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Directed Research Project Committee:
Andrew Sobel, Faculty Advisor
Susan Craig, Faculty Reader

Back to the Balance – The U.S. Security Relationship with Europe in the Twenty-First Century:
U.S. Force Posture, European Military Capability, Russian Resurgence, and Public Opinion
by
Justin A. Brown

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| AB | Air Base |
| Bbr | Bomber |
| BCT | Brigade combat team |
| C2 | Command and Control |
| Cbt Ac | Combat Aircraft |
| CFE | Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty |
| CSIS | Center for Strategic and International Studies |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| DSG | Defense Strategic Guidance document (U.S.) |
| EU | European Union |
| EUCOM | U.S. European Command |
| FGA | Fighter – Ground Attack |
| Ftr | Fighter |
| GAO | Government Accountability Office (U.S.) |
| GDP | Gross domestic product |
| GMFUS | German Marshall Fund of the United States |
| IISS | International Institute for Strategic Studies |
| ISR | Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance |
| MARFOREUR | U.S. Marine Forces – Europe |
| MBT | Main Battle Tank |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NDP | National Defense Panel |
| OPTEMPO | Operations Tempo |
| PSM | Personnel Structure Model (Germany) |
| QDR | Quadrennial Defense Review |
| RAF | Royal Air Force (UK) |
| RECCE | Reconnaissance (aircraft) |
| SDSR | Strategic Defence and Security Review (UK) |
| SDF | Strategic Deterrent Forces (Russia) |
| STOVL | Short take-off and vertical landing |
| Sqn | Squadron (of combat aircraft; varies in size, usually 18-24 aircraft) |
| UAS / UAV | Unmanned Aerial System / Unmanned Aerial Vehicle |
| USAFE | U.S. Air Force – Europe |
| USAREUR | U.S. Army – Europe |
| USNAVEUR | U.S. Navy – Europe |

I. Introduction

Since the Cold War era, the United States has maintained a traditionally robust military presence in Europe, which has served as a guarantor of peace by balancing against potential threats to national security on the European continent. Recently, however, the U.S. has been significantly reducing its military presence in Europe, raising concerns for the regional security of its European allies. In 2013, to cite one example, the U.S. Army removed the last of its M-1 Abrams tanks from bases in Germany, marking an absence of U.S. main battle tanks (MBTs) in the European continent for the first time in sixty-nine years.¹ A downsizing U.S. military presence in Europe potentially affects the security relationship between the U.S. and Europe by adversely changing the balance of power in the European continent, and necessarily raises concerns for the security and stability of international relations in Europe in the future.

Meanwhile, NATO has been involved in a thirteen year combat mission in Afghanistan since 2001, when NATO issued its only ever invocation of the Article V collective defense clause. Particularly for European nations, the invasion of Afghanistan raised concerns over NATO conducting so-called ‘out-of-area’ operations.² Likewise, for the U.S., the mission in Afghanistan called into question the military capability of its European NATO allies and their willingness to contribute to security operations. With an end to combat operations in Afghanistan effective December 31st, 2014, NATO will transition to a limited support role for Afghan security forces and can begin to refocus on its intended area of operations, the Atlantic. In the future, NATO will have to strike a balance with conducting out-of-area operations, such as counterterrorism missions, with operations closer to Europe and the Atlantic in order to provide

¹ John Vandiver. “US Army’s last tanks depart from Germany.” *Stars and Stripes*. April 4, 2013. <http://www.stripes.com/news/us-army-s-last-tanks-depart-from-germany-1.214977>.

² Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier. “Global NATO.” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 5, (Sept-Oct 2006).

for the collective defense of its continental European members.³ Also, in the near future, NATO seeks to develop the capability to launch a leaner, more rapidly deployable force to respond to a potential crisis, but is currently struggling to identify sources of contributions to fund and provide personnel for the envisioned force. Developments regarding the military capability of NATO member-states, especially any perceivable indications of declining capability, have far-reaching implications that affect the U.S.-Europe security relationship in the context of the balance of power in the European continent.

The theoretical framework of realism guides the research for this paper. Under the realist paradigm, the international state system is defined by anarchy with no hierarchical authority; nation-states are the primary actors in international affairs; nations are self-interested and rational actors; nations are in constant competition for power; nations are uncertain of the intentions of other nations; and the principal goal of a nation is survival of the state. Furthermore, structural realism considers that the structure of the international system forces states to consider the balance of power in order to maintain their position in the system, as well as discouraging aggressive behavior from would-be aggressor nations.⁴ According to offensive realism, nations strive to be the hegemonic power, since only by maximizing relative power can the nation best provide security for the nation, given the condition of anarchy in the international state system.⁵ Alternatively, defensive realism permits that stable relations among nations can persist so long as the balance of power is distributed in such a way so as to allow for collaboration to occur. Indeed, the balance of power “implies the possibility of collaboration among states in promoting

³ Henry Kissinger, Lawrence Summers, Charles Kupchan, et al., *Renewing the Atlantic Partnership: Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations*. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, March 2004), Available for download at: <http://www.cfr.org/eu/renewing-atlantic-partnership/p6871>, 26.

⁴ John J. Mearsheimer. “Reckless States and Realism,” *International Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (June 2009), 244.

⁵ John J. Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 33-35.

the common objective of preserving the balance” since the implication of the balance of power is that “each state...should recognize the responsibility not to upset the balance itself.”⁶ Under this version of realism, states engage in “self-restraining” behavior so as to not upset the balance of power or the status quo of the international system.⁷ These realist theories provide insight into understanding the behavior of nations, and suggest that a nation—like Russia for example—will either seek to maximize its power relative to European nations, leading to tensions between these nations and the occurrence of aggressive behavior from a stronger state asserting its relative power advantage over a weaker state, or will behave in accordance to the distribution of power and therefore will act to not upset the international system when its power is effectively balanced.

Compared to other theories of international relations, realism places an emphasis on the power capability of nations and the distribution of power among nation-states. Throughout much of the twentieth century, the theory of realism applied to the nation-states of Europe when they exhibited this competitive, power-maximizing behavior as European nations sought relative military power advantages over one another and dominance in the European continent, leading to two great world wars.⁸ In the twenty-first century, however, European nations prefer international law to power politics. Even though present-day Europe is different than the Europe of the twentieth century, the anarchical nature of the international system remains, and this aspect forces states to consider the distribution of power when making policy decisions regarding national security.⁹ So, while present-day European nations may choose to ignore the balance of

⁶ Hedley Bull. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 102.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979), 70.

⁹ Ibid., 121.

power, the remaining structure of international relations means that realism still offers a good theoretical understanding of state behavior. Whereas other international relations theories arrive at the existence of peaceful and stable relations in the international system by considering multilateral alliances, international legal obligations, and economic interdependence, realist theory offers the explanation that the status of the balance of power can predict the outcome of stability of international relations, a feature which is central to the argument presented in this paper. Indeed, the focus of the paper concerns changes in the balance of power in the European continent that have enabled Russia to behave in a more militaristically resurgent and aggressive way in recent years.

The security strategy for Europe has changed in the time since the Cold War ended. In the case of the Cold War era, European security was defined by bipolarity with the two superpowers, which offered a sort of stability in the European continent. Strategic deterrent nuclear weapons featured prominently in preserving the status quo of the international state system by raising the costs of engaging in war too high due to the massive retaliation that could potentially escalate from a conventional war.¹⁰ These strategic nuclear weapons meant that imbalances in the distribution of conventional forces mattered less for preserving stable relations, since the fear of escalation to nuclear war was all too apparent. At the close of the Cold War, however, the international system switched to U.S. military preponderance and regional multipolarity, a dynamic which has carried into the twenty-first century. Additionally, during the 1990s, strategic nuclear weapons and deterrence were no longer at the forefront of national security for European and U.S. foreign policy as they were in previous decades.¹¹ These changes

¹⁰ Richard A. Preston, Alex Roland, and Sydney F. Wise. *Men In Arms: A History of Warfare and its Interrelationships with Western Society*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group, 2001), 318.

¹¹ Steve Weber. "Shaping the Postwar Balance of Power: Multilateralism in NATO." *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1992), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706991>, 680.

indicate that the balance of power remains a mechanism for preserving stability in international relations when it is in equilibrium, and that a potential aggressor nation will assert its power when the distribution of power favors its side.

The research question posed in this paper concerns the presence of the U.S. military in Europe and the occurrence of peaceful stability in international relations for European nations, which is interpreted to mean the absence of conflict and/or aggressive behavior from other nations. Specifically, this paper considers whether a decline in U.S. troop presence in Europe and/or a decline in the military capabilities of the European NATO member states has necessarily led to an increase in aggressive behavior from other states that would threaten the nations of Europe. The initial hypothesis generated from the above-mentioned realist theory is:

H1: A decline in U.S. military presence in Europe contributing to a change in the balance of power leads to increased aggressive behavior towards European nations.

In this respect, the research expects to show that there is an increase in aggressive behavior from nations, particularly from Russia, toward the nations of Europe when U.S. military presence marginally declines. However, according to the relative comparisons of the data regarding the military capabilities of the U.S., Europe, and Russia, the hypothesis is later amended in order to distribute the condition of the balance of power across the European continent so that U.S. force posture and European military capability are considered together. In addition, the revised hypothesis treats Russia as the aggressor nation, and can be more simply stated as:

H2: A shift in the balance of power in conventional forces that favors Russia with respect to the European continent leads to increased aggressive behavior from Russia toward the nations of Europe.

For this hypothesis, the research expects to show that Russia engages in aggressive behavior when it has a favorable status in the relative conventional forces to the nations of Europe and the U.S. military presence located within the European continent.

The research performed treats U.S. force posture in Europe as an independent variable which is related to the dependent variable—peaceful relations within Europe. In order to measure the independent variables, absolute data on U.S. force posture in Europe since the end of the Cold War were collected and absolute data on the military capabilities of European nations were accumulated. In order to measure the dependent variable, qualitative data was collected to demonstrate aggressive behavior from Russia, which included increased troop movements, transport of military assets, European intercepts of foreign aircraft, increases in military spending, violations of arms control treaties, etc. From these gathered absolute data, relative comparisons of the data were constructed to demonstrate the status of the balance of power, which was then compared to the qualitative data showing aggressive behavior from nations towards Europe. An overlap occurring when a shift in the balance of power that favors Russia coincides with an increased incidence in aggressive behavior from Russia is taken to support the hypothesis. These accumulated data on the military capability of European nations and Russia can help guide policy decisions regarding future U.S. force posture in Europe. Also, according to the theory of the balance of power, the data on military capability may predict a path for preventing Russian aggression in the future.

Finally, since understanding state behavior requires further research beyond simply an examination of the military holdings and their relative status regarding the balance of power, the paper considers domestic public opinion in the U.S., Europe, and Russia. As Kenneth Waltz considers, examining the balance of power can help explain state behavior within similar historical cases, but since it relies on assumptions regarding states' interests, other theories are often needed to account for “the different internal structures of states [that] affect their external

policies and actions.”¹² In this case, then, European defense spending and Russian behavior are briefly examined as separate dependent variables, where the significant determining independent variables for each are the domestic public opinions in the corresponding nation. Likewise, domestic public opinion in Russia is offered as an alternative explanation for Russia’s resurgence and aggressive behavior in recent years.

II. U.S. Force Posture in Europe

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has notably decreased its military presence in Europe. The U.S. military presence in Europe served its purpose well during the Cold War, but as political scientist Charles Kupchan explains of the U.S.-Europe security relationship at the turn of the century, all good deals must come to an end.¹³ When considered with the recent changes in the U.S. strategic outlook regarding the pivot to Asia and concerns about future capability arising from sequestration, the present drawdown of U.S. forces in the European continent is initially concerning for the U.S.’ security commitment to Europe. Furthermore, as of 2012, total reductions in the overall personnel size of the U.S. Army prompted concerns that the U.S. was renouncing the strategic capability to win two ground wars in different theatres as laid out in the past strategic vision for U.S. force structure.¹⁴

¹² Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*, 122.

¹³ Charles Kupchan. *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 152.

Exact quotation: “Europe has thus had a very good deal for a long time. But as most good deals do, this one too is coming to an end. The Cold War bargain struck between a recovering Europe and a hegemonic America is fast wearing thin. And it should.”

¹⁴ Thom Shanker and Elisabeth Bumiller. “In New Strategy, Panetta Plans Even Smaller Army.” *The New York Times*. January 4, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/05/us/in-new-strategy-panetta-plans-even-smaller-army.html? r=2>.

See also:

While these concerns exist, a declining U.S. force presence in Europe must be observed in the larger context of whether the U.S. remains the global dominant military power, and whether the U.S. military maintains sufficient capability to deter potential aggressor nations. Also, increased operations tempo (OPTEMPO) for the U.S. military stationed in Europe can help overcome the drawdown.¹⁵ Likewise, the prepositioning of military equipment, like the site in Norway for the U.S. Marine Corps Forces under European Command (EUCOM) for example, in the European continent at locations in the Baltic nations or Poland can help alleviate concerns that a declining U.S. force presence means that the U.S. is disengaging from the European continent.¹⁶ Relatedly, the U.S. force presence in Europe enables the U.S. to possess the capability to launch and sustain global military operations. So long as the U.S. continues to derive benefit from the security relationship with Europe, in particular global power projection capability, then the U.S. will remain committed to maintaining a sufficient military presence in Europe.

A. Developments in U.S. National Security Strategy, 2012-2014

The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) articulated the need for an “evolution” in the force posture in Europe that should coincide with the strategic opportunity afforded by the

Anne Mulrine. “Pentagon to abandon two-war strategy, but at what cost to US security.” *Christian Science Monitor*. January 3, 2012. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2012/0103/Pentagon-to-abandon-two-war-strategy-but-at-what-cost-to-US-security>.

¹⁵ Michael C. Ryan. “Military Readiness, Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO) and Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO): Are U.S. Forces Doing Too Much?” *Congressional Research Service*. January 14, 1998. Available at: <http://congressionalresearch.com/98-41/document.php?study=MILITARY+READINESS+OPERATIONS+TEMPO+OPTEMPO+AND+PERSONNEL+TEMPO+PERSTEMPO+ARE+U.S.+FORCES+DOING+TOO+MUCH>, 10 & 29.

¹⁶ George Friedman. “Washington Returns to a Cold War Strategy.” (Austin, TX: Stratfor *Geopolitical Diary*, January 27, 2015). <https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/washington-returns-cold-war-strategy>.

drawdown of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁷ Particularly, the 2012 DSG elaborated on the idea for the U.S. to focus on building partner capacity, which would help the U.S. save money amid fiscal constraints--an idea that had been present in the earlier 2006 and 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) documents.¹⁸ In addition to maintaining the security partnership with European allies, the 2012 DSG placed a focus on transitioning military attention to the Asia-Pacific region in what has been dubbed the ‘rebalance to Asia’ or the ‘Asia pivot,’ claiming that Europe was now a “producer of its own security,” rather than a consumer of the security afforded by U.S. military presence.¹⁹ Whereas other national security strategic guidance documents have identified regions of concern, the 2012 DSG represented a shift in geographical priorities by recognizing the Asia-Pacific so prominently.²⁰

The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review upheld the geographic prioritization of the Asia-Pacific as contained in the 2012 DSG, prompting the congressionally mandated independent National Defense Panel (NDP) in its review of the 2014 QDR to assert that “renewed attention” should be paid to Europe.²¹ More specifically, the NDP review of the 2014 QDR found that “the QDR force is not adequate to meet ... posture requirements, that the readiness of the force is rapidly declining, and that it will continue to worsen under the current defense budget baseline of sequestration,” citing that “the U.S. military has undergone repeated reductions in capacity over

¹⁷ Department of Defense, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” January 2012, available at http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf, 3.

