

DGAP POLICY BRIEF

Beyond Burden Sharing

Conceptualizing the European Pillar of NATO



Kristi Raik
International Centre for
Defence and Security, Tallinn



Marcin Terlikowski
Polish Institute of International
Affairs, Warsaw



MANAGING EDITOR
Mario Baumann
German Council on Foreign
Relations, Berlin

Under Donald Trump's second presidency, NATO is facing the biggest challenge since its inception in 1949. In the face of Washington's strategic reorientation, Europe must keep the US committed while taking greater responsibility for its own defense. To that end, allies should advance the concept of a stronger European pillar of NATO. This means defining its strategic, economic, and military dimension to reshape the transatlantic bond, maintain NATO's credibility, and strengthen European security.

- Increasing Europe's share in collective defense will require multifaceted coordination among European allies. Close cooperation with the EU and Ukraine will be fundamental to strengthening the European defense industrial and technological base and advancing defense collaboration within the European pillar of NATO.
- While European defense spending must urgently increase, the European allies' share of total NATO defense expenditure may not be an adequate measure on their capacity to take responsibility for their own defense. Discussions should instead focus more on the development of key capabilities.
- Militarily, the primary areas for urgent investment should be air defense systems, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities, and deep strike capacity.

INTRODUCTION

The administration of US President Donald Trump has called into question the US role as the guarantor of European security, making the Hague Summit in June one of the most challenging ever for the alliance. European NATO members must rethink their contribution to the organization and devise a constructive response, including hefty military investments. At the summit, they must credibly signal a commitment to strengthening European capabilities and to building a strong European pillar within the alliance. Indeed, the future of NATO hangs on the rapid increase in Europe's share in collective defense, as there is no doubt the US intends to reduce its commitment.

The chaotic and confrontational policy of the Trump administration against the backdrop of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine has already spurred a much-needed boost to European defense spending. Recent European Union initiatives to support capability development and reinforce its defense industrial and technological base include the White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030, the European Defence Industrial Strategy, and the European Defence Industrial Programme (EDIP). Together with the European Commission's ambitious ReArm Europe plan, Europe aims to advance rearmament after decades of cuts in overall military capacity.

The only realistic path to keeping Europe safe in the coming decade is to maintain NATO as the framework for collective defense and to pursue EU initiatives that support this. Although the transatlantic relationship is under great strain, there is no credible alternative to US security guarantees for Europe, even in the medium term.

There is tension between the two goals: Europe taking gradually more responsibility for its defense while also keeping the US engaged. At the same time, the boost in European defense spending provides an opportunity to redefine the transatlantic bond so both needs are met: US concerns about burden sharing and European strategic ambitions. This can be achieved by properly developing the concept of a European pillar of NATO. European allies, in close coordination with the EU, need to carefully craft three dimensions of this pillar: strategic, economic, and military. This paper analyzes these three dimensions and argues for strengthening Europe's responsibility through a well-managed,

gradual process so as not to erode NATO's credibility and increase the risk of a broader war on the continent.

THE STRATEGIC DIMENSION

A More European NATO Reflects Shifting Strategic Priorities

The transatlantic relationship is arguably at its most fragile since NATO was established in 1949. The US increasingly views its strategic priorities in the Indo-Pacific and is pressuring Europeans to take on a greater burden of their own defense. These strategic realities would be the same no matter who was leading the country. However, Trump's second presidency has brought a deeper layer of uncertainty to the transatlantic relationship, as the US seems to have abandoned its commitment to the post-World War 2 international order and is pursuing a radical remaking of the old rules. Europe can no longer take it for granted that the US sees a self-interest in maintaining the alliance, is willing to defend Europe, and shares the same values of freedom and democracy.

