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A New Military Framework for NATO

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Overview

Although Americans and Europeans do not always agree on political strategies in the Middle East, they have a compelling reason to reach an accord on the need to strengthen North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military forces for future operations in that region and elsewhere. If adequate military capabilities are lacking, the Alliance will not be able to act even when its political leaders agree on the need to do so. But if it creates such capabilities, it will be able to act either ad hoc or across the board if a common political strategy eventually were to emerge.

This article proposes a new and comprehensive military framework to help guide NATO improvements in the years ahead. This framework envisions a pyramid-like structure of future NATO forces and capabilities in five critical areas: a new NATO Special Operations Force, the NATO Response Force, high-readiness combat forces, stabilization and reconstruction forces, and assets for defense sector development. The United States would provide one-third of the necessary forces, and Europe would be responsible for the other two-thirds. For the Europeans, creating these forces and capabilities is a viable proposition because they require commitment of only 10 percent of their active military manpower, plus investments in such affordable assets as information networks, smart munitions, commercial lift, logistics support, and other enablers. If NATO succeeds in creating these forces for power projection and expeditionary missions, it will possess a broad portfolio of assets for a full spectrum of operations against such threats as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and cross-border aggression.

Diplomats on both sides of the Atlantic are seeking to overcome the discord over the invasion of Iraq and to close ranks to meet a daunting set of shared security challenges, from defeating radical Islamic terrorism to controlling Iran's nuclear activities to building a free Iraq to achieving an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. Yet there remain deep differences over more basic issues: reliance on the use of force, the legitimacy of preemptive war, and whether to foment sweeping political change throughout the Middle East. Until these differences are settled, it will be difficult for the United States and its major European allies to formulate a serious common strategy or to act in unison in crises.

Perhaps the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General will succeed in organizing a deep dialogue from which an agreed strategy will emerge. But even in the absence of a new grand accord, NATO can accomplish work of grand importance. The focus should be on developing a comprehensive, common framework for NATO defense *capabilities* and then proceeding programmatically to put real flesh on that framework. The logic is straightforward:

- Capabilities for common action are needed, even though this action may not always be chosen (for non–Article V contingencies).
- If and when a common strategy emerges, NATO must have the capabilities to execute it.
- The United States and its European allies must be able to agree on necessary capabilities, even while unable to agree on grand strategy or on when and where those capabilities should be used.

This paper proposes a new defense framework for NATO combat forces and other defense capabilities as a guide to force planning, priority-setting, and cooperative programs. The framework covers the full spectrum of dangers that Americans and Europeans agree exist and the capabilities needed by the Alliance to meet these dangers. The framework is capabilities-based, not threat-based, meaning that it is predicated on what NATO members think their alliance should be able to do, not on predictions of who their enemies might be. The framework has structural integrity in that each piece fits with the others, making the whole stronger than the sum of the parts. Within this framework, we suggest specific capabilities—some existing, some agreed, and some new. Finally, this article suggests how the NATO defense framework should match up with the new U.S. military presence in Europe and growing European Union (EU) defense efforts.

To some, this agenda may seem overly ambitious for NATO and seem to ask too much of the European allies. This is not the case. The entire framework includes only about 10 percent of Europe's active military personnel. It mainly involves reorienting forces for new missions, making them more deployable, network-centric, and interoperable—goals that NATO has already embraced. The framework need not be filled out at once; a period of 5 years or more will suffice. Thus, it is affordable, practical, and politically feasible, even with continuing differences over grand strategy.

A Capabilities-Based Alliance

Since NATO began responding to security dangers outside member territory and its traditional area, first in the Balkans and then beyond, it has changed from an alliance of commitment to one of choice. During the Cold War, the Article V obligation to act in common defense was the starting point, and the capabilities to do so followed. Now, the main dangers lie outside Europe to the southeast, and members are unlikely to be attacked directly. Because of differences in strategic outlook and political goals, moreover, there may be not only no obligation to act together, but also no inclination to do so.

Observers can debate whether current differences reflect a natural, structural post–Cold War loosening of U.S.-European solidarity or a serious but situational disagreement over the invasion of Iraq. Whichever the case, if NATO does not build and maintain adequate capabilities, it will be able to mount only improvised responses to crises when its members choose to act—a recipe for military weakness, indecision, and lack of credibility at moments when strength, decisiveness, and credibility are most needed. Failure to have a *complete* set of capabilities could invite challenges. Rather than neglect capabilities because of disunity of purpose, NATO must build capabilities to enable action when unity exists.