¹⁸ Catherine Dale and Pat Towell. “In Brief: Assessing the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG).” *Congressional Research Service*. August 2013. Available at: <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42146.pdf>, 7.

¹⁹ DOD. Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership.

²⁰ Catherine Dale. “The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and Defense Strategy; Issues for Congress.” *Congressional Research Service*. February 2014. Available at: <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R43403.pdf>, 5 & 8-9.

²¹ William J. Perry, John P. Abizaid, et al. “Ensuring a Strong U.S. Defense for the Future: The National Defense Panel Review of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review.” *USIP*. July 2014. Available at: http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/Ensuring-a-Strong-U.S.-Defense-for-the-Future-NDP-Review-of-the-QDR_0.pdf, 2.

the past generation.”²² Also of concern to the U.S.-Europe security relationship, the 2014 QDR emphasizes that under the effects of sequestration on the military, the U.S. would be “unable to continue participating at current levels in joint training and exercises” with European allies which would undermine the developed interoperability and partnership trust between the U.S. and European forces.²³ Indeed, as a RAND Corporation report explains:

[f]ewer forces in Europe would lead to fewer security cooperation activities, as the marginal cost of such events is very low for forces [already] stationed in Europe. Without continuous presence, the opportunities for a broad range of security cooperation engagements would decrease, with planning more difficult and greater lead times required.²⁴

As stated, given the U.S. military personnel drawdown, equipment reductions, and base closures, there remain concerns for future U.S. military cooperation and training opportunities with European allies, even more so in the case of decreased defense budgets resulting from sequestration.

Preserving the benefits to the U.S. military gained from the U.S.-European security relationship remains essential for U.S. security objectives. For the United States, the security relationship with Europe allows for bases, stationed personnel and equipment, and air and maritime transit routes to areas across the globe, thereby granting the U.S. power projection capability to Africa and Asia. As Colonel Chad Manske, former commander of RAF Station Mildenhall (2009-2011), understands, “installations in Europe provide necessary waypoints and proximate access to trouble spots in the Middle East, where other US interests lie. Without these intermediary stops to troubled regions, the military would be forced to expend more time and

²² Ibid., 46.

²³ Department of Defense. “Quadrennial Defense Review 2014.” March 2014, available at: http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf, 55.

²⁴ Michael Lostumbo, et al. *Overseas Basing of U.S. Military Forces: An Assessment of Relative Costs and Strategic Benefits*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), 291-292.

money, and mission risk would be heightened.”²⁵ Similarly, in 2014, General Breedlove, commander of EUCOM, testified that the security relationship with Europe has enabled the U.S. and European allies to conduct operations to “[c]onfront Russian aggression in Ukraine, eliminat[e] Syrian chemical weapons, defeat[-] Islamist extremists in Mali, and interven[e] to prevent atrocities in the Central African Republic.”²⁶ Thus, the U.S. military presence in Europe grants the U.S. the access it needs to conduct operations on a global scale in order to achieve its national security objectives. Given this benefit, the U.S. should not disengage from Europe in the future and should preserve its presence at key base locations to retain U.S. military global power projection capability.

B. Current Force Posture: the Drawdown in Europe

U.S. force posture in Europe experienced a drawdown as the Cold War ended, and likewise as combat operations in Afghanistan have come to a conclusion, as indicated in the 2012 DSG and 2014 QDR. During the Cold War, the peak of U.S. Army Force in Europe (USAREUR) was approximately 250,000 troops.²⁷ A GAO report (1994) found that “[i]n the 3 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, U.S. positions in Europe have declined by 44 percent, from about 311,000 in September 1990 to about 173,000 in March 1993.”²⁸ Similarly, since 1990, the U.S. Air Force in Europe (USAFE) has seen a reduction in aircraft and forces by

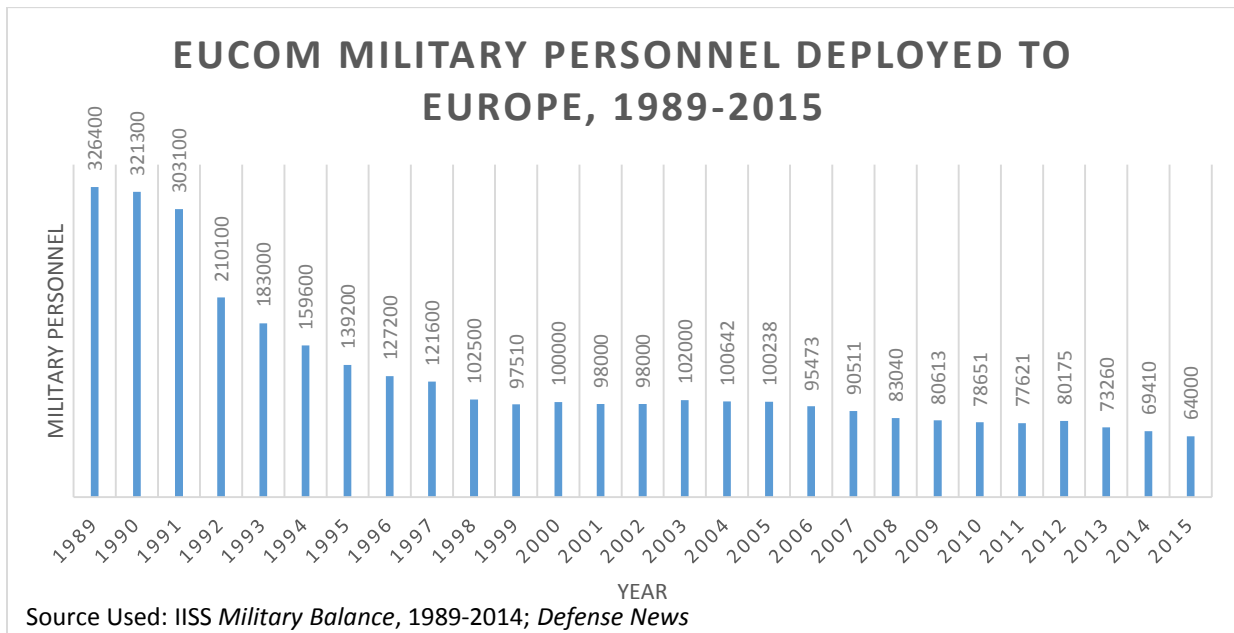
²⁵ Col. Chad T. Manske. “U.S. Military Presence in Europe Matters.” *Global Post*. January 31, 2012. <http://www.cfr.org/world/us-military-presence-europe-matters/p27241>.

²⁶ Gen. Philip Breedlove, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, Commander, U.S. Forces Europe before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. April 1, 2014. Available for download at: <http://www.eucom.mil/mission/background/posture-statement>.

²⁷ Andrew Tilghman. “EUCOM Chief: Time To Stop the Drawdown in Europe.” *Defense News*. July 7, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20140707/DEFREG01/307070016/EUCOM-Chief-Time-Stop-Drawdown-Europe>.

²⁸ Government Accountability Office. Force Structure: Basis for Future Army Forces in Europe.” *GAO*. January 14, 1994. <http://www.gao.gov/assets/160/154078.pdf>, 11.

75%.²⁹ The following table details the drawdown in U.S. military personnel (all services) assigned to EUCOM from 1989 to the present day:



Not only has military personnel been steadily decreasing, but there have been changes in the military unit deployed to Europe, with the U.S. military preferring to utilize smaller and rotational forces as opposed to permanently based forces.³⁰ In 2013-2014, two infantry brigade combat teams (BCTs) of the USAREUR were removed from Europe: the 170th Infantry Brigade

²⁹ Kathleen I. Ferguson, “Presentation before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Readiness, United States Department of Defense, March 14, 2013, 7, <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS03/20130314/100429/HHRG-113-AS03-Wstate-FergusonK-20130314.pdf>, Cited in:

Mackenzie Eaglen. “Shrinking Bureaucracy, Overhead, and Infrastructure: Why this Defense Drawdown Must Be Different for the Pentagon” *AEI*. (March 2013). http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/-shrinking-bureaucracy-overhead-and-infrastructure-why-this-defense-drawdown-must-be-different-for-the-pentagon_083503530347.pdf.

See also:

Michaela Dodge. “Beyond BRAC: Global Defense Infrastructure for the 21st Century.” *Heritage Foundation*. May 3, 2013. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/05/beyond-brac-global-defense-infrastructure-for-the-21st-century>.

³⁰ Donna Miles. “Force Changes in Europe to Preserve Strategic Edge.” *American Forces Press Service*. May 7, 2012. <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116221>.

See also:

Daniel H. Else, “Military Construction: A Snapshot of the President’s FY2013 Appropriations Request,” *Congressional Research Service*, June 22, 2012, www.fas.org/sfp/crs/natsec/R42376.pdf, 14-15.

and the 172nd Infantry Brigade.³¹ Each brigade had approximately 3,800 soldiers, and had served deployments in Afghanistan, epitomizing the global reach of the U.S. military provided by its presence in Europe. The removal of the brigades has brought the total number of BCTs stationed in Europe down to two from four.³² In 2012, USAFE saw the inactivation of 2 squadrons: 81st Fighter Sqn (20 A-10 FGA aircraft, and 525 airmen) and the 603rd Air Control Sqn (336 airmen).³³ When combined with the strategic re-focus on Asia, these troop level drawdowns and removal of equipment initially raise concerns for the future of the U.S.-Europe security relationship and the balance of power within the European continent.

C. Developments in Basing: Reduction of Military Presence and Cost-Savings

Consolidation and reductions in basing of U.S. personnel in Europe have also occurred. The USAREUR saw base closures at Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg, Germany (closed 2014); Mannheim, Germany; and the expected closure in 2015 of bases at Schweinfurt and Bamberg, Germany.³⁴ Similarly, USAFE, which is headquartered at Ramstein AB in Germany, experienced a two-thirds reduction in basing since the end of the Cold War. In January 2015, the DoD announced that it intends to close fifteen U.S. military bases in Europe by returning the

³¹ “Pentagon details downsizing of US forces in Europe.” *NBC News*. February 16, 2012. <http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/news/2012/02/16/10428342-pentagon-details-downsizing-of-us-forces-in-europe?lite>.

See also:

John Vandiver. “Pentagon lays out significant cuts to U.S. forces in Europe.” *Stars and Stripes*. February 16, 2012. <http://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-lays-out-significant-cuts-to-u-s-forces-in-europe-1.168861>.

Both of these brigades had been deployed to Afghanistan; see:

“The downgrading of Europe: Barack Obama’s new defence plans neglect Europe at their peril.” *The Economist*. January 14, 2012. <http://www.economist.com/node/21542789>.

³² Donna Miles. “Force Changes in Europe to Preserve Strategic Edge.” *American Forces Press Service*. May 7, 2012. <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=116221>.

³³ Vandiver. “Pentagon lays out significant cuts to U.S. forces in Europe.” *Stars and Stripes*. February 16, 2012. <http://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-lays-out-significant-cuts-to-u-s-forces-in-europe-1.168861>.

³⁴ Richard Sisk. “Army Adapts to Fewer Troops in Europe.” *Military.com*. September 13, 2013. <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2013/09/13/army-adapts-to-fewer-troops-in-europe.html>.

selected facilities to the respective host nations (Britain, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, and Portugal) as part of a European Infrastructure Consolidation plan that would save approximately \$500 million annually.³⁵ Although the announcement touted the savings, these must be recovered after the incurred shutdown costs, which may total as much as \$1.4 billion.³⁶ Personnel and aircraft positioned at these bases are to be transferred to other basing sites in Europe, effectively keeping the same overall number of personnel total for EUCOM.³⁷

In Britain, where the U.S. has maintained a robust military aviation presence, the U.S. plans to divest bases at RAF Mildenhall, RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth, resulting in a consolidation of U.S. military facilities in the UK. However, the current facility at RAF Lakenheath will become the permanent base for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter beginning in 2020 and is expected to receive an additional 1,200 U.S. military personnel.³⁸ More importantly, transferring stratotanker aircraft from Britain to Germany will permit the US to maintain aerial refueling capability, thereby allowing for American projection of military power globally. Therefore, even with the consolidation and reduction of basing in Europe, by preserving the functionality of key capabilities, like aerial refueling, the U.S. military will retain sufficient capability to launch global military operations in the pursuit of accomplishing U.S. national security goals.

³⁵ “DoD Announces European Infrastructure Consolidation Actions and F-35 basing in Europe.” *DoD News*. January 8, 2015. <http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=17097>.

³⁶ Scott Neuman. “Pentagon’s Money-Saver: U.S. Troops To Leave 15 European Sites.” *NPR*. January 8, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2015/01/08/375916192/pentagons-money-saver-u-s-troops-to-leave-15-european-sites>.

³⁷ Sandra I Erwin. “Base Closures in Europe a Preview of Future Debates Over U.S. Military Budget and Strategy.” *National Defense Magazine*. January 10, 2015. <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=1709>.

³⁸ Sgt. Jake Richmond. “Air Force F-35 Squadrons Slated for RAF Lakenheath Basing.” *DoD News*. January 8, 2015. <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123931>.

III. European Military Capability

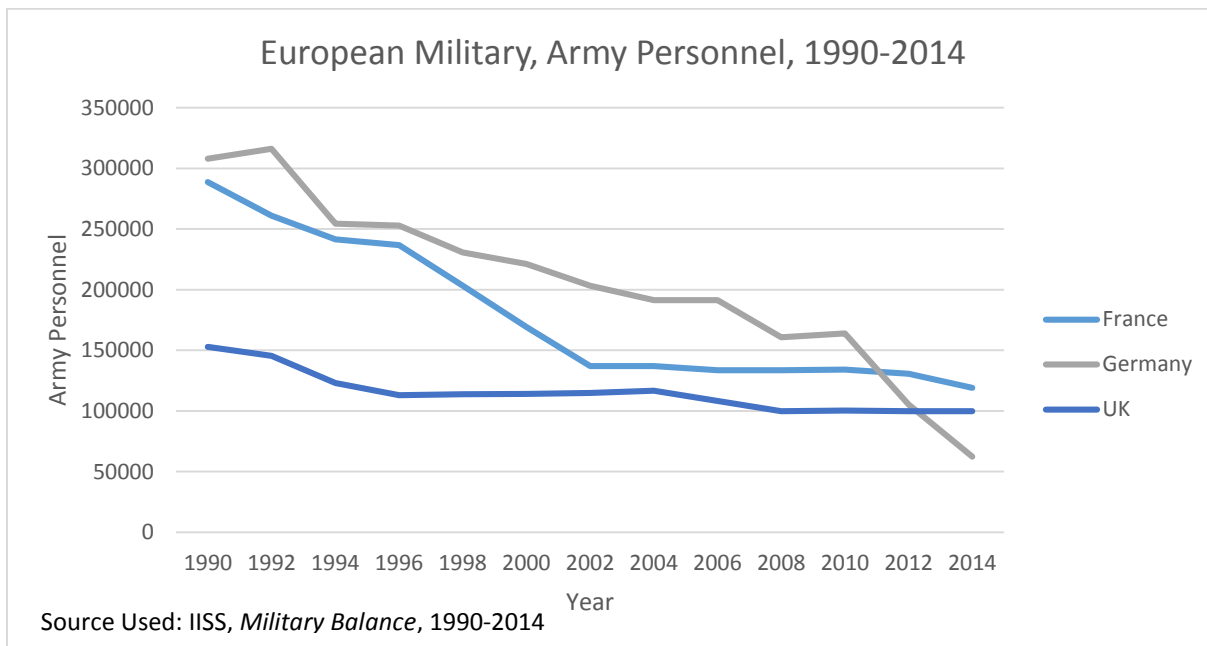
In Europe, reductions in national military forces and equipment that occurred at the end of the Cold War continued throughout much of the early twenty-first century. European attitudes toward the use of force contributed significantly to the drawdown in military capability. As Robert Cooper asserts, “[t]here is a general unwillingness in Europe to see the world in terms of power relations.... [F]or equally good historical reasons, most European countries would prefer to live in a world of law rather than one of power,”³⁹ Indeed, the common conjecture in the early twenty-first century concerning European military capability and attitude towards the use of force and the balance of power in international relations was that Europe had entered a ‘postmodern paradise,’ wherein European nations were “not ambitious for power, and certainly not for military power” since “they ha[d] rejected the power politics that brought them such misery over the past century and more.”⁴⁰ These explanations provide insight into European foreign-policy decision-making with regard to defense spending levels, military capability, and national security, and offer a focus on Europe’s attitude towards power politics and the balance of power in the twenty-first century.