The US no longer coordinates policies toward Russia and the war in Ukraine with Europeans to the previous degree, and its policies are increasingly diverging from European interests. The development of a new Russia strategy in NATO has been overshadowed by signals that the US is taking steps to normalize its bilateral relations with Russia. The Trump administration has so far taken a soft approach toward Russia, which from a European perspective has been counterproductive to the US president's expressed desire for peace. There is uncertainty over continued US military support for Ukraine. Furthermore, the US does not wish to contribute to long-term security guarantees for Ukraine, leaving this to the Europeans. The issue of Ukraine's accession to NATO is off the table for now, and the Hague Summit is unlikely to advance this process. The best case for Ukraine in The Hague is if NATO does not formally step back from its previous commitments, notably that "Ukraine's future is in NATO."¹

Despite the divergence in the (self-defined) strategic interests of Europeans and Americans, NATO remains a valuable asset not just for Europe, but also the US. The failure of what has become the most successful alliance in history would cause huge reputational damage for the US and the decline of its global influence.

1 NATO, Washington Summit Declaration (July 10, 2024): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227678.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed June 5, 2025).

Washington would lose Europe as an ally in its strategic rivalry with China. Withdrawal from Europe would mean that the US could no longer use its bases in Europe for operations and activities outside Europe, notably in the Middle East and Africa.² The US will therefore most likely not abandon the alliance, but NATO needs to account for Washington's shifting strategic priorities by strengthening its European pillar.

In a worst-case scenario, a hasty, large-scale US withdrawal from NATO could send the wrong signal to Russia, which might interpret it as the US abandoning its defense of Europe. The next three to five years could be the most dangerous for Europe, as it will be in the process of increasing its defense capabilities, but not yet able to fully deter Russian aggression. The most dangerous scenario would be for Russia to test the cohesion and solidarity of the alliance and to demonstrate that Article 5 does not actually function. Moreover, a different perception of the Russian threat is taking shape among the allies. For the US, Russia is increasingly seen as less of a threat. In fact, it is possible that bilateral relations may improve faster than some European allies would like, especially those on NATO's eastern flank who are directly threatened by Russia. For these allies, the US represents a fundamental pillar of defense against Russia. The increasing uncertainty regarding US commitments to Europe heightens security anxieties in the region and stokes a sense of strategic abandonment. Russia's hybrid actions in Europe – from the sabotage of infrastructure, cyberattacks, or disinformation campaigns that seek to influence elections and erode public support for Ukraine as well as increased military spending – are exacerbating this situation.

Washington's Call for Greater European Capabilities Requires European Leadership

In past decades, the US has taken an ambivalent position on European defense initiatives. Not only has it opposed efforts to develop European and especially EU defense separately from NATO, but it has also been keen to maintain its dominant position within the alliance. This has contributed to a division of labor where Europeans have neglected a number of

critical capabilities and relied on the US to provide them. Furthermore, the US has been keen to maintain a strong position for its defense industry in the European market.

Now there are signs the US might see a more autonomous Europe as serving US interests.³ The reduction of US commitments should be met with the development of respective European capabilities in a well-managed, coordinated way so as not to damage NATO's credibility and thereby increase the risk of a broader war in Europe. Besides military capabilities, deterrence also hinges on careful communication. For example, the US has reportedly considered giving up the position of Supreme Allied Commander of Europe (SACEUR), which it has filled since 1951.⁴ While the recent nomination of US Air Force Lieutenant General Alexis Grynkewich to the position relieved European allies' concerns over the implications of such a significant shift in custom,⁵ such public speculation increases uncertainty about the US commitment to NATO and undermines the alliance's deterrence posture, including nuclear deterrence. Ambiguous talk about the potential reduction of US troops in Europe continues to undermine the credibility of the alliance.

While the current US administration is relentlessly pushing Europeans to do more, it has not hidden its contempt toward European weakness. Europe needs to counter this by showing it is capable of decisive action. Raising defense spending is important, but not enough. Europe needs to take the lead on key tasks such as providing security guarantees and long-term assistance to Ukraine. It must pursue security and defense as top political priorities, with political leaders daring to make public messages that may be unpopular with some citizens. Politicians should not hide behind the claim that social welfare demands prevent stronger and faster investment in defense. Security is a fundamental precondition of welfare and must be prioritized in the current geopolitical environment.

