia, along with us to see the region not only as a market, but as a focus of common strategic engagement.”⁴² Along the same vein she addressed markets and stated that one of the more important questions in the future will be whether the U.S. and Europe put as much work into the economic relationship as they have in the security relationship. She maintained that the untapped potential of the transatlantic market is as much a strategic imperative as an economic one.⁴³

Despite similar speeches and papers addressing the U.S. policy in Europe in a favorable light, some scholars are skeptical. In the CSIS-produced “Global Forecast 2012,” Heather A. Conley pleads, in the article *Beware the Backburner: The Risk of a Neglected Europe*, for the U.S. to put Europe back on the front burner. Her argument is that Europe’s reaction to the European sovereign debt crisis has challenged the liberal foundation upon which Europe was built after World War II. She notes that although Europe is unlikely to revert to the Europe of the 1930’s, it is nevertheless under significant internal stress, requiring more attention than the U.S. has recently shown.⁴⁴ Conley and Clinton vary widely in their outlook on the U.S. position in Europe. However, given Clinton’s position, her view is the most correct interpretation of the current U.S.

policy in Europe. As policy and strategy are so inextricably connected (as pointed out earlier), it is important to understand what military resources are available in Europe to execute U.S. and allied strategies.

Comparative Military Resources in Europe

Current European Military Budgets

The financial crisis has affected all NATO countries albeit to differing degrees of severity according to a November 2012 NATO report. The countries most affected with respect to defense cuts are those in the Central and Eastern parts of Europe. In 2010, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Estonia cut their defense budgets by 28%, 26% and 23% respectively. Military spending in Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia was reduced by over 10% the same year. In 2011 Bulgaria decreased their defense budget by 20%, the Czech Republic by 15%, and Slovenia by 13%. However Latvia and Estonia, which both endured large cuts in 2010 were able to overcome some budgetary obstacles in 2011 and make a modest military spending increase of 3.41% and 6.88% respectively.⁴⁵

Another important consideration is that two of Europe's largest NATO contributors, France and the United Kingdom, also significantly reduced their military budgets during this financial downturn. France decreased its military budget from 2.5% of its GDP in 2006 to 2.0% in 2010. Then in 2011, it reduced its defense budget an additional 3.14%. In 2012 France was able to increase its budget by 1.8% over the 2011 budget; this amounted to 31 billion euros, not including pensions. Although the United Kingdom had increased its military spending over the past decade, it was forced to make cuts which will result in an 8% reduction in 2014-15. The UK will reduce its military by 24,000 personnel by 2015. The UK will, however, remain the largest defense-budget contributor of all European NATO nations and will continue to meet its

NATO requirement of 2% of GDP defense spending for the next three years.⁴⁶ In 2011 only three U.S. Allies reached or surpassed the 2% of GDP mark on defense spending while 17 of the Allies spent 1.5% or less. In total European NATO nation defense spending dropped 5.4% from 2008 to 2010.⁴⁷

As a whole, the majority of the cuts have been in personnel, infrastructure and procurement. One of the most important concerns that the U.S. and its NATO Allies have, is the vast reduction of investments in modernizing equipment. Postponements and cancellations of major equipment projects are creating risks that some projected capabilities will be lost by the Allies. Even worse is the fact that some joint programs have been cancelled. Canada, for example, is no longer participating in the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) program. Such reductions will affect the military equipment upgrading and modernization process in the medium to long term. It will therefore affect the overall NATO Alliance military capability.⁴⁸

Given the current defense reductions in Europe, the U.S. policy of shifting focus to the Asia-Pacific comes at a bad time for Europe. However by examining what duplication of capabilities is present, the Atlantic Alliance can work to mitigate risks. The U.S. will have to reduce forces for the same reasons Europeans are reducing their defense budgets. Closer coordination between the two sides will be paramount.