At the end of the Cold War, European nations embraced setting limits on their military holdings in an effort to thwart the balance of power mechanism from being the cause of conflict within the European continent. The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty -- signed November 1990; provisional application status by July 17, 1992; adapted 1999 -- placed ceiling restrictions on the quantities of tanks, armored combat vehicles, artillery, and combat aircraft that the signatory members of NATO and the then-Warsaw Pact nations could possess in

³⁹ Robert Cooper. *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*. (New York: Grove/Atlantic Inc., 2003), 158-159.

⁴⁰ Robert Kagan. *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 55-56.

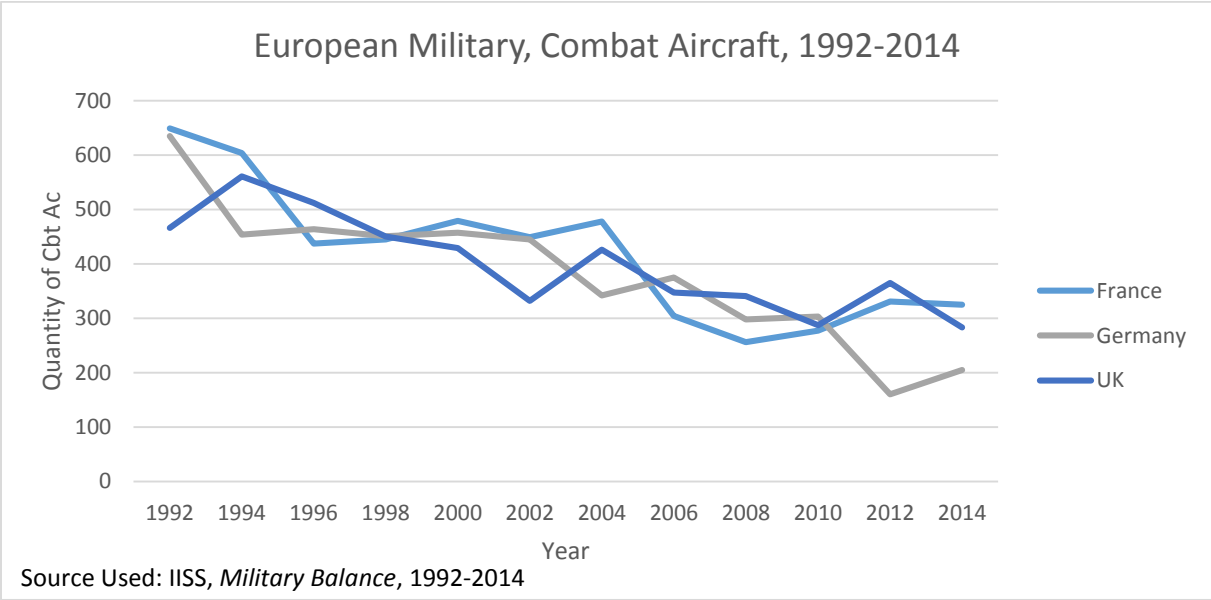
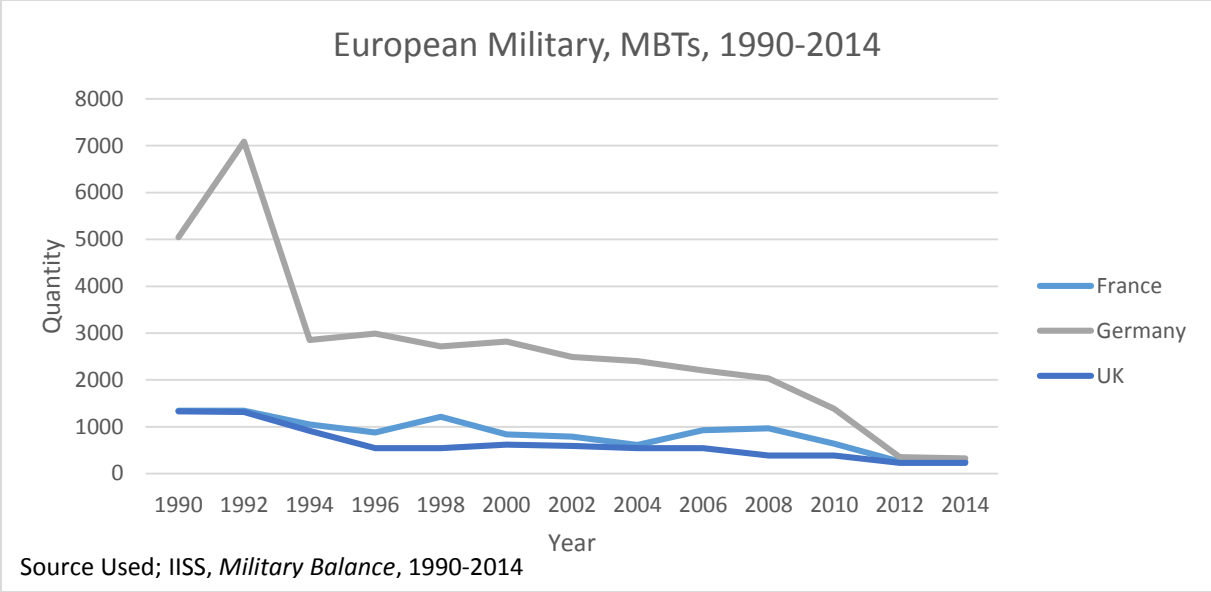
the European area.⁴¹ Over the sixteen-year period from 1992-2008, nations affected by the CFE “reduced more than 52,000 pieces of conventional armaments” including instances where “[m]any states reduced their holdings more than required – with over 17,955 voluntary reductions or conversions below treaty limits.”⁴² Indeed, many European nations reduced their military personnel, main battle tanks (MBTs), and combat aircraft, along with other applicable treaty-limited conventional forces equipment, for much of this time period, as demonstrated by the selected national inventories depicted in the figures below:⁴³



⁴¹ *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe*. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. November 19, 1990. Available for download at: <http://www.osce.org/library/14087>.

⁴² Tom Z. Collina. “The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and the Adapted CFE Treaty at a Glance.” *Arms Control Association*. August 2012. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheet/cfe>.

⁴³ See figures in appendix for more details on European nations’ military capability.



As a result of the European military drawdown, there emerged a so-called “capability gap” between the militaries of Europe and the U.S. that persists to the present and plagues international cooperation in military exercises among these nations. Nearing the turn of the century, European military contributions to NATO’s air war against Serbia and the Kosovo campaign revealed “deficiencies in existing European defense capabilities...when inadequate military transport, surveillance, intelligence collection, and radio communication on the part of

the European NATO members' forces elicited reactions of contempt and resentment within the U.S. command."⁴⁴

In the present-day, European militaries in the aggregate specifically lack strategic airlift, aerial refueling, and ISR capabilities. Part of the problem that has perpetuated deficient European military capability is the protection of national industry within individual European nations, since "European NATO members [buy] duplicative capabilities to support their own domestic industries which undermine[s] proposed pooling and sharing arrangements," citing as an example that "European armed forces have seven types of combat helicopters and four types of main battle tanks."⁴⁵ More recently, two prominent examples concerning a reduction in or the overall lack of capability in the militaries of European nations are the UK's decision to forego its naval aviation and carrier capability for a temporary basis from 2010 until 2020 and the Netherlands' retirement of its full inventory of MBTs, thereby eliminating the bulk of its heavy-armor capability.⁴⁶

From the perspective of the NATO military alliance, many European nations operate defense budgets that are below the 2% of GDP mark for defense spending, with Great Britain, Estonia, and Greece being the only members to meet the guideline.⁴⁷ Moreover, the austerity

⁴⁴ William Keylor, *A World of Nations: The International Order Since 1945*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 169.

⁴⁵ Heather A. Conley and Maren Leed. "NATO in the Land of Pretend." *CSIS*. June 26, 2013. <http://csis.org/publication/nato-land-pretend>.

⁴⁶ Charles Barry and Hans Binnendijk. "Widening Gaps in U.S. and European defense Capabilities and Cooperation." *Transatlantic Current*. (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies), July 2012. Available for download at: <http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/publications/articles/Widening%20Gaps%20in%20U.S.%20and%20European%20Defense%20Capabilities%20and%20Cooperation.pdf>.

⁴⁷ "NATO's Military Decline." *Wall Street Journal*. March 25, 2014. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303802104579449571957045910>.

For representation of data on military spending accumulated by the World Bank, see also: Ernesto Londono. "The U.S. wants its allies to spend more on defense. Here's how much they're shelling out." *The Washington Post*. March 26, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/03/26/the-u-s-wants-its-allies-to-spend-more-on-defense-heres-how-much-theyre-shelling-out/>.

measures adopted by European nations after the 2008 financial crisis meant that defense budgets received a substantial share of domestic cuts in an effort to balance domestic spending, largely affecting the military procurement of these nations, thereby allowing the gap in capability to persist or widen.

A. UK Military: Strategy, Structure, Funding, and Capability

For much of the early twenty-first century, the United States counted on the UK as its most reliable international partner regarding security operations. Although operating above the 2% of GDP mark, UK defense spending levels have been largely stagnant, which has caused the force structure to decrease and the temporary loss of some capability. The UK's most recent national security strategy document, the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), articulated an 8% reduction in defense spending, but vowed to keep defense spending at 2% of GDP through 2014.⁴⁸ According to a recent report (2015) issued by the UK Parliament, such cuts have caused an estimated reduction in conventional forces capability of all three UK services by 20-30% over this five-year period.⁴⁹ More recently, there are growing concerns that the UK could fall below the 2% of GDP target for defense spending in 2016 after their next national election, which has prompted warnings from the U.S. regarding the UK's commitment to NATO.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Britain Ministry of Defence. "Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review." (October 2010). Available for download at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-strategic-defence-and-security-review-securing-britain-in-an-age-of-uncertainty>, 17.

⁴⁹ UK Defence Committee. *Re-thinking defence to meet new threats*. (London, UK: House of Commons, March 17, 2015). Available for download at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/512/51202.htm>, 8.

⁵⁰ Andrew Chuter. "Obama Warns UK About NATO Spending Targets." *Defense News*. February 11, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/02/11/obama-warns-america-nato-spending-2-percent-uk/23224363/>.

In particular, the SDSR 2010 acknowledged that the UK Armed Forces must be necessarily “scaled back” due to the onset of austerity measures.⁵¹ According to Future Force Structure documents, UK military personnel will total 158,000 in 2015, with the Royal Navy at 30,000, the Army at approximately 95,000, and the Royal Air Force at around 33,000.⁵² Of concern for the UK military, the personnel reductions have led to shortages of engineering personnel for maintaining the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, leading to instances where the UK was dependent on U.S. engineers for aircraft maintenance.⁵³ Concerning equipment, the SDSR 2010 called for a 40 percent reduction of Challenger 2 main battle tanks and a 35 percent reduction in heavy artillery by 2020.⁵⁴ These figures contribute to an overall declining military capability for the European nations, and raise concerns for the reliability of European militaries with respect to the U.S.-European security relationship.

On the procurement side, the UK agreed to purchase fourteen fifth-generation F-35B fighter jets, the first four of which will arrive in 2016 and the remainder over five years thereafter.⁵⁵ Likewise, the Royal Navy is expecting to re-gain carrier strike capability with the arrival of the first of two new aircraft carriers, the *HMS Queen Elizabeth*, in 2020 that will carry

⁵¹ Britain MoD. SDSR. 16.

⁵² Britain Ministry of Defence. “Future Force 2020 – summary of size, shape and structure.” (October 2010). Available for download at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-strategic-defence-and-security-review-securing-britain-in-an-age-of-uncertainty>.

⁵³ Jaraslow Adamowski, Andrew Chuter, Tom Kington, and Pierre Tran. “People & Programs To Watch in 2015: Europe.” *Defense News*. January 9, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2015/01/08/europe-tight-budgets-russian-swagger-new-industry-leadership-special-report/21434717/>.

See also:

Andrew Chuter. “Lack of Engineers May Hurt UK Aviation Safety.” *Defense News*. January 19, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/support/2015/01/18/maa-boss-flags-up-engineering-shortage-concerns/21865027/>.

⁵⁴ Britain MoD. SDSR 2010. 25.

⁵⁵ Associated Press. “UK Confirms First F-35 orders.” *Defense News*. November 25, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2014/11/24/uk-confirms-first-f-35-orders/19494459/>.

up to twelve F-35B short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft.⁵⁶ Re-gaining this capability to the Royal Navy would be helpful for future deployment operations, but as the recent parliamentary vote on the Syrian crisis demonstrated, the UK remains reluctant to use military force for intervention.

B. France’s Military: Strategy, Funding, and Capability

The French 2013 White Paper acknowledged that France should not rely on U.S. military strength to accomplish its security objectives, and that France must instead partner with other European nations.⁵⁷ More specifically, the 2013 White Paper boasted that France possessed a “military with a global reach” as a result of its “special relationships” with nations outside of the European continent; the document reaffirmed France’s obligations to multilateral institutions like the EU and NATO; and it upheld France’s commitment to “universal values” and the dissemination of the French language and culture as a way of maintaining peace.⁵⁸ Notably, however, the 2013 White Paper revealed that France does not consider the balance of power when making decisions regarding its security policy. Instead, France recognizes that the multilateral commitments of European nations to the EU is more directly beneficial to obtaining peace within Europe.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, France views its military as an extension of its state sovereignty, such that there is a historic link between the state’s control of power and the sovereignty of the nation. Accordingly, France retains its military capability for this reason.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ France Ministry of Defence. *French White Paper: Defence and National Security 2013*. April 29, 2013. Available for download at: <http://www.gouvernement.fr/en/defence-and-security>, 52-53, 55, 57.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 13.

For mention of France’s attitude toward the U.S. Rebalance to Asia and concurrent drawdown of US forces in Europe, see p. 29. For France’s concern with Russia, see pp. 35 & 53.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 32-33; 37.

Although the 2013 White Paper mentioned strengthening NATO military capability, it placed greater emphasis on the political function of NATO as an alliance of democratic nations.⁶⁰ France only recently re-joined the formal NATO military command structure in 2009, from which France had previously disassociated its military. Lastly, in drafting and releasing the 2013 White Paper, France decided to hold its defense budget at €31.4 billion for the next three years, which represents roughly the same value as the previous commitment from 2008, although it noted that the financial crisis had adversely affected its prior forecasts on defense spending through 2020.⁶¹ These spending figures stretched the French appropriation, and in order to seek an alternative financing solution for the defense budget, France considered adopting a public-private lease program for some of its military hardware.⁶²

As a result of stagnant defense spending, French force structure incurred additional cuts to personnel and equipment over the next five years, and the French military extended the service time of equipment for a longer duration than originally planned so that it would be available through 2025.⁶³ Even though France initiated a modernization program for its inventory of *Leclerc* MBTs, the contract only allowed for upgrade and systems modernization of existing tanks which will be re-delivered to France beginning 2020 and is expected to extend their service life to 2040.⁶⁴ Additionally, France reduced its expected order amount of *Tiger* helicopters by

⁶⁰ Ibid., 60.

⁶¹ Ibid., 83-84.