2 CEPA, *Going, Going ...? The US Base Network in Europe* (April 14, 2025): <https://cepa.org/article/going-going-the-us-base-network-in-europe/> (accessed June 5, 2025).

3 Sohrab Ahmari, "JD Vance: My Message to Europe – America Doesn't Want a Vassal Continent," *Unherd* (April 15, 2025): <https://unherd.com/2025/04/jd-vance-my-message-to-europe/> (accessed June 5, 2025).

4 Andrew Corbett, "Why it Matters for European Security if an American No Longer Commands Nato Troops – by a Former Trident Submarine Commander" *The Conversation* (April 11, 2025): <https://theconversation.com/why-it-matters-for-european-security-if-an-american-no-longer-commands-nato-troops-by-a-former-trident-submarine-commander-254122> (accessed June 5, 2025).

5 Phil Stewart, Idrees Ali and Lili Bayer, "US announces pick for NATO's next Supreme Allied Commander," *Reuters* (5 June, 2025): <https://www.reuters.com/world/pentagon-announces-pick-natos-next-supreme-allied-commander-2025-06-05/> (accessed June 5, 2025).

EU Defense Cooperation is Bolstering NATO's European Pillar, but Needs Better Coordination

Despite the Trump administration's well-known reservations about the EU, the Union needs to be involved in building a strong European pillar of NATO. The Commission's recently published White Paper on defense is aimed at strengthening the alliance and helping member states achieve NATO capability targets. The priorities identified in the White Paper⁶ – filling capability gaps, supporting Ukraine, strengthening the European defense industry, and increasing defense spending – are all supportive of NATO's collective defense. The EU provides the much-needed framework for enhancing European defense cooperation, involving also key European countries not in the EU such as the UK, Norway, and Ukraine.

An area of some unavoidable tension and competition between Europe and the US is the defense industry, as the US expects higher European defense spending to benefit American business interests. In the short term, this will surely be the case. The US has already benefitted from increased European spending.⁷ The short-term challenge is not that Europeans won't buy American, but that US industry doesn't have the capacity to fully respond to the fast-growing demand. In the longer term, however, Europe must invest in the growth of its own defense industry, which is necessary to strengthen NATO's European pillar.

There is a need to further streamline EU-NATO cooperation based on complementarity – coordinating different resources and capabilities to be as efficient and effective as possible. There has been progress in the field of capability development, where states that are members of both organizations are encouraged to use EU instruments to meet NATO targets. The EU has extended its main instrument to promote cross-national military cooperation, PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), to NATO allies US, UK, Norway, and Canada.

Another important area of EU-NATO coordination is countering hybrid threats, for example in cyber defense and strategic communication. Both organizations must continue coordinated exercises to improve their preparedness to respond to hybrid attacks. Information-sharing remains a well-known challenge but informal exchange and regular contacts at staff-to-staff level can overcome this.

Finally, the EU plays an important role in integrating Ukraine, including the country's impressive defense industrial production, into European security and defense.⁸ Irrespective of its potential membership in NATO, an independent and sovereign Ukraine is a key factor for European security, as its ability to confront Russia's aggression will make European allies more secure. The EU and European states are already making substantial investments in the Ukrainian defense industry and joint projects.⁹ In the short term, Europeans can replace US military assistance to Ukraine in many fields,¹⁰ while seeking to maintain the US contribution of certain critical capabilities such as air defense and intelligence which cannot be secured by Europeans alone. In the longer term, it is up to Europeans to ensure that Ukraine will have a strong military and a rightful place in the European security architecture after the war.