Current U.S. Resources in Europe

The new strategic guidelines concerning Europe call for the elimination of two Armored Brigade Combat Teams (ABCTs) while maintaining the NATO Article V commitments by allocating a U.S.-based brigade to the NATO Response Force as well as rotating stateside Army units to Europe for exercises and training. The implication of

the guidelines on the strategy is that the permanent U.S. presence in Europe will be quite reduced which some might consider an acceptable risk. Others believe that any further reduction of U.S. forces in Europe will have a detrimental effect on regional security.⁴⁹ The remaining two Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), consisting of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck, Germany, and the 173rd Airborne in Vicenza, Italy will be the only U.S. power projection forces remaining in Europe.⁵⁰ While looking at the fact that two BCTs, the 170th and the 172nd, will be removed from Europe in FY 2013 and FY 2014 respectively, it must be understood that the proposal for their removal was made before the current shift toward Asia.⁵¹ To be clear, given the defense budget reductions, their removal would most likely be necessary even without the new focus on the Asia Pacific.

Projected Effect of Removing Resources from Europe

Some states view these remaining two U.S. brigades and their associated supporting units as the only form of reassurance from the U.S. to counter potential Russian aggression. These states, mainly the newest members of NATO, could feel abandoned if the U.S. were to remove the remaining combat land forces from Europe. This could lead to Russia gaining a political victory, and those politicians that are Russia supporters may find new political support at home.⁵²

As for power projection of the two remaining BCTs, it is important to note that they are closer to the Middle East and Africa than stateside units. The European based support units could also support U.S. Special Operating Forces en-route to other missions.⁵³ At the Army level, senior leaders in Europe describe the mission as being prepared to conduct full-spectrum operations while focusing on asymmetric warfare and in particular training NATO partner and non-NATO European forces in

counterinsurgency and preparation for operations in Afghanistan. With the end of U.S. operations in Afghanistan in 2014, it stands to reason that the stated primary mission for the U.S. Army in Europe will conclude. However, Army leaders contend that U.S.-based units will rotate to Europe in company- and battalion-sized deployments for a few weeks or two months at a time to engage and train with our European counterparts to “build partner capacity.”⁵⁴

In January of 2012, the Obama Administration changed an earlier decision to wait until after 2015 to remove one BCT from Europe and instead decided to remove two BCTs by 2014. One U.S.-based rotational battalion will replace the two BCTs. The 170th BCT is scheduled to be cut in 2013 and the 172nd BCT in 2014. The U.S. Army in Europe will also reduce approximately 2,500 soldiers from support units over the next five years. In total, more than 10,000 of the 80,000 U.S. service personnel currently assigned to Europe will leave.”⁵⁵ In addition to removing the two BCTs the U.S. will also remove a corps headquarters, inactivate two Air Force squadrons and close four of the twelve Army bases in Germany. Panetta has indicated that more cuts will follow: “the U.S. military’s force posture in Europe will, of necessity, continue to adapt and evolve to meet new challenges and opportunities, particularly in light of the security needs of the continent relative to the emerging strategic priorities that we face elsewhere.”⁵⁶ With respect to naval forces, Panetta stated in his 1 June speech: “by 2020 the Navy will reposture its forces from today’s roughly 50/50 percent split between the Pacific and the Atlantic to about a 60/40 split between those oceans.”⁵⁷

The two remaining BCTs in Europe will serve as some reassurance to eastern NATO nations as a deterrent to Russian aggression. There are concerns that if the

remaining two BCTs in Europe are removed, it would be difficult to justify retaining the other Title X forces in Europe such as aviation, air and missile defense, engineer, and military police brigades.⁵⁸ A second-order effect of removing some or all of these units would be the difficulty in justifying the continuation of the Joint Maneuver Training Command (JMTC) and its supporting units. The JMTC conducts live fire exercises, force-on-force maneuvers, and simulation training for U.S. and allied forces. It also operates the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) Academy. The contributions of JMTC to U.S. and NATO combat readiness are an important factor.⁵⁹