The amount mentioned in the 2013 White Paper was €364 billion for 2014-2019. Previous amount in the 2008 White Paper was cited at €377 billion, and was projected through 2020.

⁶² Pierre Tran. "France Seeks Defense Budget Financing Options." *Defense News*. March 6, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/03/06/france-lease-military-equipment-ministry-finance/24497433/>.

⁶³ France MoD, *French White Paper* 2013, <http://www.gouvernement.fr/en/defence-and-security>, 90-91, 92, 93. See also 130-131 for specific details.

⁶⁴ Victor Barreira. "French Leclerc MBTs receive EUR330 million upgrade." *IHS Jane's Defence Weekly* March 12, 2015. <http://www.janes.com/article/49928/french-leclerc-mbts-receive-eur330-million-upgrade>.

twenty rotary aircraft, and instead will begin retrofitting existing helicopter models.⁶⁵ Finally, in order to address its emerging deficiency in aerial refueling and air transport capability, France placed a €3 billion order for twelve A330 multirole tanker transport aircraft, with the first aircraft delivery expected in 2018.⁶⁶ The contract means that France is replacing its existing aerial refueling aircraft, the Boeing C135, which has been a part of the French Air Force since 1964. France's aging military equipment and stagnating defense expenditure below two percent of its GDP provide cause for concern for the France's military capability with respect to its contributions to the U.S.-Europe security relationship.

In recent years, however, France's willingness to use force in Mali, Libya, and Iraq have led to claims that France was supplanting Great Britain as America's closest ally.⁶⁷ The mission in Mali demonstrated that France was willing to deploy 4,000 French forces to combat al Qaeda affiliated insurgents, which represented a personnel amount greater than France's contributions to Afghanistan. However, in Mali, French fighter aircraft relied on U.S. Air Force KC-135 refueling aircraft in order to conduct aerial strike operations.⁶⁸ In Libya, the mission prominently featured French aerial assault capability and revealed that France possesses sufficient joint C2 capability, but needed better ISR capability.⁶⁹ The mission also prominently featured the aircraft

⁶⁵ Pierre Tran. "France Cuts Order for Tiger Helicopters." *Defense News*. January 31, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/strike/2015/01/31/france-cuts-order-tiger-helicopters/22530483/>.

⁶⁶ Pierre Tran. "France Orders 12 A330 Tanker Transport Aircraft." *Defense News*. November 20, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2014/11/20/france-orders-12-a330-tanker-transport-aircraft/70024098/>.

⁶⁷ Agence France-Press. "France Displaces Britain as Key US Military Ally." *Defense News*. March 19, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2015/03/19/france-displaces-britain-key-us-military-ally/25025191/>.

⁶⁸ Murielle Delaporte. "Mali: France's Version Of Shock And Awe, add Allies, Crush AQIM." *Breaking Defense*. February 19, 2013. <http://breakingdefense.com/2013/02/mali-frances-version-of-shock-and-awe-add-allies-crush-aqim/>.

⁶⁹ Robbin Laird. "French Libya Lessons learned: Better Targeting, Flexible ROEs, Limits to Armed UAVs." *Breaking Defense*. September 23, 2011. <http://breakingdefense.com/2011/09/french-libya-lessons-learned-better-targeting-flexible-roes-l/>.

carrier *Charles de Gaulle* and the Mistral helicopter carrier for combat strike capability.⁷⁰ For countering the Islamic State in Iraq, the *Charles de Gaulle* carrier strike group was deployed to the Persian Gulf so that its onboard *Rafale* fighter squadron (12 aircraft) could conduct strikes on Islamic State targets.⁷¹ These deployments demonstrate France's willingness to contribute to security operations, and help strengthen the U.S.-European security relationship.

C. Germany's Military: Strategy, Structure, and Capability:

The most recent German White Paper (2006) emphasized that the relationship Germany and the rest of Europe share with the United States, referred to as the 'transatlantic partnership,' remains vital to Germany's national security. The 2006 national security strategic guidance document set a target force structure for the German Armed Forces, or *Bundeswehr*, at 252,000 military personnel by 2010 (for comparison, 2006 *Bundeswehr* personnel was 249,300), and articulated a broad-reaching capability profile that highlighted the following roles: command and control (C2), intelligence collection and reconnaissance, mobility, effective engagement, support and sustainability, and survivability and protection.⁷² More recently, the 2012 Personnel Structure Model (PSM) articulated a reduction of military personnel by 17,000, or approximately 9.2% from the previous annual total.⁷³ The *Bundeswehr* no longer utilizes conscription, and

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Agence France-Presse. "French Aircraft Carrier in Gulf for IS Fight" *Defense News*. February 23, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2015/02/23/france-deploys-aircraft-carrier-gulf-fight/23909577/>.

⁷² German Bundesministerium der Verteidigung. *Weißbuch 2006 zur Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr*. Available for download at: http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/!ut/p/c4/Fcw5DsAgDADBH-E-XV6Ro8PEAguwUbi-H6Jtplq4YSV2sLeNVWYCEy7HG06DeXhT2QV6A3GrRRM3jsaKJ9RG5tHYM8nSJK4Vuwtw_L_k4SKBkvP-AfvAtHQ!, 69 & 81; 112.

The next White Paper is expected in Summer 2016, whereas the previous one was published in 1994.

⁷³ "Informationen zum Personalstrukturmodell (PSM) 185." *Bundesministerium der Verteidigung*. July 3, 2012. Available for download at: <http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/>.

current (2014) German Army personnel totals around 62,500, whereas total *Bundeswehr* military personnel stands at approximately 186,450.⁷⁴

Assessing the capability status of the German military is often difficult. Data reported on German military holdings frequently does not reflect the condition of the equipment, although the conclusion inferred from Germany's stagnant defense budgets and overall political attitude—often described as “ambivalence”—toward hard power suggests that German military capability has been waning considerably over time.⁷⁵ Indeed, as of October 2014, of Germany's combined inventory of *Sea-King* and *Sea-Lynx* helicopters, only seven of forty-three were deemed ready for action by the German Ministry of Defense; additionally, only eighty combined combat aircraft of the 109 *Eurofighter* and 89 *Tornado* inventory were also reported to be ready for action.⁷⁶ For another example, a 2007 review of German military capability found that the *Bundeswehr* generally lacks the capability to forward deploy its military personnel, citing that “[w]ith around 7,300 troops deployed in international missions, Germany is currently operating at the limit of its capabilities” and remains “unable to deploy more than 10 per cent of its forces to foreign theaters.”⁷⁷ These details demonstrate the declining capability and overall poor status of the German military, and further raise concerns for Germany's ability to contribute to NATO operations.

⁷⁴ Population data of force size is from IISS, *Military Balance*, 2014.

⁷⁵ Patrick Keller. “German Hard Power: Is There a There There?” *National Security Outlook*, no. 4. (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, October 2013). Available for download at: <http://www.aei.org/publication/german-hard-power-is-there-a-there-there/>.

⁷⁶ “Pannenserie bei der Bundeswehr: Herstellungsfehler am ‘Eurofighter’ entdeckt.” *Bild am Sonntag*. October 1, 2014. <http://www.bild.de/politik/inland/bundeswehr/pannenserie-herstellungsfehler-am-eurofighter-entdeckt-37967786.bild.html>.

⁷⁷ Victor Mauer. “German Defense Policy: Continuity and Change.” *Analyses in Security Policy* 2, no. 14 (Zurich: Center for Security Studies, May 2007). Available for download at: http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/DetailansichtPubDB_EN?rec_id=605.

Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) is one role area where Germany has demonstrated its previous capability through participation in past operations, including the use of its ISR aircraft in the war in Afghanistan. However, the 2010 retirement of its traditional ISR aircraft raised concerns for Germany's capability in this role for future operations.⁷⁸ To accomplish its ISR missions in the future, Germany decided to purchase the Euro Hawk unmanned aerial system, preferring the cost savings when compared to regular ISR aircraft. But in May 2013 Germany canceled its investment of €600 million because of concern over legal issues of operating the drones over European continental airspace.⁷⁹

Another significant concern for the German military is the lack of tactical mobility capability provided by its helicopter fleet, most of which is in need of maintenance or has been grounded for other mechanical reasons. As of February 2015, the German military grounded its fleet of thirty-five NH-90 multi-function helicopters, due to what was credited as an apparent design flaw.⁸⁰ Further complicating matters is the four year delay of the A400M transport aircraft used for strategic airlift, which the *Bundeswehr* Minister blamed on industry rather than spending levels and procurement decisions, and has only finally arrived into service in early 2015.⁸¹ Along with the A400M transport aircraft, the NH-90 helicopters had been touted in the 2006 White Paper as being critical to the *Bundeswehr*'s operations by providing tactical mobility

⁷⁸ Deanne Corbett. "Germany Seeks To Revive Euro Hawk Program." *Defense News*. January 16, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/isr/2015/01/16/germany-euro-hawk-uas-/21799109/>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Associated Press. "Germany halts routine flights with NH90 military helicopters." *Military Times*. February 7, 2015. <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/02/07/germany-nh90/23036673/>.

Germany had acquired its NH-90 helicopters beginning 2011 when it operated them mostly for training purposes.

⁸¹ "A400 landet mit 4 Jahren Verspätung" *Bild.de*. December 19, 2014.

<http://www.bild.de/regional/hannover/bundeswehr/bundeswehr-nimmt-a400m-von-airbus-in-empfang-39043454.bild.html>.

See also:

"Ursula von der Leyen im Bild-Interview: Wie Schrott ist die Bundeswehr, Frau Ministerin?" *Bild am Sonntag*. September 28, 2014. <http://www.bild.de/politik/inland/ursula-von-der-leyen/wie-schrott-ist-die-bundeswehr-37925584.bild.html>.

capability.⁸² Furthermore, in June 2014, Germany's Defense Ministry had to ground twenty-one of twenty-two *Sea-Lynx* Mk88 helicopters, due to a discovered crack in the hoist arm of one helicopter while it was onboard a frigate deployed to a joint operation near Great Britain, (fifteen were ordered down while the other six had been scheduled for maintenance).⁸³ By end 2015, however, Germany's Army will begin acquiring fifteen new multirole EC645 T2 helicopters that it ordered in June 2013, which should help begin to close the existing gap in tactical mobility capability.⁸⁴

IV. Russian Resurgence in the Twenty-First Century

The twenty-first century has also seen more aggressive behavior from a militarily resurgent Russia. The 2013 Ukraine crisis and subsequent annexation of Crimea and the August 2008 conflict with Georgia are two recent examples. Richard Betts observes that Russia's behavior became more aggressive circa 2006-2007, when Russia "manipulated gas supplies to Ukraine and the West, demonstrating its leverage over European economies; was the prime suspect when crippling cyber attacks were mounted against Estonia in 2007; [and] flirted with military basing arrangements in Venezuela."⁸⁵ Also in 2007, the Russian military resumed long-range Tu-95 bomber flights in the Pacific—which had been suspended since 1991—often

⁸² German Bundesministerium der Verteidigung. "Weißbuch 2006 zur Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr." Available for download at: http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/!ut/p/c4/Fcw5DsAgDADBH-E-XV6Ro8PEAguwUbi-H6Jtplq4YSV2sLeNVWyCEy7HG06DeXhT2QV6A3GrRRM3jsaKJ9RG5tHYM8nSJK4Vuwtw_L_k4SKBkvP-AfvAtHQ!, 83 & 90; 93.

⁸³ Albrecht Müller. "German Navy Grounds Sea Lynx Helicopter Fleet." *Defense News*. September 22, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014309220018>.

⁸⁴ Deanne Corbett. "Helo for German Special Forces Conducts First Flight." *Defense News*. December 4, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014312040024>.

⁸⁵ Richard K. Betts. *American Force: Dangers, Delusions, and Dilemmas in National Security*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 191.

neering the U.S. coastline and even over U.S. naval vessels operating in the Pacific.⁸⁶ In June 2007, Russia declared that it would “suspend” implementation of its obligations under the CFE Treaty as of December 2007, such as abiding by ceilings, data reporting of military holdings, and availability to inspections, a decision which drew criticism of Russia’s willingness to abide by customary international law.⁸⁷

In 2014, Russian military aircraft exhibited more aggressive behavior, as indicated by NATO reporting 400 intercepts for that year, representing a near fifty percent increase from the previous year.⁸⁸ Furthermore, these Russian military aircraft have been causing problems for commercial flights, as the December 2014 incident with Scandinavian Airlines demonstrates, where Russian fighter jets were flying near the commercial aircraft with their transponders turned off.⁸⁹ According to one report, an increase in Russian belligerent behavior concerning the use of airspace began as early as March 2014, as well as other subsequent high-risk incidents including the capture of an Estonian intelligence officer and a presumed Russian submarine operating in Swedish waters during October 2014.⁹⁰ Russia’s more aggressive behavior is most likely a result of concurrent shifts in the balance of power between Russia and other nations.

⁸⁶ Quinlavan. “Yes, Russia’s Military Is Getting More Aggressive.” *Foreign Policy*. 2014.

⁸⁷ US Department of State. *Adherence To and Compliance With Arms Control, Nonproliferation, And Disarmament Agreements and Commitments*. July 2010. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/145181.pdf>, 31-32.

⁸⁸ Agence France-Presse. “NATO Reports 400 Intercepts of Russian Aircraft.” *Defense News*. November 20, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2014/11/20/nato-reports-400-intercepts-of-russian-aircraft-in-2014/70016232/>.

See also:

Agence France-Presse. “NATO Intercepts Russian Bombers Over Baltic Sea.” *Defense News*. December 9, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2014/12/09/nato-intercepts-russian-bombers-over-baltic-sea/20169901/>.

Gerard O’Dwyer. “Nordics React To ‘Unprecedented’ Russian Activity In Baltic Sea.” *Defense News*. December 18, 2014. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/isr/2014/12/18/nordic-russia-baltic/20592391/>.

⁸⁹ James T. Quinlivan. “Yes, Russia’s Military Is Getting More Aggressive.” *Foreign Policy*. December 30, 2014. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/12/30/yes-russias-military-is-getting-more-aggressive/>.

⁹⁰ Thomas Frear, et al. “Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014.” European Leadership Network. November 10, 2014. Available for Download at: http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/dangerous-brinkmanship-close-military-encounters-between-russia-and-the-west-in-2014_2101.html.

A. Russia's National Security Strategy, 2010-2014

In the most recent version of its quadrennial military strategic guidance document, released 2014, Russia's military doctrine placed NATO as the top military threat to its national security.⁹¹ Although the previous version (2010) had listed NATO expansion as a threat to Russian national security, the distinction afforded by identifying NATO offensive capacity so prominently showed Russia's intent to counter NATO with a robust military of its own. In addition, the new version discussed the creation of an Arctic Command force that would allow Russia to conduct military operations in an area of "special interest" for the Russian Federation.⁹² The previous 2010 version of the national security document mentioned that "military dangers to the Russian federation are intensifying," even though "the likelihood of a large-scale war involving the use of conventional means of attack and nuclear weapons being unleashed against the Russian Federation."⁹³ These strategic documents indicate that Russia intends on strengthening its military capability in the near future, and continues to view NATO as its adversary. Such a strategic outlook from Russia has consequence for the future status of the balance of power in the European continent.