NATO must build capabilities to enable action when unity exists

The United States and its European allies had a single mode for collective action during the Cold War. Now, they have several. One is formation of an ad hoc coalition for an operation that is not ordered by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and not carried out by the integrated command. Another is an operation that is ordered by the NAC and directed by the integrated command but with forces provided by just a few members. The third is an operation ordered by the NAC, directed by the integrated command, and composed of forces from many members. The past years have seen all three modes employed in such diverse contingencies as Kuwait, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Having all three options provides valuable flexibility; each one is worth having, and each can work, but only if it can draw upon well-prepared capabilities.

A strong capabilities-based alliance is possible because of the similarity of U.S. and European views on key challenges of the global security era, despite disagreement over how to respond to them. From these similar views, it is possible to derive the contents of a *warehouse* of defense capabilities. Those we prescribe are:

- NATO Special Operations Force
- NATO Response Force
- NATO High Readiness Forces for major combat operations
- NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force
- NATO capacity for Defense and Security Sector Development for countries in transition.

The Value of Military Accord

Prior to the NATO Istanbul Summit in mid-2004, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer urged the Alliance to write a new Harmel Report, aimed at finding common ground on Middle East policy and strategy.[1] Others echoed this idea and called for such a report to become the basis for a new NATO strategic concept that would reflect agreed principles for action outside Europe, including the Middle East. Meanwhile, despite U.S.–EU and intra-EU disagreements over the use of force and policy toward Iraq, the European Union issued its own global security assessment, which was strikingly similar to that of the United States. Yet because of the disagreements, the Istanbul Summit took no important initiatives and reached no agreement to forge a common strategy for the Middle East or set standards for the use of military force.[2]

The United States and Europe are not at odds across the board. They share many interests and goals in the world at large. For instance, they have similar views on the democratization of the former Soviet Union, as their united stance on Ukraine's elections shows. Nor are they wholly polarized on the Middle East, where they agree on the need for a democratic Palestinian state and on the criticality of secure oil supplies. Approaches to Iran are being harmonized. NATO leaders are cooperating in many aspects of the war on terrorism and policy toward Afghanistan.

Perhaps the future will produce greater strategic and political harmony between the United States and those European countries that disagree with its policies on the use of force and in the Middle East. A dramatic coming-together could occur, for example, in response to an al Qaeda attack on Europe, defeat of the insurgency in Iraq, an Israeli-Palestinian settlement, or success in preventing Iranian production of nuclear weapons. A safer assumption is that the United States and major European states will continue to agree on some policies and crises while disagreeing on others. But again, this condition neither precludes nor makes less crucial U.S.-European agreement on the capabilities their alliance should possess. The persistence of strategic discord need not and ought not block agreement on capabilities.

There is precedent for agreement on capabilities despite disagreement over purpose and policy. In the 1960s, NATO experienced strategic divergence and political discord over what to do about the

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Soviet Union's nuclear buildup. Whereas the Europeans wanted to cling to a strategy of nuclear deterrence, the Americans wanted to bolster NATO conventional defenses to lessen reliance on escalation. The debate between them raged for years, even after NATO agreed in 1967 on the need to be capable of both "forward defense" and "flexible response." What finally softened the debate was progress in strengthening military cooperation. As a result, NATO conventional forces improved while nuclear capabilities were maintained. The Americans became satisfied that the Europeans were truly committed to a better conventional defense, and the Europeans became satisfied that the Americans were still committed to a strong nuclear deterrent. From this practical agenda of enhanced military cooperation came greater political harmony and strategic coherence, as the Alliance pursued a dual agenda of strong defense and arms control.

Again, in the 1980s, the United States and Europe were at loggerheads over how to respond to the Soviet Union's conventional and nuclear military buildup, as well as its invasion of Afghanistan. Whereas Washington was calling for a NATO strategy of force buildup and counter-pressure, many Europeans favored arms control and détente. Without resolving this tension, the Americans and Europeans were able to agree to reconfigure NATO defenses in Central Europe for nonlinear combat and to deploy improved nuclear missiles in Europe while also pursuing arms control negotiations aimed at banishing such nuclear missiles on both sides. As the 1980s unfolded, this agenda helped restore Alliance unity and contributed to convincing the Soviet Union to end the Cold War.