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The Hague Summit will focus on burden sharing. Allies are expected to agree to a new – and very ambitious – defense spending pledge. By 2032, all NATO nations aim to spend 5% of GDP on defense, with 3.5% in core defense expenditures and 1.5% in defense-related expenditures such as infrastructure or cybersecurity investments.¹¹ Such a bold pledge by European allies will also serve as an early personal success for Donald Trump, who has ranted about allegedly unfair burden sharing in NATO for years. Yet, the expected boost to European defense spending will hardly transform the transatlantic burden-sharing ratio

6 European Commission, *Joint White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030* (March 19, 2025): https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/30b50d2c-49aa-4250-9ca6-27a0347cf009_en?filename=White%20Paper.pdf (accessed June 5, 2025).

7 According to the Draghi report, between mid-2022 and mid-2023, 78% of the EU's total procurement spending went to non-EU suppliers, of which 63% went to the US. European Commission, *The Draghi Report: A Competitiveness Strategy for Europe* (September 9, 2024): https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/97e481fd-2dc3-412d-be4c-f152a8232961_en?filename=The%20future%20of%20European%20competitiveness%20-%20A%20competitiveness%20strategy%20for%20Europe.pdf (accessed June 5, 2025).

8 For an overview as of 2024, see Ares Group, *Integrated Arsenal: Mapping Defence Industrial Relations Between Europe and Ukraine* (December 2024): https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/ARES_2024_12_107_Ukraine_Defence_Industry_PolicyPaper.pdf (accessed June 5, 2025).

9 Ibid.

10 Kiel Institute, *Ukraine Aid: How Europe Can Replace US Support* (March 2025): <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/ukraine-aid-how-europe-can-replace-us-support-33907/> (accessed June 5, 2025).

11 France24, *NATO chief seeks defence spending at 5% of GDP by 2032: Dutch PM* (May 9, 2025): <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250509-nato-chief-seeks-defence-spending-at-5-of-gdp-by-2032-dutch-pm> (accessed June 5, 2025).

in any substantive way. In other words, focusing on numbers and the monetary value of Europe's expected input into common defense may easily turn out to be counterproductive.

The European Share of Defense Expenditure Has Varied Greatly over Time

According to NATO estimates, US defense spending in 2023 constituted some 67% of the combined spending of all allies. In 2015, shortly after NATO members pledged at the Wales Summit to spend 2% of GDP, the US contributed 72%. These numbers may suggest a trend toward an increasing European share of NATO defense expenditure. From a longer-term perspective, however, the European share of the common burden for transatlantic security has varied considerably. In 2007, US defense expenditure totaled 64.5% of all NATO spending, in 2000 it stood at 63.6%, and in 1990, just as the Cold War was ending, at 60.7% (see figure 1).

Behind these numbers are several factors, like the uneven pace of disarmament after the end of the Cold War in Europe and America, the enlargement of NATO, costly US military interventions, and European involvement in them. Yet, without analyzing individual

drivers of allies' defense expenditure, two fundamental observations can still be made.

The Burden-Sharing Discussion May Have Little to Do with Europe's Overall Military Capacity