B. Russian Military Capability

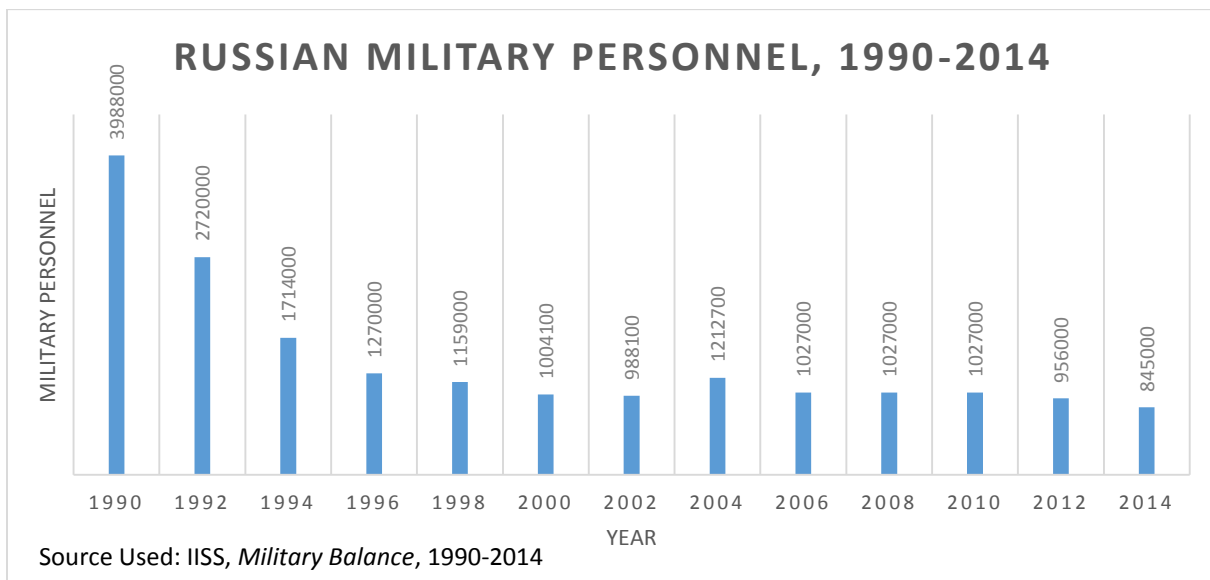
In the twenty-first century, Russia remains an aspiring regional hegemonic actor in the European continent with considerable military might, although it too has experienced a

⁹¹ Carol J. Williams. "Russia revises military doctrine to name NATO as chief threat." *Los Angeles Times*. December 26, 2014. <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-russia-military-doctrine-nato-20141226-story.html>.

⁹² Ibid.

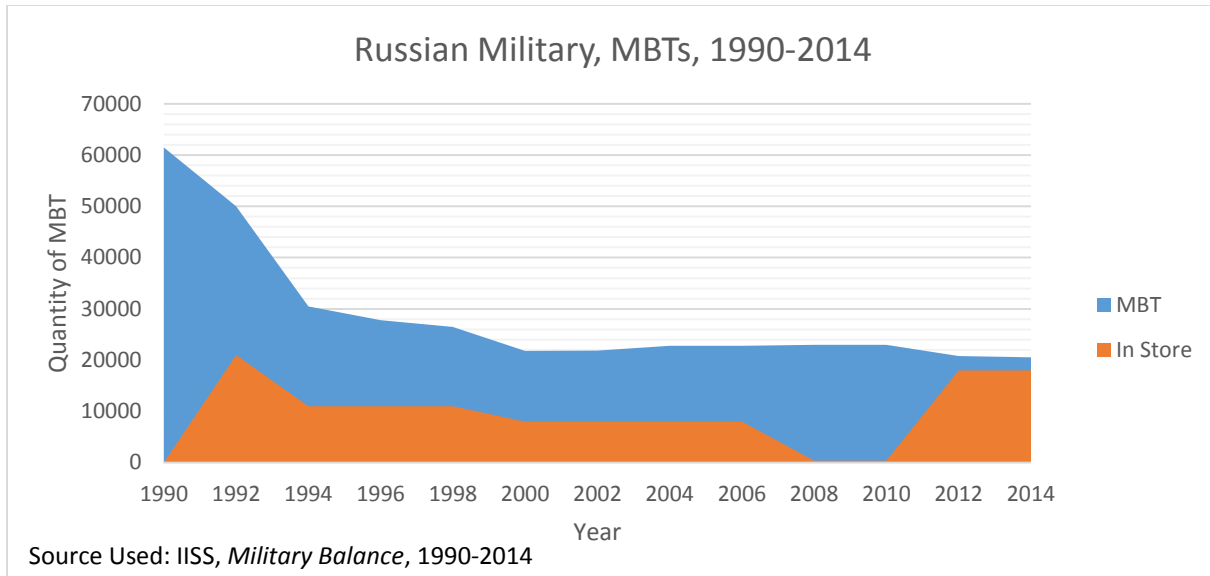
⁹³ An English translated version of the 2010 document, *National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020*, can be found at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf.

drawdown in absolute terms of its military forces and equipment. As a national resource, it possesses a large population which serves as a contributing factor to its latent national power. Consequently, concerning its actual military possessions, Russia has traditionally boasted a large land-force presence—especially given its conscription requirements—as well as a navy with carrier capability, aviation and air defense assets, and a significant amount of strategic nuclear weapons. The following figure shows the progression of active military personnel (all services) of Russia since 1990⁹⁴:

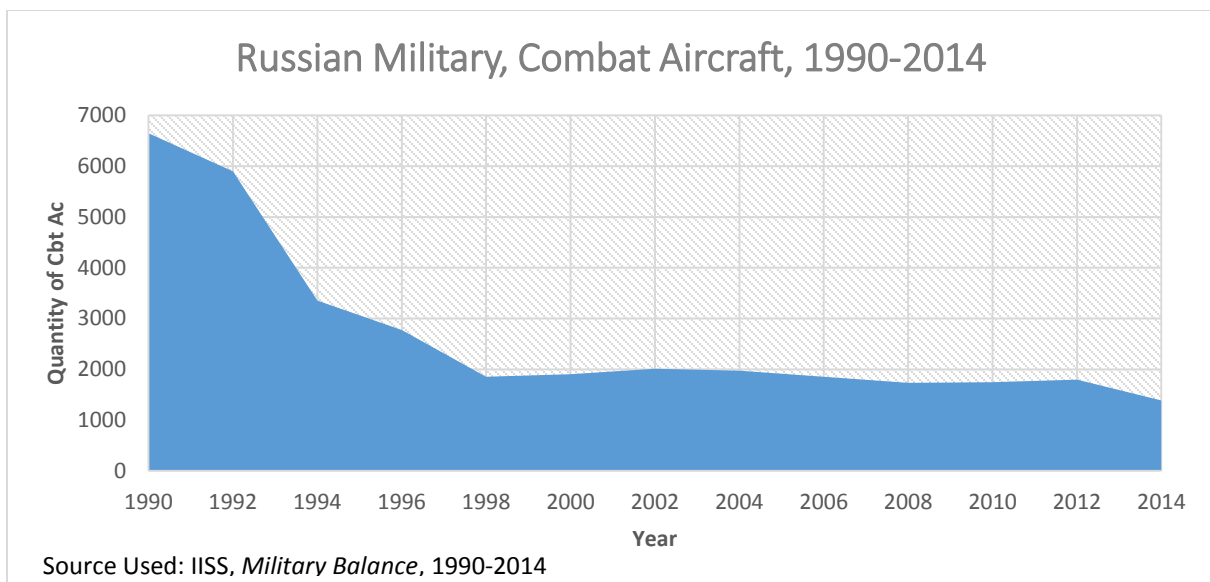


Additionally, Russia has a vast inventory of armored vehicles and MBTs, but has placed a large percentage of the MBTs in storage in recent years, as the following figure depicts:

⁹⁴ See appendix for more detailed figure representing Russian military personnel.



Russia possesses numerous combat aircraft, although the amount has declined since the end of the Cold War, as demonstrated in the following figure⁹⁵:



These military holdings show that Russia remains a prominent state-actor and military power in the twenty-first century, even though for the period immediately after the Cold War during the 1990s Russia decreased its military holdings.

⁹⁵ A more detailed version of the figure that breaks down combat aircraft into bombers (Bbr), fighters (Ftr), fighters with ground attack (FGA) capability, and ISR and RECCE/reconnaissance aircraft is presented in the appendix section.

C. Russian Military Modernization and Procurement

The military modernization program, the State Armaments Program to 2020, approved towards the end of the Medvedev administration in December 2010 set an ambitious target for the future Russian military and provided over \$700 billion to improve and modernize weapons platforms.⁹⁶ A summary of the modernization program as outlined in the document explains that “the Russian military, by 2020, will return to a million active-duty personnel, backed up by 2300 new tanks, some 1200 new helicopters and planes, with a navy fielding fifty new surface ships and twenty-eight submarines, with one hundred new satellites designed to augment Russia’s communications, command and control capabilities.”⁹⁷ Relatedly, Russian defense spending has increased steadily since 2007, with defense spending doubling between the time period of 2007 and 2013, and is projected to have tripled during the period from 2007 to 2016.⁹⁸

The Russian invasion into Georgia in August 2008 was a turning point for Russia regarding its emphasis on the military. One reporter summarizes that, “[t]he five-day conflict with Georgia in August 2008 exposed major deficiencies—in command-and-control systems, hardware, weaponry, and intelligence—and confirmed that Russia’s mass-mobilization military, where millions of conscripts could marshal to protect the motherland, remained outdated.”⁹⁹

Indeed, one analyst demonstrates that “[t]he war [with Georgia in August 2008] convinced the

⁹⁶ “Russia’s Military Modernisation - Putin’s new model army: Money and reform have given Russia armed forces it can use.” *The Economist*. May 24, 2014. <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21602743-money-and-reform-have-given-russia-armed-forces-it-can-use-putins-new-model-army>.

⁹⁷ Nikolas K. Gvosdoev. “The Bear Awakens: Russia’s Military Is Back.” *The National Interest*. November 12, 2014. <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/russias-military-back-9181>.

⁹⁸ Tate Nurkin. “Options for the evolution of NATO.” *IHS Jane’s 360*. August 26, 2014. <http://www.janes.com/article/42392/options-for-the-evolution-of-nato>.

See Appendix section for IISS table depicting estimated Russian defense spending.

⁹⁹ Jonathan Masters. “How Powerful Is Russia’s Military?” *Defense One*. November 14, 2014. <http://www.defenseone.com/threats/2014/11/how-powerful-russias-military/99062/>.

Russian leadership that far-reaching military reform and modernisation had become essential and that, notwithstanding the crisis and the strains on the budget, military expenditure would have to increase as a share of GDP,” adding also that “prior to the war with Georgia military spending was growing more slowly than GDP, but since the war military expenditure has grown more rapidly.”¹⁰⁰

Russian procurement orders for its future military include its version of a fifth-generation fighter jet, developed in co-operation with India. With expected first delivery in 2015, Russia is poised to receive its first order of its fifth-generation fighter jets, the Sukhoi T-50, which would start to replace Russia’s existing Sukhoi Su-27 and Mikoyan MiG-29 fighter aircraft.¹⁰¹ By 2020, Russia’s Air Force is expected to procure 55 T-50 fighter jets; in addition, according to earlier estimates, Russia is expected to procure a total of 126 new combat aircraft and 88 helicopters under the announced national military modernization program.¹⁰² These procurement figures may change, however, since, and state resources and Russian military spending remain related to energy prices and the price of oil; although increased arms exports could provide some relief for the Russian defense budget and procurement orders.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Russia remains intent on modernizing its existing military equipment and procuring new weapons systems and platforms, which could significantly affect the balance of power in the European continent in the near future.

¹⁰⁰ Julian Cooper. “Military Spending in the Russian Federal Budget, 2010-2014.” *SIPRI*. August 2011. Available for download at: http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/publications/unpubl_milex/cooper-russia-2010-14/view.

¹⁰¹ Jaroslaw Adamowski. “Russia to Receive 5th Gen Fighters This Year.” *Defense News*. February 9, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/strike/2015/02/09/russia-receive-5th-gen-fighters-this-year/22922759/>.

¹⁰² *Ibid*.

¹⁰³ Stanley Carvalho. “Russia’s military budget may shrink 10 percent in 2015 – Rostec.” *Reuters*. February 23, 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/23/us-russia-crisis-arms-rostec-idUSKBN0LR10P20150223>.

V. The Status of the Balance of Power

Comparing the data collected on U.S. force posture in Europe, the military holdings of Europe, and Russia's military capability provides insight into Russia's behavior in the twenty-first century, as well as the overall effectiveness of the U.S.-European security relationship in this time. Among Stephen Van Evera's hypotheses for factors that make war among nations more likely are two that can help elucidate Russia's resurgent behavior: (1) "war is more likely when the advantage lies with the first side to mobilize or attack," wherein "a first-strike advantage invites states to adopt offensive force postures," and (2) "war is more likely when the relative power of states fluctuates sharply."¹⁰⁴ In these instances, Van Evera characterizes the nature of the balance of power as a cause for war and conflict, which suggests that Russia's resurgent behavior is a condition thereof, as the comparative data may illustrate.

So, if we accept circa 2006-2007 and 2013-2014 as the emerging points for Russian resurgence for the qualitative reasons presented earlier in this paper, then we can choose these as the pivotal comparison points for the balance of power considerations. Additionally, data collected in this paper has focused on the 'big three' of Europe: the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to gain an understanding of European military capability, which is used as a substitute for European military capability in the following calculations. These nations were

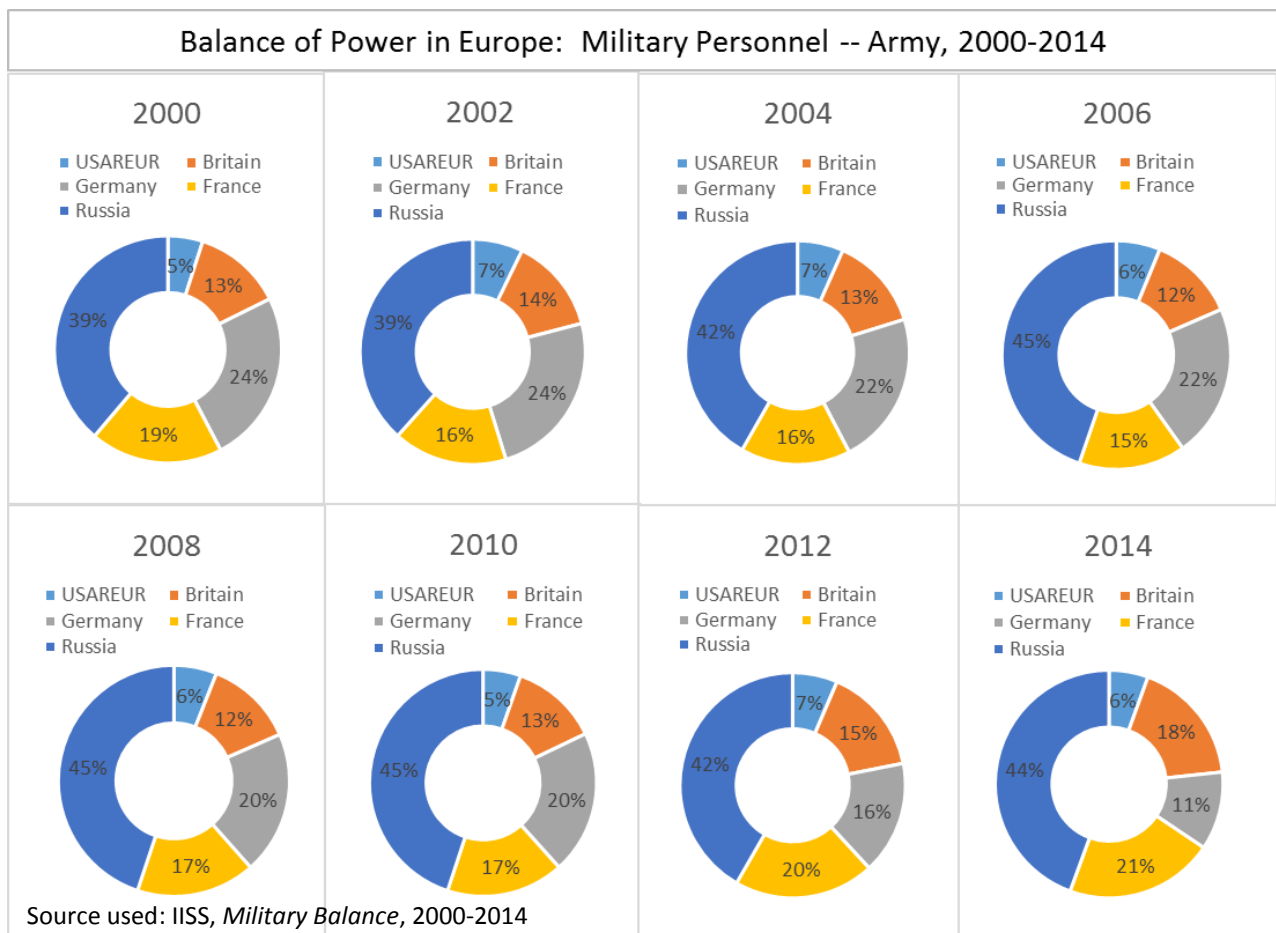
¹⁰⁴ Stephen Van Evera. *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 35, 52, 73 & 259-260.