Today, notwithstanding political debates that have raged across the Atlantic, a roughly common view on required NATO capabilities has quietly emerged. This is evident in NATO pursuit of the Prague Capability Commitment and the NATO Response Force, both of which were adopted at the Prague Summit of 2002 and reaffirmed at Istanbul in 2004. Despite public impressions that the United States has lost interest in the Alliance, Washington led the way toward adoption of the Prague and Istanbul defense programs. Moreover, many European countries that disagree with U.S. policy on Iraq do agree on defense requirements. France is among the leaders in European military transformation, and Germany is now pursuing a parallel effort. Although the European Union is trying to create its own military forces, it is not proposing to reduce its reliance upon NATO for most warfighting missions and is eager for cooperation with NATO defense planners.

Alliance agreement on a comprehensive framework of needed capabilities could contribute to convergence on strategy and restoration of mutual confidence. Success at building better European military forces for such a framework will alter the conditions for determining military responses to crises. European governments will not be averse to military action just because they lack the capability to act. The United States will have an incentive to seek multilateral action rather than to act unilaterally because its European allies lack usable capabilities.

NATO Military Progress and Shortfalls

News media have focused on intramural Alliance political disputes and largely overlooked the military progress of the past 2 years. The Prague Summit decisions to reorganize the NATO military command, to create a new "Allied Transformation Command," and to field the NATO Response Force were critical because they opened new avenues for military preparedness and multilateral cooperation. These have not been the only important steps. During 2003–2004, the Alliance:

- reformed its force-planning process to enable creation of adequate capabilities for new missions
- conducted exercises that have helped its military forces prepare for new missions
- launched a program to improve communications through use of Italian, French, and British satellite constellations
- initiated studies to create defenses against missile threats to Europe
- endorsed a "Program of Work for Defense against Terrorism," which comprises eight high-priority armaments directives in such areas as protecting harbors, detecting use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), enhancing intelligence, and performing consequence management
- completed creating the "Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense Battalion"
- signed a long-delayed contract to buy a new air-to-ground surveillance system
- improved its strategic sealift by creating a Sealift Coordination Center and signing an agreement to gain commitment of several roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) cargo ships from the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Norway.[3]

Meanwhile, NATO also expanded its military operations outside its new borders. While it has completed its original stability mission in Bosnia and transferred main responsibility for peacekeeping to the EU, it retains a military headquarters in Sarajevo to assist the country with defense reform and to support the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It continues to perform major peacekeeping missions in Kosovo, the fate of which remains unsettled. After initially being embarrassed by its inability to act decisively in Afghanistan, NATO subsequently agreed to take command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) there, and to deploy Provincial Reconstruction Teams to the western countryside; ISAF today stands at about 8,000 troops. In Iraq, NATO has agreed to an expanded role in training Iraqi forces.

Thus, recent defense measures show that NATO is capable of step-by-step progress toward upgrading its forces for new missions, and recent operations show that NATO is willing to use its forces ad hoc. Still, there are two significant discrepancies. First, there is no agreed framework covering the entirety of needed capabilities—a gap this article aims to fill. Second, the European allies need to prioritize their defense expenditures—an effort this article may help to illuminate.

> **recent defense measures show that NATO is capable of step-by-step progress**

Critics complain about the inability of European militaries to produce more personnel for missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. These limitations reflect the extent to which many European military forces remain largely tailored for continental defense missions, even though the saliency of these missions has largely vanished. To protect Europe, NATO still needs forces in such areas as air and maritime defense, missile defense, and counterterrorism. But it no longer needs large numbers of ground and air forces configured for campaigns against massive invasion. While some progress has been made, most European militaries still lack the capacity to project sizable forces rapidly outside the continent. In a fast-breaking emergency, they could draw upon Britain and France to deploy, at most, 60,000 troops, far fewer than the United States can project. In slower-moving situations, they can perform better; some 56,000 European troops are stationed in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Even then, however, their manpower policies limit the size of their rotational base, which constrains the number of troops that can be kept abroad for long periods. As a result, European militaries claim that they cannot handle far bigger deployments than now, even though they have about 2.4 million active-duty troops, which is far more than the U.S. total of 1.4 million troops, 340,000 of which are stationed abroad, including in Iraq. A fair estimate is that, whereas the United States could deploy overseas about 700,000 service personnel from all branches over a period of 3 to 6 months, Europe could deploy at most 150,000.