There are strategic risks associated with both the overall shift toward the Asia-Pacific strategy as well as the removal of resources from Europe. According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin E. Dempsey, in his February 15, 2012 testimony to the House Armed Services Committee on the FY 2013 DOD Budget, perhaps the most critical issue is the risk involved. The risks he described are in time and capacity. He did however point out that the force could compensate through such means as “effective diplomacy and strong partnerships.”⁶⁰

Some analysts are not as optimistic as the administration about the effect of these reductions in Europe. In his article “Removing Brigade Combat Teams from Europe Undercuts NATO Allies,” Luke Coffey states that “the decision to remove a large number of U.S. troops and their associated military capabilities from Europe sends the signal to European allies that America no longer cares about Europe,” that many Europeans question U.S. resolve, and that “now is not the time for U.S. disengagement from transatlantic security.”⁶¹ Perhaps Coffey is correct. However, taken as a whole, the resulting effect of these reductions will be that they will force the U.S. and its NATO

allies to have to work closer together in order to ensure that security capabilities in Europe are not diminished. If the U.S. and allies do not work closer together on security issues, then Coffey's warnings may prove to be true.

Economic and Diplomatic Considerations and Trends

Looking at the U.S. policy in Europe through the lens of the U.S. global strategy focus on Asia is, however, myopic as it does not take into consideration economic, cultural and other factors. Given the economic and cultural instability in the world today, the community of geopolitical pundits is growing exponentially. Since the end of the Cold War there has not been a single geopolitical template that adequately defines world politics. This phenomenon, in addition to globalization and the ever increasing rise in expectations throughout the world has led many to look for new geopolitical "structures" to give meaning and definition so that leaders could define and direct policy.⁶² According to Gordon Adams, a respected defense budget analyst, the budget cuts will go very deep.⁶³ In Adams' view, the president faces the tri-fold tasks of deficit reduction, entitlement reduction, and the tax reforms to allow these. Adams' predicts that the defense budget will be the major bill payer to avoid cuts elsewhere in the government or at least to make other cuts more politically palatable. Adams predicts the additional \$550 billion sequestration cut as inevitable. In fact, Adams says the question will be not whether but when even more cuts will be made. Todd Harrison of the Center for Strategic & Budgetary Assessments, agrees with this forecast.⁶⁴

The Europeans face the same dilemmas. In preparation for the 2013 "European Council's Session on Defence Matters," a draft Italian proposal titled "More Europe" stated "The commonality of values and interests between Europe and North America should...where appropriate, go beyond a mere division of tasks and focus on how to

work better together, building further on the existing European and Western independent but mutually supportive approaches, especially in the areas of non-military security.”⁶⁵ The document argues that the EU complements the Atlantic Alliance with the added value of the EU civil-military approach to crisis management through the CSDP. This organization represents the main driver for advancing complementary as well as specialized competencies in Euro-Atlantic security endeavors. The evolving partnership, according to the document, is best served by the acquisition from European counterparts of all relevant military capabilities and their collective political commitment to use them in order to maintain international peace and security. The Italian proposal goes on to state that this approach could be the basis of a renewed transatlantic security community where *More Europe* is needed: More is needed *from* Europe in terms of defense capabilities and more is needed *to* Europe in terms of political commitments. The proposal makes it clear that the aim is not to replace NATO but instead to increase Euro-Atlantic cooperation in a renewed manner to address the issues and threats in 21st century terms.⁶⁶ One of the most important observations in the proposal is that “If EU member states do not pool their efforts, where appropriate on certain common requirements or capabilities, none of them, nor Europe as a whole, will be able to guarantee its own security.”⁶⁷ The logical outcome is that if there is no real and effective coordination concerning national defense planning, Europe will certainly lose many defense capabilities. The paper argues that member states must therefore overcome national reservations and be willing to agree on an appropriate level of interdependence, especially among states lacking key capabilities.⁶⁸