In the second consideration, Van Evera's cases support the situation where a declining state opts to engage in preventative war to take advantage of a 'window' created by the expected shift in relative power, such that a declining state would soon find itself at a greater relative power disadvantage to a rising state.

chosen as an approximation for European military capability because together they constitute over 60% of the European defense spending.¹⁰⁵

A. Actual Power Comparisons in the European Continent

Concerning the progression of the balance of power in terms of actual military power possession, the quantities of land power measured in Army personnel demonstrates a marginal increase to Russia’s military capability, as the following figure shows:



¹⁰⁵ The next highest defense spending nation in Europe is Italy, which factors at less than 11% of total Europe defense spending. These data for 2012 defense spending are accumulated by European Defense Agency. See links available at: <http://www.eda.europa.eu/info-hub/defence-data-portal/EDA/year/2012>.

As the figure demonstrates, Russia's largest share of presence in the land forces balance of power existed from the years 2006-2010 with a return again in 2014, demarcating a timeframe which is largely consistent with the timeframe observed in the previously mentioned behavior categorizing Russian resurgence. The data also show that Russia's relative gain in the distribution of power is a result of a combination of factors, including the modernization and procurement of its military assets, but also--as is most graphically visible in the representation--a reduction of German troop levels, and with only some U.S. force reduction as an input producing the change in relative power status. In fact, the data show that relative U.S. military contributions remain largely constant at between six and seven percent of the conventional land forces balance of power for most of this time period, in spite of the absolute declines in U.S. force posture during those years.

B. Latent Factors of Balance of Power

When making evaluations regarding the balance of power, a comparison of military holdings should be made in conjunction with the latent factors a nation possesses which a nation could utilize to improve its military assets and standing. As John J. Mearsheimer explains, "it is important to distinguish between potential and actual power. A state's potential power is based on the size of its population and the level of its wealth. ... A state's actual power is embedded mainly in its army and the air and naval forces that directly support it."¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Robert J. Art provides a more detailed account of the power assets a nation-state possesses:

¹⁰⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, "Power and Fear in Great Power Politics," in G. O. Mazur, ed., *One Hundred Year Commemoration to the Life of Hans Morgenthau (1904-2004)*. (New York: Semenenko Foundation 2004), 188. See also: John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of America's Continental Commitment," in Geir Lundestad, ed., *No End To Alliance: The United States and Western Europe* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 236.

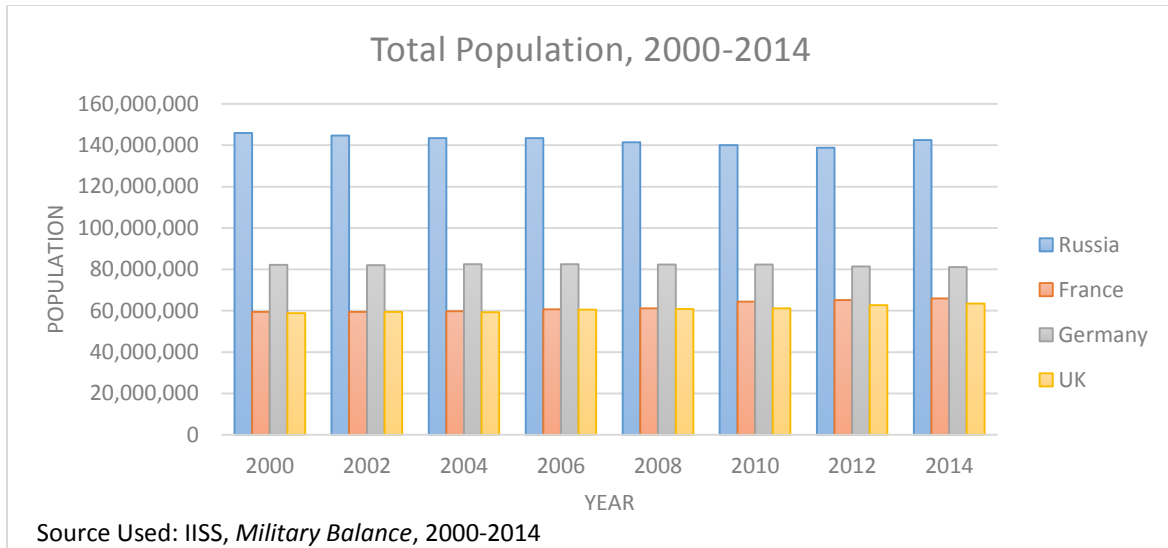
Consider what power assets a state owns. They include: population—the size, education level, and skills of its citizenry; geography—the size, location, and natural resource endowment of the state; governance—the effectiveness of its political system; values—the norms a state lives by and stands for, the nature of its ideology, and the extent of its appeal to foreigners; wealth—the level, sources, and nature of its productive economy; leadership—the political skill of its leaders and the number of skillful leaders it has; and military power—the nature, size, and composition of its military forces.¹⁰⁷

While factors like population, geography, wealth, and military power are relatively easily quantified, the aspects of governance, political leadership, and values are not. Therefore, the research in this paper examines these first four factors—having already described military force capability in absolute and relative terms—in order to gain an approximation of the latent factors affecting the balance of power within the European continent and Russia.

A comparison of the national populations reveals that while Russia possesses a significant advantage over other European nations with its population size, Russia should have concerns for its population as a factor for its latent power, even though European nations also have issues with aging national populations. As Jeffrey Mankoff recounts, “the Russian population has declined from 148.7 million people at the start of 1992 to 144.5 million when the last census was conducted a decade later.... In percentage terms, the decline of the Russian population is among the most severe in history for a country not in the throes of war or famine.”¹⁰⁸ In 2012, the national population of Russia even dropped below the 140 million mark, as the following figure shows:

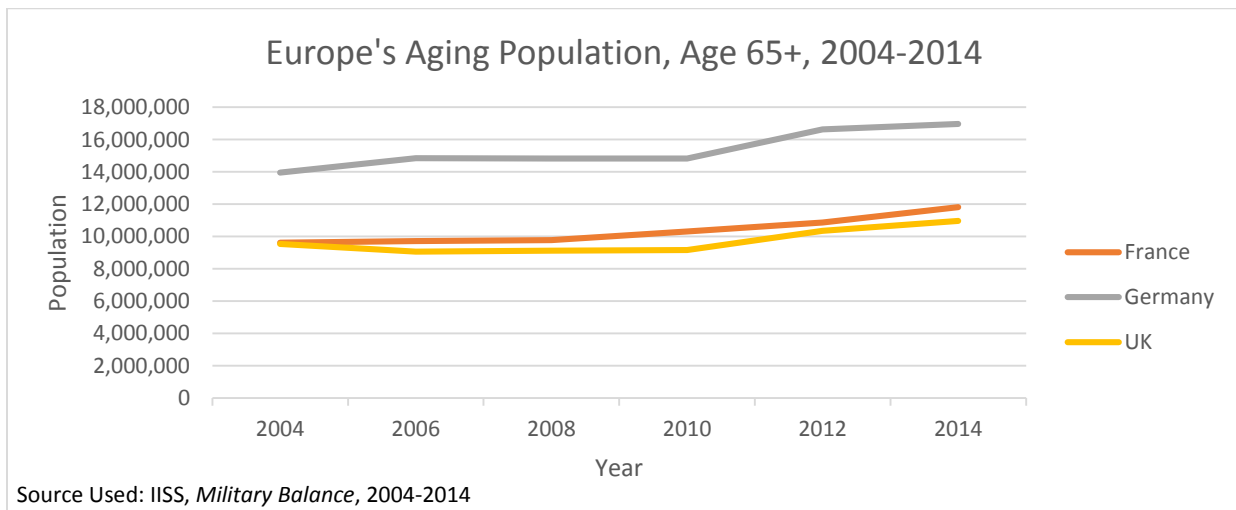
¹⁰⁷ Robert J. Art. “The Fungibility of Force.” In *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics*. 7th edition. Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (eds.), (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 6.

¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 38.



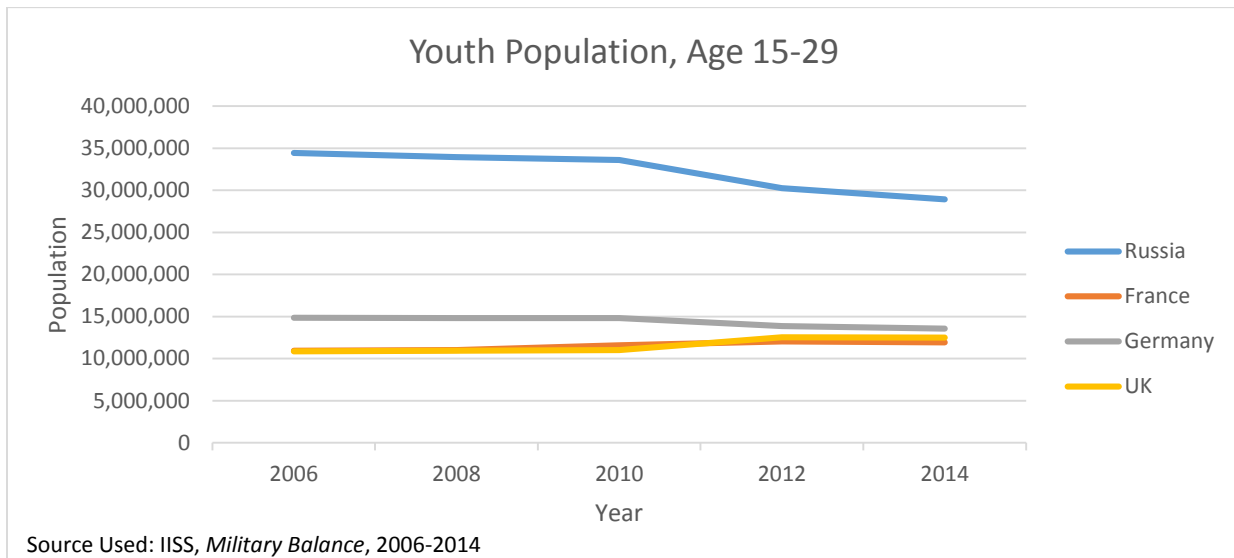
Regardless, as the graph illustrates, Russia still maintains a significant advantage over the nations of Europe with respect to total population, which serves as a latent factor for determining a nation's power.

However, further examinations of the data concerning population demographics reveal two causes for concern for both Europe and Russia. First, Europe's population is getting older, as depicted in the following figure:



The aging population in Europe poses a potential problem for the military capability and future force size of European nations. Second, the youth demographic for Russia is getting smaller,

although still sizeable, which would adversely affect the size of the future military, as demonstrated below:



So, even though Putin remains intent on modernizing and procuring more equipment for the military, Russia must realize that the size of its military personnel, particularly concerning the size of its future land forces, remains constrained by demographic issues.

Concerning other latent factors affecting the balance of power, a geographical comparison reveals that Russia has an advantage in geographical size and natural resource endowment over Europe, but climate and actual arable land favor European nations. Russian geographical area is the largest in the world, at about 17.1 million square km, approximately 1.8 times the size of the United States, and includes over 37,000 km of coastline, but only 7.11% of its landmass is arable land.¹⁰⁹ Russia possesses a vast natural resource endowment in oil, natural gas, and coal and has access to strategic minerals and rare earth metals, although challenges from climate and terrain impede this access.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, the UK, France, and Germany have a

¹⁰⁹ For more information, see the CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

combined geographical area of 1.15 million square km, where about a third of France and Germany and a quarter of the UK are arable land, and over 18,000 km of coastline.¹¹¹ The natural resource endowment of these three European nations includes coal, iron ore, natural gas, and earth metals, among other resources.¹¹²

Regarding national wealth, the European Union economy definitively outpaces the Russian economy. In nominal GDP terms, Russia's 2013 GDP totaled about \$2.1 trillion, whereas the EU had a 2013 nominal GDP of \$17.4 trillion.¹¹³ For comparative purposes, the nations cited in the European section had the following nominal GDP figures in 2013: the United Kingdom at \$2.49 trillion; France \$2.739 trillion; and Germany \$3.593 trillion.¹¹⁴ Using purchasing power parity GDP figures for 2013 reveals a similar comparison, since the EU had an estimated \$15.85 trillion compared to Russia's \$2.553 trillion. Recent GDP real growth rates favor Russia, however, as the EU's 2013 rate was 0.1% compared to Russia's 1.3%; in 2012 EU had a GDP real growth rate of -0.3% compared to Russia's 3.4%.¹¹⁵

This descriptive research into the latent factors of the balance of power suggests that Russia's behavior may stem from the notion that Russia considers the actual balance of power more favorably than the latent factors affecting the balance of power. It is therefore plausible to expect that hard power balancing may be more successful than diplomacy or economic sanctions

¹¹¹ See CIA World Factbook:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fr.html>.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gm.html>.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uk.html>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ "European Union vs. Russia." *Index Mundi*. <http://www.indexmundi.com/factbook/compare/european-union.russia/economy>.

¹¹⁴ Data is from CIA World Factbook. See reference cited above for links.

¹¹⁵ "European Union vs. Russia." *Index Mundi*. <http://www.indexmundi.com/factbook/compare/european-union.russia/economy>.

See also:

Mark Adomanis. "Russia's Economy is Still Growing Faster than Every EU Country." *Forbes*. August 16, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/markadomanis/2012/08/16/russias-economy-is-still-growing-faster-than-every-eu-country/>.

in stopping Russian aggression.¹¹⁶ Alternatively, Russia's aggressive behavior and military resurgence could mean that Russia is asserting its power because it aspires to be a hegemonic actor in the European continent, and also to be regarded as a superior military power in the world.

VI. Public Opinion in the U.S., Europe, and Russia

Domestic public opinion is also a significant factor that affects state behavior and foreign policy decision-making, and offers explanations for European defense spending levels and military capability, and, to some degree, Russia's recent resurgent behavior. As Kupchan and Kupchan observe, "[t]he level of military capability maintained by a given state is affected by its general threat environment, but also by a complex mix of political and economic considerations.... Force levels rise with the political will to support the necessary expenditures."¹¹⁷ Therefore, by examining the domestic public opinion, the decisions made by nations regarding force structure and military capability become more apparent than by examining accumulated data on military holdings year after year.

For the U.S.-European security relationship, two prominent events—the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the war in Afghanistan—have had consequences on European public opinion on U.S. policy. The American Political Science Association recounts that the 2003 Iraq War had ramifications for the national leadership in Europe given the relationship between elite and mass public opinion on that issue, although the document admits later that Europeans as early as the

¹¹⁶ Steven Erlanger. "Europe Begins to Rethink Cuts to Military Spending." *The New York Times*. March 26, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/27/world/europe/europe-begins-to-rethink-cuts.html?_r=0.