Despite the deterioration in security conditions, especially in and arising from the Middle East, most European defense budgets have not grown, and investment budgets have been starved. Yet as NATO military authorities have argued, retiring many excess forces no longer needed for border defense could liberate substantial funds. These funds could be plowed into investments to create network-centric forces for expeditionary missions and for operating with U.S. forces. Simply put, ample resources exist to meet comprehensive NATO capabilities requirements, if those resources are properly allocated.

Challenges and Dangers of the Early 21st Century

The allocation of defense resources should, of course, reflect the assessment of the security environment. For all their differences over policies on the use of force and Middle East strategy, the Atlantic democracies more or less agree on the nature of the main security dangers in the current era. Broadly stated, there is a common view that, from Africa to South Asia, many states are plagued by poor development prospects, illegitimate governments, lack of connectivity to the world economy, religious radicalism and strife, and unfriendly neighbors. Further, Alliance members agree that these conditions have given rise to both strategic terrorism and an appetite for weapons of mass destruction. These developments threaten the surrounding regions, the dependability of world oil supplies, and Western societies. Consequently, most NATO members and partners recognize the importance of promoting political-economic transformation in this geographic swath, employing force when necessary to safeguard peace and protect vital interests, and setting the conditions for stability and reconstruction when conflict does occur.

Within this generally agreed assessment of security trends in the world beyond Europe, there is consensus on certain dangers and challenges:[4]

- terrorism that aspires to global reach and harm
- proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical WMD in the hands of countries and terrorist groups willing to use them
- proliferation of conventional weapons and information technologies that, along with WMD, support asymmetric strategies aimed at countering U.S. and allied military force operations
- rogue governments that oppress their own people and are poised to commit aggression against their neighbors and otherwise menace entire regions
- state-to-state rivalries that produce military competition, threaten to erupt into war, and create a climate of fear and distrust throughout their regions
- ethnic tensions and radical ideologies that foster violence
- growing potential for state failures, thereby creating domestic turbulence and mass migration
- failing states that provide sanctuaries for terrorists and organized crime
- ethnic, sectarian, and separatist instability and violence stretching from Africa through the Middle East and into South and Southeast Asia
- mass killing of civilians, especially in sub-Saharan Africa
- in parts of Africa and Asia, stalled economic and political development, caused in part by exclusion from world markets, producing social anxiety in a setting of fast population growth, poverty, urbanization, and ineffective governments
- absence of democratic governance and economic progress in an era of global communications, high public awareness, rising standards of expectation, and growing frustrations
- rising demands for fossil fuels, natural gas, and water, coupled with growing environmental degradation.

Although there have been and remain U.S.-European differences over the role of military power in tackling these problems and the conditions in which the use of force is justified, both Europeans and Americans realize that power and force have roles to play but cannot be predominant. To suggest that the United States regards force as its policy instrument of choice is as wrong as to suggest that Europeans will not use force under any circumstances. In general, both favor policies and efforts aimed at ameliorating hostility and fulfilling aspirations for prosperity and freedom, thus reducing reliance on military instruments.

A New Framework for NATO Defense Capacity

In the face of this agreed assessment of dangers, a multidimensional concept of security is both needed and possible. U.S. and European forces will need to be fully prepared for major combat operations that could cover a wide spectrum of missions and geographic locations. They also have to be prepared for many other missions, such as limited intervention, conflict prevention, crisis management, consequence management, peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement, postconflict occupation, stabilization and reconstruction, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, partnership building, and the creation of democratically accountable and capable military establishments. This wide spectrum of new-era missions will require military forces of diverse skills and capabilities that extend considerably beyond the traditional mission of deterring and fighting major wars.

In addition, the very way of thinking about requirements must change. The challenges ahead cannot be reduced to a small set of predictable contingencies for which U.S. and European forces can be optimized. Recognizing this, current U.S. defense strategy calls for capabilities-based planning to create a diverse portfolio of military assets that are modular and scalable and that provide high degrees of flexibility, adaptability, and agility. Increasingly, NATO and European military commanders are coming to the same conclusion.