Secretary of Defense Panetta seems to agree with the premise of the draft Italian proposal. In a speech at King's College in London on 18 January 2013, he posed the tough questions the alliance is facing: "What is the future of the NATO alliance? Will NATO retreat from its responsibilities out of complacency or a different set of priorities in the face of growing budget constraints? Or will NATO have the creativity, the innovation, the commitment to develop and share the capabilities it must have in order to meet future security threats?"⁶⁹ In his speech, he addressed the focus on Asia, the Atlantic alliance and the financial crisis. He confirmed to his European audience the U.S. strategy for focusing on the Asia Pacific released a year prior to his speech. He stated that "as we rebalance our global posture to emphasize Asia Pacific and the Middle East, we must be able to assert force protection in recognition of the many challenges and opportunities in those two regions." He also confirmed a new commitment to Europe, stating, "We will seek to reinvigorate our security relationships throughout the world by modernizing our alliances, building innovative defense partnerships, developing rotational deployments in Europe...where we can go in and train and exercise and develop the capabilities of other countries, develop other partnerships..."⁷⁰ He explained that the new strategy has to make \$487 billion in budget reductions while investing in the key elements of that strategy. He states "our strategy makes clear, the United States and Europe now are facing the reality of budget constraints together. And in an era of constrained resources, we need to make our alliances count. The bottom line is that no one nation can confront the threats that I've described alone. That's the reality. But that also means no one nation can shoulder the burden for our collective security alone." He goes on "That's why I have made building stronger alliances and

partnerships my top priority as secretary of defense, including NATO. It's also why I believe we have a window of opportunity to fundamentally reorient the transatlantic alliance to tackle the most pressing challenges that we are facing in the 21st century, and yet to be able to meet our fiscal responsibilities at the same time.”⁷¹ Later he addressed Europe's concerns even more directly stating “I know that our so-called pivot to Asia has evoked concerns in Europe about whether America was turning away from the transatlantic alliance, but today those concerns should be put to rest. Global security is not a zero-sum game, but neither are the security commitments of the United States. More importantly, Europe's economic and security future is – much like the United States – increasingly tied to Asia. After all, the European Union is China's largest trading partner, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN's) second-largest trading partner, and ranks third and fourth with Japan and South Korea.”⁷² It was a very important comment to make to the European audience. In the last five years, China has overtaken both the German and Japanese economies and now has the second largest economy in the world. According to the Center for Economic and Business Research (ECBR), by 2020 there will not be one European country among the top five world economic powers.⁷³

While discussing NATO's progress in strengthening the security of its networks against cyber threats Panetta declared that the alliance needs to begin to develop additional cyber defense capabilities. He urged that NATO ministers hold a session to examine how those cyber defense operational capabilities could be increased. In addition he pointed out that the alliance must also invest in other capabilities such as new intelligence surveillance, reconnaissance platforms, next-generation platforms to

include the Joint Strike Fighter, and special operations units. Admitting again that these investments will need to be made during a time of budget constraints, he stated “it is imperative that we do so in a strategic and coordinated way.”⁷⁴ Appearing to echo the same ideas of the Italian proposal, Panetta stated that NATO’s smart defense means that nations do not necessarily need to duplicate capabilities and that the time has come when these critical capabilities and capacities can be shared.⁷⁵ Panetta was wise to address NATO “Smart Defense.” NATO Secretary General Andres Fogh Rasmussen announced the “Smart Defense” initiative in order to cope with NATO’s expanding responsibilities while the nations address reductions in defense budgets. The specific aim of the initiative is to improve the cooperation among the alliance members and develop capabilities which would enable them to address security challenges and allow NATO to reach the “Level of Ambition” outlined in the Strategic Concept. It encourages nations to focus on stricter prioritization, specialization, and multinational cooperation in modern equipment acquisition in order to maximize the efficiency of their defense budgets.⁷⁶