¹¹⁷ Charles A. Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan. "The Promise of Collective Security." *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1995), 56.

1800s started to view Americans as “clumsy, warlike, and uncultured” and that the “European criticisms [in the twenty-first century] reflect European attitudes about the use of force, which are reflected in and reinforced by weaknesses in military power as much as by doubts about US esteem.”¹¹⁸ Likewise, the ‘out-of-area’ operation in Afghanistan challenged the consensus view on NATO, more specifically affecting public attitudes about whether NATO should be conducting such foreign interventions away from the Atlantic and continental Europe. Ultimately, public opinion can provide an alternate approach to understanding the behavior of nations, as is true for explaining European defense spending levels and to some degree Russian resurgent behavior, apart from predicting nation-state behavior based on realism and the balance of power calculations.

A. European Attitudes toward NATO, Defense Spending, and the Use of Force

In the twenty-first century, many Europeans tend to view NATO as a necessary institution for providing for security. In 2013, 58 percent of EU respondents to the German Marshall Fund’s (GMFUS) *Transatlantic Trends* survey agreed with the statement that NATO was “‘still essential’ to their country’s security.”¹¹⁹ Yet, of the EU respondents who agreed with this statement, when asked why NATO remained important, a majority (56 percent) stated it was because “NATO represented an alliance of democratic countries,” whereas a minority (15 percent) cited NATO was important because “there are still major threats to that nation.”¹²⁰ This response indicates that Europeans tend to identify NATO with its inherent political values, rather

¹¹⁸ Peter J. Katzenstein, Jeffrey W. Legro, et al. “U.S. Standing in the World: Causes, Consequences, and the Future.” Task Force on U.S. Standing in World Affairs (Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, September 2009), <http://www.apsanet.org/content.asp?contentid=554>, 9 & 28.

¹¹⁹ GMFUS. *Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2013*. (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall fund of the United States, September 2014). Available at: <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2013/09/TTrends-2013-Key-Findings-Report.pdf>, 28.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 30.

than its military capability, which also supports the concept that Europeans identify a state's national power more closely with political norms and values than do Americans.

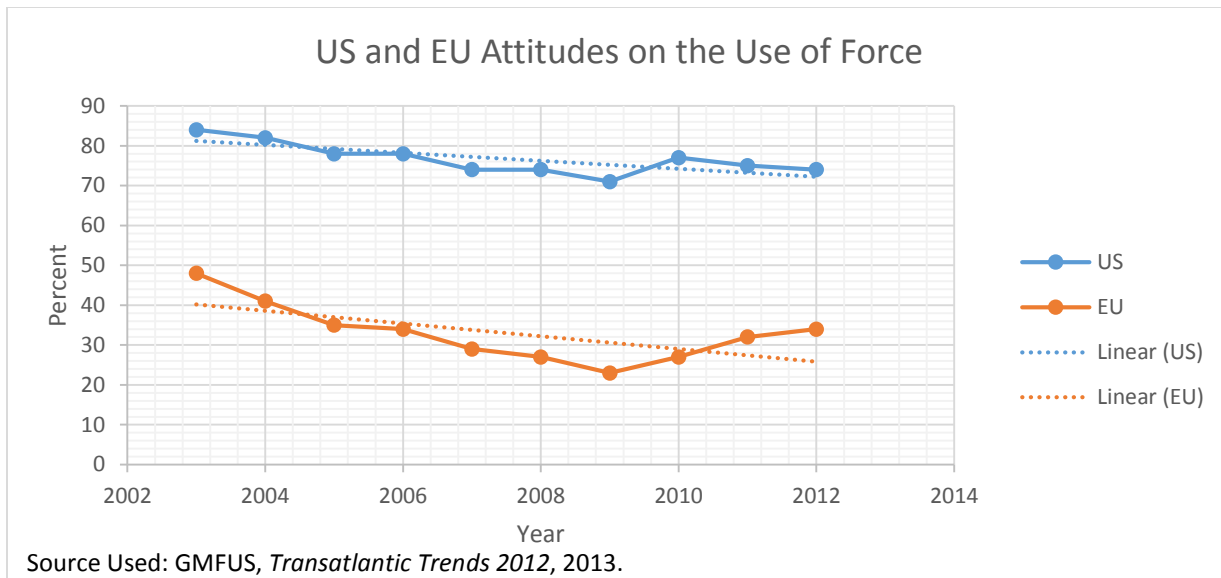
Also in response to the *Transatlantic Trends* survey, most Europeans responded that their national defense spending should stay the same or should decrease, with a very small minority in these nations responding that it should increase. In 2012, 46 percent of EU respondents sought to maintain current defense spending levels, while 39 percent wanted to decrease defense spending, with only 11 percent opting for an increase in defense spending.¹²¹ Similarly, in the U.S., 45 percent of Americans sought same levels of defense spending, 32 percent decrease, and 20 percent increase.¹²² These data show that raising defense spending is an impractical political decision for most European nations due to domestic public opinion, and can be similarly politically dangerous for the U.S., although the U.S. does possess a higher value of respondents who are open to the idea of increasing defense spending. These public opinion numbers suggest that European military capability will continue to decline or atrophy in the future, as defense spending continues to stagnate or decline over time.

As described in the above section on European military capability, Europeans tend to reject power politics, which is as reflected in their view on the use of force. In order to measure these attitudes, GMFUS asks those surveyed in *Transatlantic Trends* to respond to the statement: “war is sometimes necessary to obtain justice.”¹²³ Their 2012 data on responses to this statement, including previous years are reproduced in the following chart:

¹²¹ Ibid., 31.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ GMFUS. *Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2012*. (Washington, D.C.: German Marshall fund of the United States, September 2013). Available at: http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/TT-2012_complete_web.pdf, 41-42.



While the GMFUS argues that these polls reflect “deeply held values” on behalf of the U.S. and Europe, and that it is therefore “unlikely to [expect] change despite day-to-day events and changing security environments,” there is an observed slight increase in European response beginning in 2009, although the overall trend is still downward.¹²⁴ Such an increase during these years would indicate a growing appreciation for the use of force concomitant with Russian resurgence during this time, although the value still represents the minority of European respondents.

B. Russian Public Support for Putin and the Military

Meanwhile, unlike European publics, Russians tend to support the notion of raising the amount allocated to defense spending. In a Levada Center poll (August 2014), 46 percent of Russians responded that they favored increasing military spending even in the case of an economic slowdown.¹²⁵ Indeed, there is an observed historical willingness on behalf of Russian

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Nikolas K. Gvosdoev. “The Bear Awakens: Russia’s Military Is Back.” *The National Interest*. November 12, 2014. <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/russias-military-back-9181>.

public to raise defense spending even in times of economic hardship.¹²⁶ In addition, Russian public approval for Putin has increased tremendously during the timeframe overlapping Russian resurgence, particularly for the situation in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, even in the presence of a recent decline in global oil prices and a significant drop in projected Russian gross national product. Levada Center polling data show Putin’s popularity increasing from 64 to 84 percent during this timeframe.¹²⁷ Similarly, Gallup polling data show that since 2006, Russians’ views of the military have also been increasing, as depicted below¹²⁸:



These data suggest that Putin’s Russia is behaving in accordance to domestic public opinion, demonstrating preference to nationalist sentiment, and is also strengthening the military for political favor. This notion that offers an alternative explanation to Russia’s resurgence and

¹²⁶ Robert D. Kaplan. “Countering Putin’s Grand Strategy.” *The Wall Street Journal*. February 12, 2015, A15. See also appendix for IISS data on Russian defense spending that is consistent with this idea.

¹²⁷ Sam Greene and Graeme Robertson. “Explaining Putin’s popularity: Rallying around the Russian Flag.” *Washington Post*. September 9, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/09/09/explaining-putins-popularity-rallying-round-the-russian-flag/>.

See also:

Leon Aron. Putin’s Popularity. *AEI*. March 2, 2015. Available at: <http://www.aei.org/multimedia/putins-popularity/>.

¹²⁸ Julie Ray and Neli Esopova. "Russian Approval of Putin Soars to Highest Level in Years." *Gallup*. July 18, 2014. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/173597/russian-approval-putin-soars-highest-level-years.aspx>.

aggressive behavior in the twenty-first century, however, is not entirely mutually exclusive to idea that Russia is acting according to considerations of the balance of power as is expected under realism, as characterized earlier.

VII. Conclusion

Realism provides a good first-look at explaining the U.S.-European security relationship in the context of the twenty-first century. Calculations concerning the balance of power among nations are useful for understanding the relative capability of national militaries and provide insight into the behavior of nations. A nation's force posture decisions are determined primarily by the resources allocated to defense spending, which is itself a political process that includes consideration for domestic public attitudes, as well as threat assessment and the capabilities deemed necessary to provide for national security.

Realism maintains that the balance of power will always exist in international relations because of an anarchical state-system. As the data presented in this paper illustrate, the balance of power remains a consideration for state behavior in the twenty-first century, even if European nations do not wish to consider the balance of power when formulating their national security strategies. The timeframe of Russia's resurgent behavior occurred when Russia gained a marginal increase in relative power to European nations, an idea that supports the realist paradigm that predicts a stronger state will assert its authority in the state system, whereas a weaker state will not seek to upset the status quo of the international system. According to this logic, peaceful and stable relations in Europe will return when the balance of power equilibrates.

Making calculations regarding military holdings is a difficult process because of the pervading uncertainty that results from the lack of transparency concerning state intentions and capabilities. This uncertainty affects the decisions that states make; yet even rational state-actors must make decisions on imperfect information. The historical record of the Cold War, where calculations concerning the relative status of the militaries of the two superpowers dominated the strategic calculus of U.S. and Soviet foreign policy-makers, demonstrated this feature of international relations and strategic decision-making all too well. Indeed, one example during the Cold War era immediately comes to mind: the perceived bomber gap. In this case, the U.S. believed that the Soviets possessed more strategic long-range bombers than the U.S. because of a parade in Moscow where a single squadron of *Bison* bombers flew in circles in order to appear as if there were many aircraft when there were really only a few.¹²⁹ But these presumptions on the part of the U.S. were based on faulty intelligence that was distorted by Soviet misinformation, when in actuality the U.S. still held the advantage in strategic bombers at approximately two-to-one, and later five-to-one.¹³⁰

Historically, the large U.S. force presence in Europe during the Cold War era provided the European nations with the opportunity to rebuild their economies after the devastation of WWII. At that time, the Truman administration decided that it was in the U.S. national interest to forward base U.S. soldiers in Europe for this purpose.¹³¹ Furthermore, U.S. concerns about European nations acting as ‘consumers of security’ provided by the U.S. military presence and effective ‘free-riding’ on NATO are as old as the Eisenhower administration.¹³² In the twenty-

¹²⁹ Preston, Roland, and Wise. *Men In Arms*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group, 2001), 314.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Keylor, *A World of Nations*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 58.

¹³² Weber. “Shaping the Postwar Balance of Power: Multilateralism in NATO.” *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1992), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706991>, 654.

first century, European nations should be expected to be producers of their own security and should welcome the security alliance with the U.S. and NATO.

The data on public opinion discussed in this paper help demonstrate that the national security strategic guidance documents drafted by the administrations of European nations are politically-minded inasmuch as they inform the foreign and defense policy decisions, thereby giving credence to the axiom that ‘politics do not stop at water’s edge’ in foreign policy-making. Interestingly enough, however, is that the declining U.S. force presence in Europe and Russian resurgence in recent years has not had a demonstrable effect on European public attitudes toward NATO, their national defense spending, or the use of force, which have remained largely unchanged in the previous years.

The research and data presented in this paper fit into the context of a larger debate on U.S. grand strategy and foreign policy in the twenty-first century, specifically the exchange between isolationism/retrenchment and interventionism/global hegemony, and what these strategies mean for the U.S. military. On one side of the debate, the U.S. foreign policy requirements of the military are already too ambitious and costly, and the U.S. should do more to encourage its allies to provide for their security while the U.S. decreases its international military footprint.¹³³ In this case, the preference for U.S. force posture would be to decline the amount under control of the EUCOM area of responsibility as much as possible in order to supply the minimum amount of security, or to withdraw from the European continent altogether. On the other side of the debate, the global U.S. presence has enabled the U.S. to accomplish many foreign policy goals over the past sixty years, and continues to provide benefits in preventing

¹³³ Barry R. Posen. “Pull Back: The Case for a Less Activist Foreign Policy.” *Foreign Affairs*. (Jan./Feb. 2013). <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138466/barry-r-posen/pull-back>.

conflict, supporting the global economy, and allowing for international cooperation.¹³⁴ In this view, U.S. force posture to Europe would remain at current levels, or possibly increase to match prospective Russian military advantage in the European continent.

In the perspective of this debate, a declining presence in Europe does not necessarily indicate a tendency toward isolationism, but does reflect the reality of rising military costs. The relative data comparisons performed in the research show that the U.S. declining military presence in Europe has not upset the balance of power in the European continent as much as the absolute data might suggest, given the overall decline in European and Russian military forces as well. Nevertheless, the details on Russian procurement indicate a future where Russia gains an advantage in the balance of power, which would mean a continuation of aggressive behavior exerted in the European continent. Therefore, these data are useful for determining future U.S. force posture to Europe, and contribute to decisions on overall end strength of the U.S. military.

While reductions in U.S. force structure in Europe have already been made, the recommendation is to find a consistent balance to Russia's ambitious modernization and personnel increases in the future. For the U.S. force posture, finding the right size of personnel and equipment in Europe is important given the concurrent decline in the military capabilities of its European allies. According to the theory of realism and the predictive capability of the balance of power in determining stability in international relations, providing an effective force size capable of restoring an equilibrium in the balance of power in the European continent can help to resolve ongoing situations involving Russian aggressive behavior.

¹³⁴ Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth. "Lean Forward: In Defense of American Engagement." *Foreign Affairs*. (Jan./Feb. 2013). <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138468/stephen-g-brooks-g-john-ikenberry-and-william-c-wohlforth/lean-forward>.

Finally, if, as this paper has argued, the European continent is still a place where the balance of power mechanism operates to either preserve peace or incite aggressive behavior, then there should be some evidence to support the notion that the balance of power is equilibrating as a result of Russia's aggressive behavior and potential future gains in actual military capability. Indeed, as a result of Russian behavior, Poland has committed nearly \$42 billion in modernization and procurement of systems including 70 multi-role and combat helicopters, anti-missile and anti-aircraft systems, armored personnel carriers, submarines, and combat UAVs.¹³⁵ The Baltic nations are also seeking to spend more on defense and to increase personnel totals, with Lithuania looking to increase spending from 0.89% of GDP in 2014 to 1.11% in 2015; Latvia to increase its personnel by an additional 2,000 by 2018 from a current size of 4,600; and Estonia increasing its voluntary reserve forces.¹³⁶ In addition, the UK Parliament recently considered that the 2010 SDSR is outdated in light of the threat possibility to Europe's eastern border posed by Russia's behavior and urged the government to regain such military capabilities as maritime surveillance and comprehensive carrier strike capability and to procure more warships and aircraft for the UK military.¹³⁷ These changes in the militaries and defense spending levels of European nations demonstrate that the balance of power is functioning in the European continent and is in a process of equilibrating to accommodate Russia's military resurgence and aggressive behavior.

¹³⁵ Agence France-Presse. "Poland To Spend Billions on Defense." *Defense News*. February 16, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2015/02/15/poland-spend-billions-defense-amid-rumblings-war-europe/23457827/>.

¹³⁶ Agence France Presse. "Poles, Baltics and Scandinavia Rally Troops as Russia Grows." *Defense News*. April 3, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/2015/04/03/pires-baltics-and-scandinavia-rally-troops-as-russia-grows/25245417/>.