Likewise, U.S., NATO, and European commanders are adopting similar views on military transformation. Nearly all agree that transformation should focus on blending advanced networks, sensors, munitions, modern weapons, and new logistic support to create forces attuned to military operations of the information age, which are radically different from those of the industrial age. They also agree on the need to prevent a big "transformation gap" from emerging between U.S. and European forces that would prevent them from operating closely together. While they recognize that U.S. forces will remain ahead of many European forces in the transformation process, they aspire to accelerate transformation of European forces so they will be capable of working alongside U.S. forces, with common information networks, in future operations across the entire spectrum.

Finally, military leaders on both sides of the Atlantic agree on the nature of military operations. Although U.S. forces are already prepared for many expeditionary missions, European forces must increasingly acquire the assets for power-projection and force operations that are needed to perform these and other missions. If they strive to do so, the consequence might be European forces that may be smaller but that are tailored to perform many missions in partnership with U.S. forces. Transatlantic agreement on these important matters provides a solid foundation for a new strategic framework for NATO-wide force improvements.

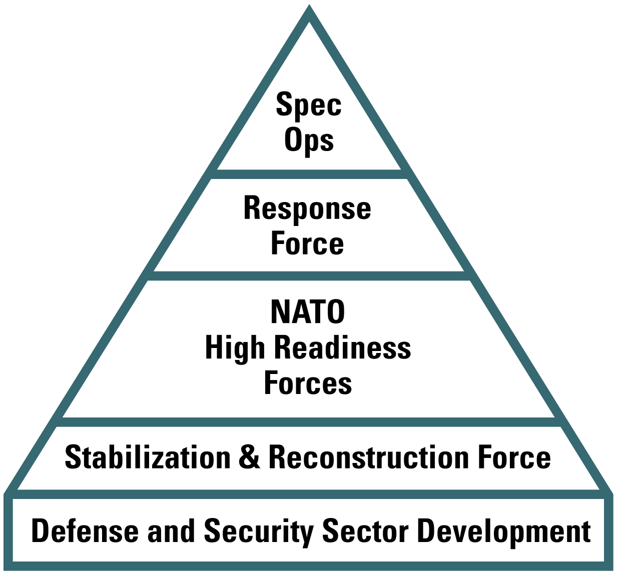
To help guide NATO defense planning, this paper proposes an integrated, five-tiered defense pyramid of forces, capabilities, and assets for new-era missions (figure 1). In each category, NATO will need to establish appropriate goals for forces and capabilities, assess existing assets against these goals, and design programs to achieve them. This pyramid is a useful tool to help NATO see the whole as well as constituent parts and their relationships. Its key point is that being prepared for future missions requires a broad portfolio of multiple, different assets, not a one-dimensional military configured for a single type of warfare.

Each tier of the pyramid identifies military assets required for specific types of new-era missions. At the top of the pyramid are relatively small forces for sudden, demanding, quick-response operations. They include a *new* NATO Special Operations Force (NSOF) and the NATO Response Force (NRF), already in train. In the middle of the pyramid is the largest component, the NATO High Readiness Forces (HRF) for sustained major combat operations. Improvements to these forces should focus on a limited set of divisions and brigades, fighter wings, and naval strike groups, provided with the information networks, joint warfighting assets, logistic support, and transport needed for expeditionary missions against significant opponents. One tier down is a *new* NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force (NSRF) for the mission of occupying territory, stabilizing postconflict settings, and helping begin the task of reconstructing countries with functioning governments and economies. At the bottom of the pyramid are assets—largely human and institutional—for the mission of NATO Defense and Security Sector Development (NDSSD), helping foreign militaries and other security institutions modernize, democratize, and improve their performance.

Today NATO has formally assigned assets in only two of these five categories, the NRF and HRF. In our view, NATO will be sufficiently endowed for future missions only if it has adequate forces and capabilities in all five areas. NATO forces, for example, could be used sequentially. A crisis intervention could begin with use of the NSOF for targeting enemy positions, as occurred in the early stages of the invasion of Afghanistan. Next, NATO could deploy the brigade-size NRF to establish a foothold, defeat access-denial threats, and conduct initial strikes. Then, NATO could deploy the larger HRF to conduct major combat operations aimed at winning the contest in this key stage of warfighting. Afterward, NATO could deploy the NSRF, which would work alongside the HRF to stabilize the situation and begin reconstruction until peace is restored and civilian assets can be deployed to complete the reconstruction phase. At this juncture, NATO assets for the NDSSD could begin helping the new government to preserve safety and security while building democracy.