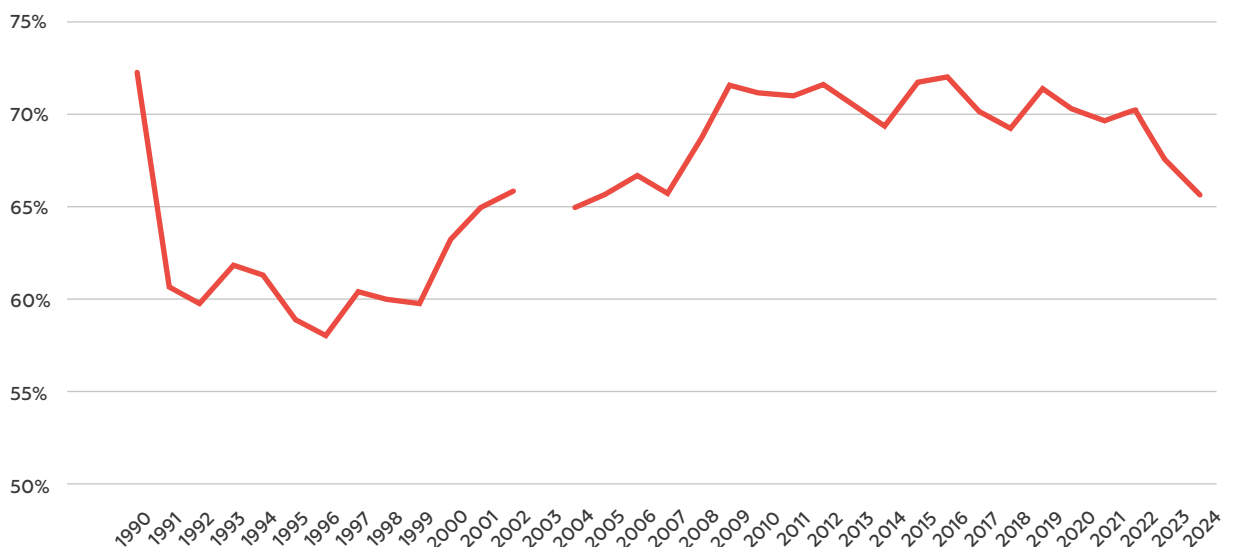
First, the burden-sharing indicator, defined as the ratio between the European and US shares of total NATO defense expenditure, does not relate directly to or reflect the European allies' overall military capacity. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the burden carried by the European allies was greater (41%–33%) than it has been since around 2010 (roughly 30%). Yet, lacking strategic enablers such as satellite reconnaissance and communication, heavy airlift, and deployable logistical support, and lagging behind the US in precision-guided munitions, Europe remained fully dependent on the US for crisis management via NATO throughout the 1990s and 2000s. This was best epitomized by missions in the Western Balkans in the mid-1990s, the 2011 air campaign in Libya, and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan in the early 2000s.

Second, burden-sharing dynamics correlate strongly with changes in US defense expenditure. Simply put, when America spends more on defense, its sheer scale

US Share Of NATO Defense Expenditure

Figure 1

Calculated individually for each year. Data for 2003-2004 was not available in a methodologically comparative form.

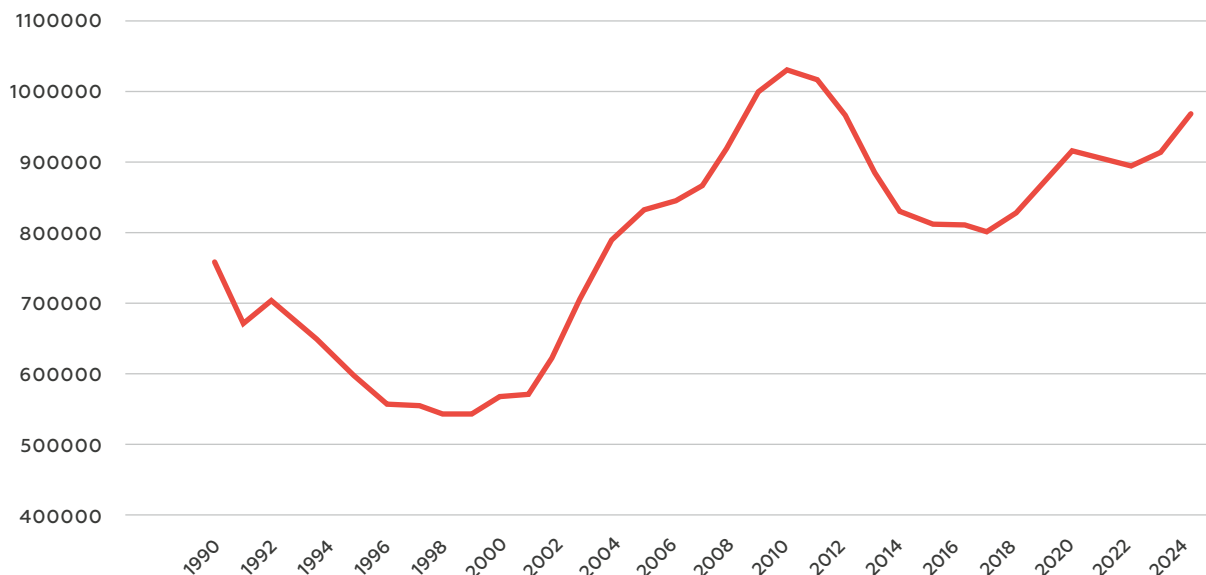


Source: Own calculations based on NATO data.