¹³⁷ Andrew Chuter. "UK Report: Rebuild Conventional Forces." *Defense News*. March 23, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/03/23/mod-rebuild-conventional-forces-defense-committee-budget-sdsr-fallon/70333950/>.

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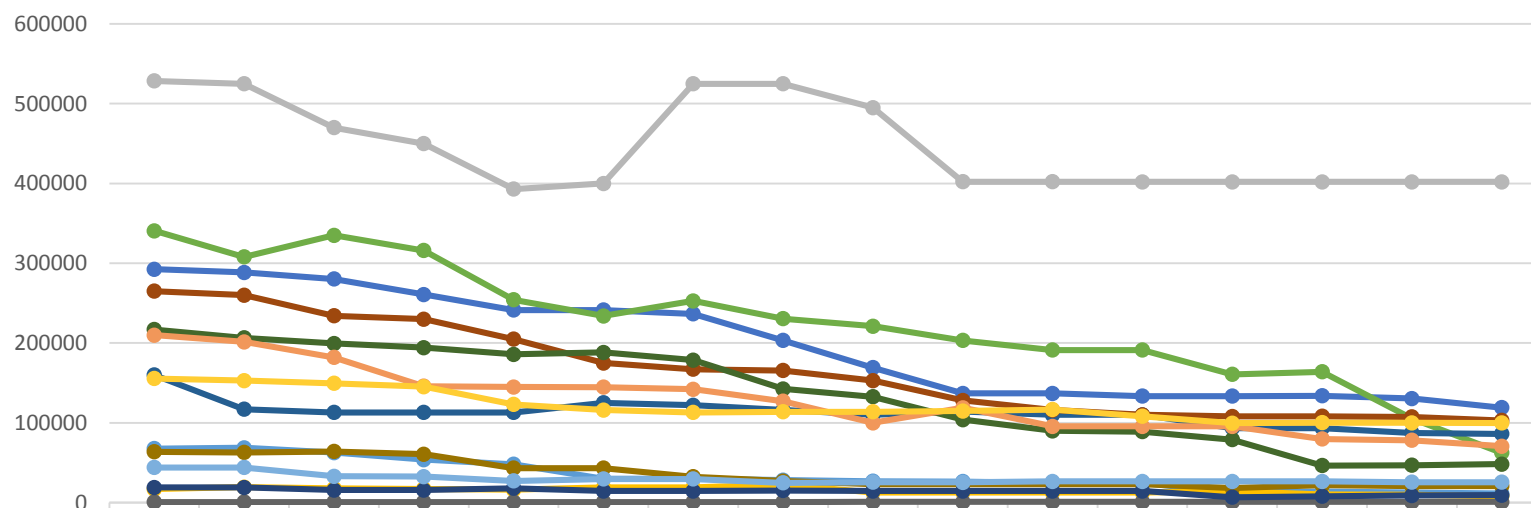
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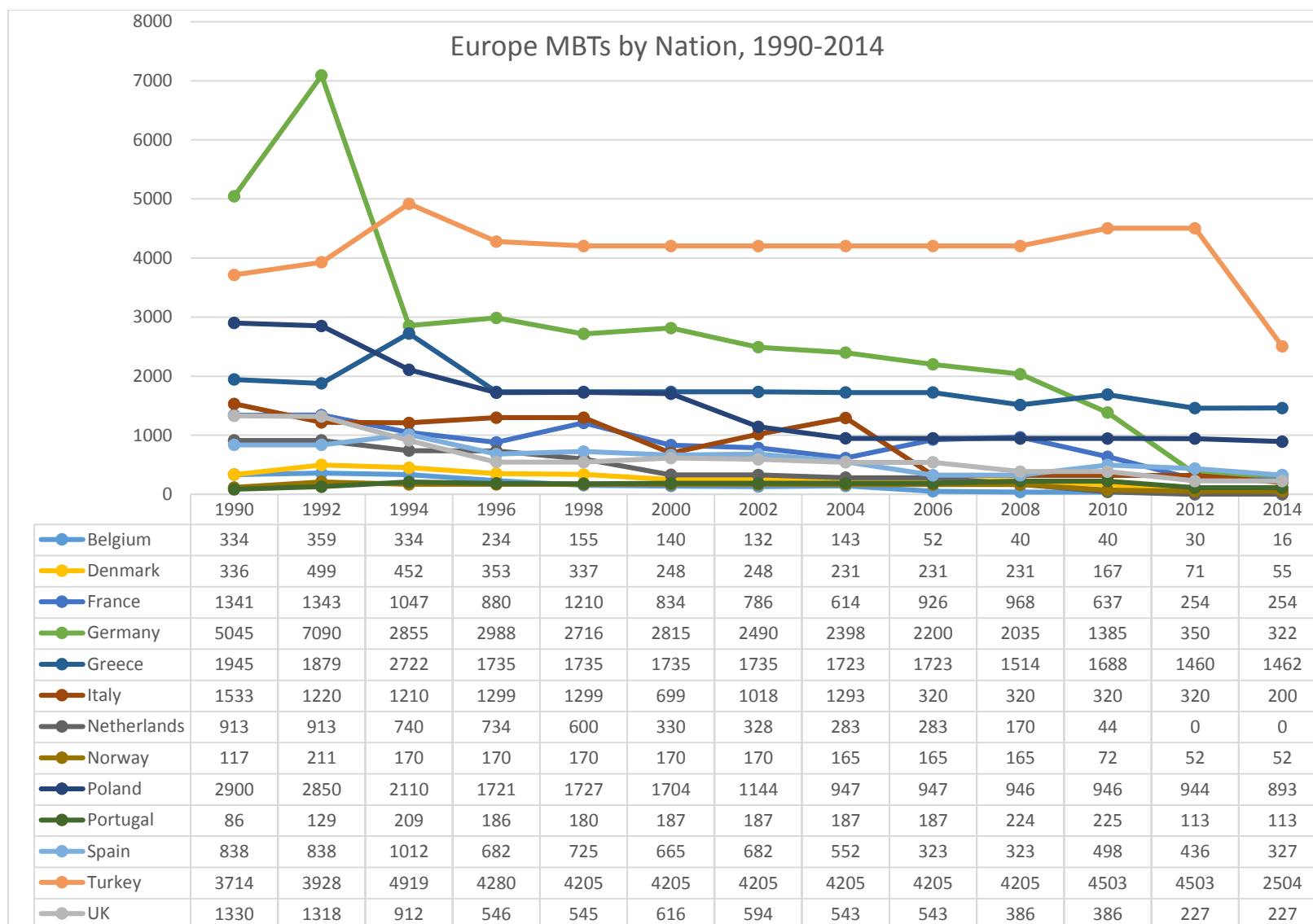
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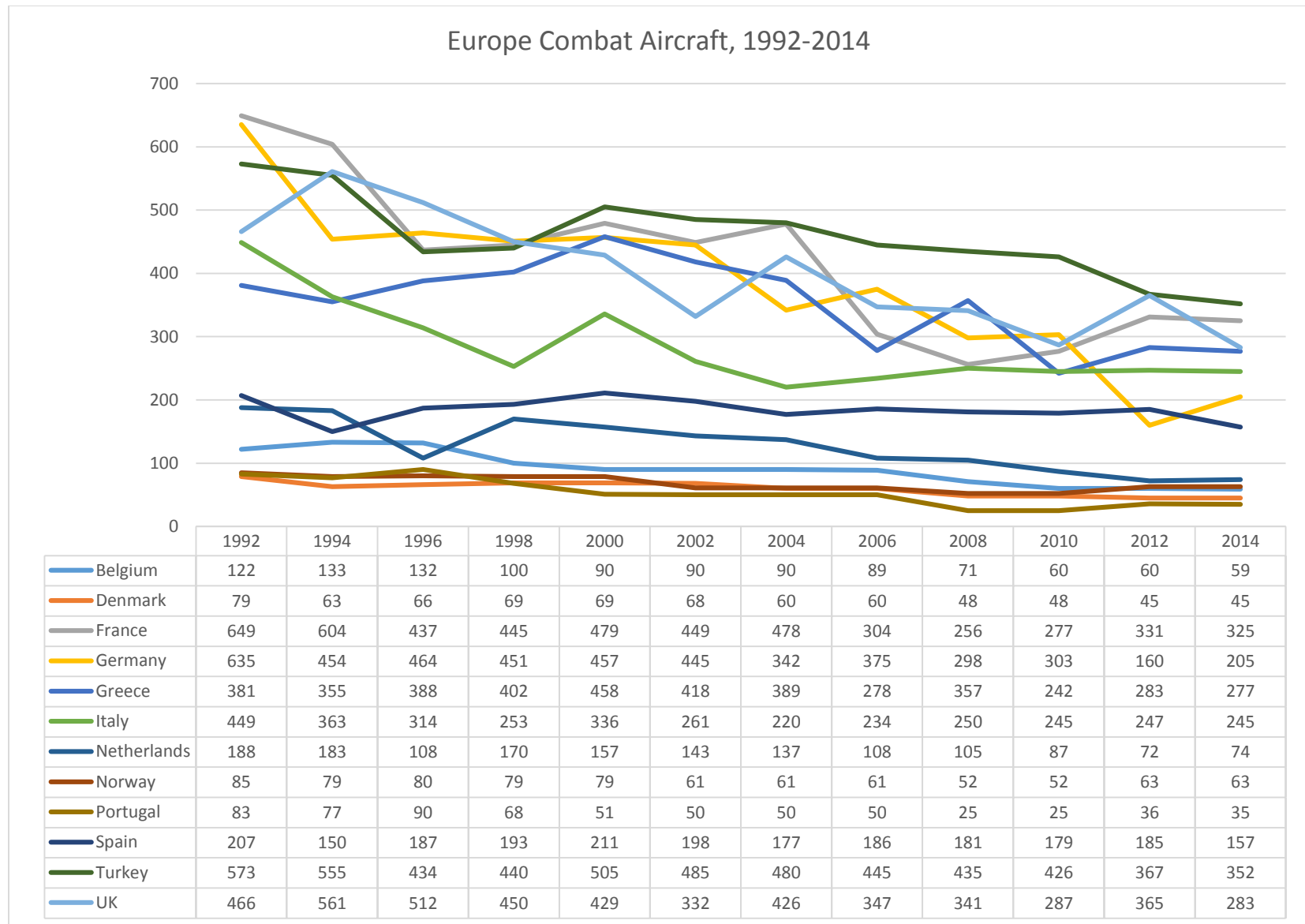


| | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 | 2002 | 2004 | 2006 | 2008 | 2010 | 2012 | 2014 |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Belgium | 67800 | 68700 | 62700 | 54000 | 48000 | 30100 | 30100 | 28250 | 26800 | 26400 | 24800 | 24800 | 12571 | 14013 | 12544 | 11300 |
| Denmark | 17000 | 19400 | 17900 | 17300 | 16300 | 19100 | 19000 | 22900 | 12850 | 12800 | 12500 | 12500 | 14240 | 10366 | 9925 | 7950 |
| France | 292500 | 288550 | 280300 | 260900 | 241400 | 241400 | 236600 | 203200 | 169300 | 137000 | 137000 | 133500 | 133500 | 134000 | 130600 | 119050 |
| Germany | 340700 | 308000 | 335000 | 316000 | 254300 | 234000 | 252800 | 230600 | 221100 | 203200 | 191350 | 191350 | 160794 | 163962 | 105291 | 62500 |
| Greece | 160000 | 117000 | 113000 | 113000 | 113000 | 125000 | 122000 | 116000 | 110000 | 114000 | 110000 | 110000 | 93500 | 93500 | 87441 | 86150 |
| Italy | 265000 | 260000 | 234200 | 230000 | 205000 | 175000 | 167250 | 165600 | 153000 | 128000 | 116000 | 110000 | 108000 | 108300 | 107500 | 103100 |
| Luxemburg | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 | 800 | 811 | 899 | 900 | 900 | 900 | 900 | 900 | 900 | 900 |
| Netherlands | 63700 | 63000 | 64100 | 60800 | 43200 | 43200 | 32350 | 27000 | 23100 | 23150 | 23150 | 23150 | 18266 | 21825 | 20836 | 20850 |
| Norway | 19000 | 19000 | 15900 | 15900 | 18000 | 14700 | 14700 | 15200 | 14700 | 14700 | 14700 | 14700 | 6700 | 7900 | 8900 | 9350 |
| Poland | 217000 | 206600 | 199500 | 194200 | 185900 | 188200 | 178700 | 142500 | 132750 | 104050 | 89900 | 89000 | 79000 | 46400 | 46900 | 48200 |
| Portugal | 44000 | 44000 | 33100 | 32700 | 27200 | 29700 | 29700 | 24800 | 25650 | 25400 | 26700 | 26700 | 26700 | 26700 | 25701 | 25700 |
| Spain | 210000 | 201400 | 182000 | 146000 | 145000 | 144700 | 142200 | 127000 | 100000 | 118800 | 95600 | 95600 | 95600 | 79736 | 78121 | 70800 |
| Turkey | 528500 | 525000 | 470000 | 450000 | 393000 | 400000 | 525000 | 525000 | 495000 | 402200 | 402200 | 402000 | 402000 | 402000 | 402000 | 402000 |
| UK | 155500 | 152900 | 149600 | 145400 | 123000 | 116000 | 113000 | 113900 | 113950 | 114800 | 116760 | 108150 | 99707 | 100290 | 99950 | 99800 |

Source Used: IISS, *Military Balance*, 1989-2014



Source Used: IISS, *Military Balance*, 1990-2014



Source Used: IISS, *Military Balance*, 1992-2014



Source Used: IISS, *Military Balance*, 1990-2014



Source Used: IISS, *Military Balance*, 1990-2014

Russian Defense Expenditure:

Table 16 **Russia National Defence Expenditure Trends (2000–14)**

| Year | GDP (R bn) | Real GDP Change (%) | National Defence Expenditure ¹ (R bn) | % Change in Real Defence Expenditure | National Defence as a % of GDP |
|------|------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2000 | 7,305.6 | 10.05% | 191.72 | 20.50% | 2.62% |
| 2001 | 8,943.6 | 5.09% | 247.70 | 10.91% | 2.77% |
| 2002 | 10,819.2 | 4.74% | 295.39 | 3.26% | 2.73% |
| 2003 | 13,208.2 | 7.25% | 355.69 | 5.79% | 2.69% |
| 2004 | 17,027.2 | 7.15% | 429.99 | 0.48% | 2.53% |
| 2005 | 21,609.8 | 6.39% | 581.14 | 13.29% | 2.69% |
| 2006 | 26,917.2 | 8.15% | 681.80 | 1.87% | 2.53% |
| 2007 | 33,247.5 | 8.54% | 831.87 | 7.21% | 2.50% |
| 2008 | 41,276.8 | 5.25% | 1,040.85 | 6.07% | 2.52% |
| 2009 | 38,786.4 | -7.80% | 1,188.17 | 12.01% | 3.06% |
| 2010 | 44,939.2 | 4.00% | 1,276.51 | -3.57% | 2.84% |
| 2011 | 53,274.0 | 4.29% | 1,532.80 | 5.12% | 2.88% |
| 2012 | 58,683.0 | 4.08% | 1,853.34 | 12.94% | 3.16% |
| 2013 | 64,803.0 | 4.05% | 2,329.41 | 17.39% | 3.59% |
| 2014 | 72,493.0 | 4.00% | 2,737.44 | 10.23% | 3.78% |

Sources: Federal Service of State Statistics (Rosstat), Russian Ministry of Finance, Kremlin Annual Laws on Budget Implementation, 2011 budget and 2012–14 draft budget.

¹National defence expenditure figures 2000–10 reflect actual expenditure, figure for 2011 reflects the amended federal budget, and 2012–14 figures reflect the draft national budget.

Source:

IISS. *Military Balance 2012*. (London: IISS, 2012), p. 189.