The smart defense approach does not imply that defense budgets should be cut but instead seeks to achieve cost reductions in order to increase capabilities and multinational cooperation. In addition it does not replace NATO’s Defense Planning and Review Process (NDPP). The NDPP and its five-step process will remain NATO’s framework for capability development. Even though the NDPP was revised in 2009 with the introduction of more coherent and comprehensive defense planning processes, member nations have reduced defense spending with little coordination among others concerning their cuts to capabilities. Unfortunately, no rational attempt has been made

to ensure that important capabilities were protected.⁷⁷ To make matters worse, most military budget cuts by NATO allied nations have been “across the board” and applied evenly across maintenance, supply, operations and investment budgets which has resulted in an ever increasing number of troops not trained, ready, or adequately equipped for their specified tasks. These uncoordinated cuts run counter to the NATO efforts of the NDPP.⁷⁸

Given these circumstances, “Smart Defense” should be a welcome enterprise by NATO members and indeed Alliance Heads of States and Government have approved twenty-two projects under the “Smart Defense” initiated at the Chicago Summit. In the Summit “Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020” the goal was clearly “to have modern, tightly connected forces equipped, trained, exercised and commanded so that they can operate together and with partners in any environment.”⁷⁹ This “Smart Defense” however, will be successful only in the Allies that pool and share their defense resources can be certain that they will have access to the pooled military capabilities when they need them. Therefore the participating nations must be committed to the significant, institutional and permanent change associated with implementing the initiative. Consultations among member states will be paramount to making “Smart Defense” work.⁸⁰

Conclusion and Recommendations

Shift toward Asia – Implications of U.S. Policy in Europe

John Agnew deconstructs the idea of a “pivoting” of U.S. Foreign Policy from the trans-Atlantic to the Asia Pacific.⁸¹ Even so, it is clear that with the budget cuts and the focus on the Asia-Pacific, there will be physical changes in Europe with the level of troop commitments. The U.S. policy toward the allies in Europe will remain the same in

principle but move toward strengthening alliances in practice in order to mitigate the effects of troop reductions.

In conclusion, this paper agrees with the draft proposal “More Europe” and carries the argument to its logical conclusion that the U.S. and its European counterparts, NATO and the EU need to coordinate the development of future defense structures in Europe before more defense resources are cut.

The U.S. Policy will perhaps change little but then again, as described early in this paper “policy” is a term that needs to be fully defined when addressing security measures. In this sense, as we look at the U.S. future security measures, it is clear the U.S. will have to reduce the physical assets and resources that are available in Europe in order to deal with the policy focus on the Asia-Pacific and the added constraints on the current budget crisis. It is imperative for the security of both the U.S. and Europe that the future defense cuts be coordinated closely to avoid duplication of efforts and the total loss of particular defense capabilities.

Recommendations on Future Policy

Overall, this paper has provided the analysis that any future U.S. policy in Europe would have to be made in coordination with the overall U.S. global policy, not only because of the interconnectedness of the world economies, globalization and security alliances but also because of the effect it would have on European defense strategy and posture. In addition, future U.S. policy should look beyond the NATO and EU transatlantic security partnerships and address economic cooperation as well.

The most important recommendation this study offers is for a renewed transatlantic partnership that acknowledges the relative strengths of both Europe and

the U.S. The U.S. needs to work closely with its NATO partners and the EU as it withdraws physical resources from Europe to ensure that the capabilities those resources represent will be substituted by willing and able European assets. This is critically important if the U.S. intends begins to seek to remove the last remaining two BCTs in Europe once the two scheduled to leave have departed.

Both the U.S. and the European nations need to plan defense cuts with a comprehensive strategy rather than make the defense cuts first and then come up with a strategy. It is clear that the basic concept is understood by each individual country in the transatlantic alliance but the European allied nations need to go one step further and develop an overall security plan for Europe before cuts are made. Likewise the U.S. and its NATO and European partners need to continue to improve on consultations, talks and forums to ensure that efforts in security capabilities are not unnecessarily duplicated and that important capabilities are not lost during the ongoing defense budget cuts affecting all nations concerned.

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