US Defense Expenditure 1990-2023

Figure 2

US \$ million, constant prices (2023)



Source: Own calculations based on SIPRI data.

boosts the US share of total NATO defense expenditure (see Figure 2). At the same time, American defense spending is driven by the unique strategic calculations of the US, often not linked directly to the collective defense requirements of the NATO area. Obviously, the hike in US defense spending after 2000 was linked to the Global War on Terror and American engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the European contribution to those operations was driven rather by solidarity than a shared threat perception, they did not match the US in terms of increased defense budgets. Similarly, the recovery of defense expenditure following the global financial crisis was more pronounced in the US, outweighing changes in European defense budgets. While Europe did not see an imminent threat to its territory in the period 2009-2014, the threat from the Islamic State extremist group required more investment in domestic security.

These observations have deep implications for the likely trajectories of the future burden-sharing ratio in NATO. The Trump administration is seeking a defense budget of over USD 1 trillion in the next fiscal year.¹² Combined with its clear ambition to project greater

power in the Indo-Pacific, this promises a significant rise in defense spending on the US side of the equation. If the hike in Europe's defense expenditure remains less ambitious than currently being discussed, or if it is not delivered or sustained over time, there may be no positive change in the burden-sharing ratio between the US and its European allies. Early estimates for 2024 indicate total spending by European NATO allies of roughly USD 490 billion and by the US of USD 935 billion.¹³ This elicits a ratio of 35% to 65% in a situation where European allies and Canada are now spending on average a little over 2% of GDP on defense. If Europe were spending 3.5% of GDP on defense today, the ratio would look different: 47% to 53% – close to the much-sought equilibrium. Yet, equilibrium is a moving target. It will take European allies many years to reach that level of expenditure. Their commitment to reaching 3.5% and 1.5% of GDP on defense and defense-related investments, respectively, may easily wane over time, particularly if Russia – exhausted by years of engagement in Ukraine – presents a different threat than today. In the meantime, the US defense budget is likely to increase further. In other words, the “golden” 50:50 ratio between the American and

12 Dan Grazier, “A Trillion Dollars Annually for the Pentagon: Military Spending is Out of Control,” *The Hill* (June 11, 2025): <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/5342338-a-trillion-dollars-annually-for-the-pentagon-military-spending-is-out-of-control/> (accessed June 11, 2025).

13 NATO, *Secretary General's Annual Report 2024* (April 24, 2025): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_212668.htm (accessed June 11, 2025).

European shares of total defense spending in NATO may never be reached in practice. If the Europeans are to sustain their trajectory toward 5% of GDP over time, it is critical to bolster their resolve to take on a greater share of the burden. Since relative numbers say little about Europe's role in collective defense, however, a stronger European pillar of NATO requires first and foremost the closing of existing capability gaps. Palpable investments in new capabilities will better reflect Europe's commitment to the burden of transatlantic common defense than figures.

THE MILITARY DIMENSION

The concept of a European pillar of NATO must go beyond economic considerations and also focus on Europe's military capacity. Europe must now aspire to provide a much bigger chunk of the decisive military capabilities than it has since the end of the Cold War. The key decisions to be made by European allies at the national level and collectively are what capabilities Europe should prioritize and how to develop them.

Five Priorities to Strengthen the European Pillar in Collective Defense

Ongoing discussions point to five priorities for building up European capabilities and strengthening the European pillar of NATO. First, changes could be made to NATO's Command and Force Structures (NCS and NFS) and its operational plans. Irrespective of the recent discussion about a potential European SACEUR, the US may well leave some posts in the NFS or NCS. The guiding principle here should be to fill these gaps with European officers while keeping American staff at every level of Command and Force Structures. Operational plans, in turn, may need revision – not as a response to changes in the Russian threat, but rather to address the contingency that American assets might be largely unavailable for a defense operation in Europe. Here, a guiding assumption should be that while Europeans will provide large military formations, American force packages should remain an immanent part of every division-sized force.

Second, Europe massively lacks the air defense systems of all layers and types necessary to protect both citizens and critical infrastructure from ballistic and cruise missiles. While developing an Israeli-like defense capability for vast parts of European territory is impossible for obvious scale- and cost-related reasons, building an interoperable, robust package of air defense assets could become Europe's flagship

project. Such a package, developed in a multinational framework based on European technologies with fully interoperable elements, could be easily moved around Europe in response to changing threats.

Third, Europe badly needs to improve its situational awareness based on both space and airborne assets. Investment in a variety of platforms, which together could comprise a robust European-owned ISTAR capability also tops the list of priorities. As in the case of air defense, this capability could be composed of assets developed multinationally and flexible enough to scale up wherever needed – for instance, along the border of NATO's eastern flank should Russian forces be redeployed there.

Fourth, Europe must deliver on a deep-strike capacity, or long-range precision fires (LRPF), particularly given the changing thinking about the most cost-effective way to deter and defend against Russia. Engaging the rear area of Russian forces from day one of a potential conflict is now considered to be a key element of a renewed approach to fighting Russia. Effective attacks on command posts, areas used for reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSOI), and on logistical infrastructure may help blunt Russian aggression. For now, Europe does not really possess such capabilities, while America's is still relatively modest.

Finally, Europe must address the issue of the “drone revolution” seen in the battlefields of Ukraine. While this phenomenon goes far beyond the current simple use of cheap first person view (FPV) drones, which are a military adaptation of commercial systems, there is no reason to expect that the US will be leading NATO efforts in that area. Europe's defense industrial and technological base has enough capacity, and European militaries have learned enough from Ukrainians (also thanks to the Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC) in Bydgoszcz, Poland) to develop both drone countermeasures and drone forces for many different tasks. As such, learning from the battlefield-hardened Ukrainian Armed Forces – in all aspects of modern warfare – should be considered fundamental for streamlining the European pillar of NATO.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A EUROPEAN PILLAR OF NATO

A strong European pillar of NATO should emerge if Europe can balance greater responsibility for its own defense with keeping the US engaged in underwriting

its security. With Washington's geopolitical focus shifting in the long term to Asia and the Pacific, greater European capabilities are needed regardless of, not because of, current divergences in the transatlantic relationship. Yet, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and – most importantly – the potential of a Russian escalation against NATO in the medium term underscore the urgency for Europe to reduce its dependence on US military assets and the need for bold European initiatives. At the same time, even if the European allies fulfill these ambitious plans, having the US as part of a common defense will still be a tremendous reinforcement of NATO's defense and deterrence capacity toward Russia. American military assets – not to mention the political value of the US commitment to defending Europe – will always be an invaluable reinforcement of European posture in any form. The European pillar of NATO should therefore boldly increase investments in European capabilities while considering that US guarantees remain fundamental and irreplaceable in the foreseeable future.

Strengthening the European pillar of NATO will require a great deal of cooperation among European allies to fund and coordinate the build-up of comprehensive military capabilities. In this process, the EU can contribute by strengthening the European defense technological and industrial base and facilitating funding and joint procurement by its member states. In particular, the ReArm Europe plan, which may enable up to EUR 800 billion for European defense spending, and the EDIP instrument, may become spurs for European capability investment.

Another important factor for the strength of the European pillar is Ukraine, whose fight against Russia's aggression is key for the security of European allies. While doing so, Ukraine wins time for European countries to build up their own defense capabilities. Its experience on the battlefield is informative for Europeans to adapt their militaries to the requirements of modern warfare. Hence, the European pillar of NATO should by all means develop strong links with Ukraine.

At the upcoming summit, the focus will be on increased defense spending. Indeed, increased funding, be it on the national or EU level, is fundamental for strengthening European capabilities. While pledges for spending targets will help signal resolve and satisfy the Trump administration's domestically motivated expectations, the discussion on burden sharing has little to do with Europe's practical contribution to collective defense which is determined by real capabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Strategic:** More than ever, European allies need a common strategic approach to the US. This should be based on the understanding that Russia poses a long-term threat to European security, while the US contribution to European defense will diminish. Europeans need to pursue a substantive dialogue with the US on the changes in American posture in Europe and on strengthening the European pillar of NATO.
- **Economic:** Europe must urgently increase defense spending, but the European allies' share of total NATO defense spending is not an adequate measure of European efforts. What matters is demonstrating deliverables – palpable investments in big-ticket armament programs, which will both prove Europe's willingness to take up a larger burden of the common defense and will set the right tone in public debate.
- **Military:** European allies need to work jointly and fully utilize the EU's recently expanded defense-industrial toolbox to strengthen its capabilities for defending itself and to become less dependent on the US. The primary areas for urgent investment should be air defense systems, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities, and deep strike capacity.

The views expressed in this policy brief are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Zeitenwende Strategy Group or DGAP.

EUROPEAN ZEITENWENDE STRATEGY GROUP

This paper is a publication of DGAP's European Zeitenwende Strategy Group, which seeks to reconceptualize European security in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment. Against the backdrop of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, a strained transatlantic relationship, growing rivalry with China, and changing global and regional orders, Europe must reposition itself strategically if it wants to actively shape security on the continent.

Europe's strategic reorientation should be inspired by those who – as direct neighbors to Russia and Ukraine – best understand the urgency to act. The Strategy Group therefore draws on in-depth analytical discussions with experts and stakeholders from Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, as well as the Nordic and Baltic states, where debates on security are arguably most advanced, to propel a *Zeitenwende* – a turning point – in security policy and thinking in Europe.

Chaired by the German Council on Foreign Relations, the group meets regularly online and in-person. Convinced of the need for a comprehensive approach, it considers different dimensions of resilience, including security and defense, economic security, institutional reform, and societal cohesion.

Members: **Robin Allers** (Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies), **Hiski Haukkala** (Finnish Institute of International Affairs), **Wilfried Jilge** (German Council on Foreign Relations), **Karl-Heinz Kamp** (German Council on Foreign Relations), **Pavlo Klimkin** (Center for National Resilience and Development), **Jana Kobzova** (European Council on Foreign Relations), **Nicole Koenig** (Munich Security Conference), **Stefan Meister** (German Council on Foreign Relations), **Carolina Vendil Pallin** (Swedish Defence Research Agency), **Katri Pynnöniemi** (University of Helsinki & Finnish National Defence University), **András Rácz** (German Council on Foreign Relations), **Kristi Raik** (International Centre for Defense and Security), **Toms Rostoks** (National Defence Academy Latvia), **George Scutaru** (New Strategy Center), **Margarita Šešelgyté** (Vilnius University, Institute of International Relations & Political Science), **Marcin Terlikowski** (Polish Institute of International Affairs)

The European Zeitenwende Strategy Group is an initiative established in conjunction with the project "In Together – Shaping a Common European Future," funded by Stiftung Mercator.



Advancing foreign policy. Since 1955.

Rauchstraße 17/18
10787 Berlin
Tel. +49 30 254231-0
info@dgap.org
www.dgap.org
X @dgapev

The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) is committed to fostering impactful foreign and security policy on a German and European level that promotes democracy, peace, and the rule of law. It is nonpartisan and nonprofit. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP).

DGAP receives funding from the German Federal Foreign Office based on a resolution of the German Bundestag.

Publisher

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Auswärtige Politik e.V.

ISSN 2198-5936

Editing Ellen Thalman

Layout Marie Bauer

Design Concept WeDo

Author picture(s) © DGAP



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons
Attribution – NonCommercial – NoDerivatives 4.0
International License.