Such a sequential process is not the only or even most likely way that these NATO forces and capabilities could be employed. Instead, they could be used individually or in a combination suited to the situation. For example, some situations might require only the NSOF, or NSOF forces and the NRF, followed by commitment of the NSRF. Other combinations are equally possible. Moreover, peacetime relationships with many foreign countries might involve only the use of NATO assets for defense sector development, in a manner reflecting how the NATO Partnership for Peace (PFP) has

Figure 1. A NATO Framework of Future Forces and Capabilities for Expeditionary Missions


Spec Ops
Response Force
NATO High Readiness Forces
Stabilization & Reconstruction Force
Defense and Security Sector Development

been carried out with many European countries. For this reason, the pyramid of forces and capabilities must be modular and scalable. NATO must be capable of tailoring packages to meet the unique requirements of each situation. A NATO defense pyramid of such assets, which cover a wide spectrum and are capable of being combined in many ways, will provide the flexibility and adaptability needed for a wide range of possible futures. This pyramid will ensure that when NATO political leaders decide to act collectively, they will have the full set of forces and capabilities at their disposal.

Building the Pyramid

As the ancient Egyptians could attest, it is one thing to draw a pyramid and quite another to build one. To be prepared for all five types of missions, NATO will need to be able to draw upon both U.S. and European forces. As a general rule, the United States might provide one-third of the military commitments and Europe two-thirds. In order to make progress in the coming years on building a well-stocked military warehouse, European NATO members will need to focus their limited investment funds on program priorities that can yield high-leverage returns in the form of enhanced, usable forces and capabilities. All five of these areas are appropriate for investment as well as other force-improvement efforts, such as developing new doctrines, creating new structures, and establishing new employment practices. The necessary steps are modest and will not unduly strain the NATO and European capacity to pursue them. The following discussion moves from the top of this pyramid to the base.[5]

a NATO defense pyramid will provide the flexibility and adaptability for a wide range of possible futures

NATO Special Operations Force[6]

National special operations forces (SOF) have proven their high value because of their many uses. SOF can be used to conduct surgical attacks on terrorist camps, help train foreign militaries in counterterrorist operations, free hostages, destroy obstacles and threats, and conduct surveillance behind enemy lines. As fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq shows, they can use lasers and global positioning system devices to spot enemy targets, and then transmit the information to air forces to achieve precision strikes. Special operations forces are light, lethal, small, mobile, well trained, and superbly conditioned. Because they are easily networked with other forces, they can be powerful force multipliers. In addition, SOF are highly flexible and adaptable.

Some years ago, the United States took the step of creating a new Special Operations Command for SOF, with a formal headquarters and staff, forces assigned from all services, and a separate budgeting program aimed at funding their unique requirements. This step has yielded strategic dividends, particularly in combating terrorism. Pressures are mounting to enlarge SOF assets because of their capacity to perform so many important missions and to work closely with other forces, including large ground and air forces conducting major combat operations. NATO and Europe would be well served by a similar capability.

Most European militaries grasp the value of SOF, and many have well-trained SOF units in their ranks, such as the fabled British Special Air Service. But these national units are not organized into a multilateral entity that could operate under NATO command. A new SOF command could be built upon existing U.S.-UK-French SOF units imbedded in Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTFs) and on SOF units operating in Afghanistan.

There is much to be gained by sharing know-how through multilateral training and exercises. Beyond this, most contingencies in which NATO allies may operate together will require SOF. While such forces often operate in small groups and in isolation, much can be gained by improving their interoperability in such areas as communications and networking, doctrine, tactics, weapons, and logistics. British and French SOF, for example, should be able to work together using information networking to guide precision strikes of American, German, and Italian aircraft.

What steps should NATO take to capitalize on this opportunity? An attractive possibility is to create an NSOF command with responsibility for the coordination of Alliance-wide SOF goals and collaborative programs. This would require multinational agreements on intelligence sharing and other matters. Despite national sensitivities, such agreements can be forged. The actual NSOF should have a small inner core and a larger outer network. The inner core could be as small as 300 troops, with specialized technology, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), focused on one or two vital missions, such as counterterrorism and counter-WMD. This inner core would be formally assigned to NATO, highly integrated, stationed at one location, and composed of rotating national SOF units. It would have uniform equipment and procedures and be ready to deploy within 72 hours.

Surrounding this inner core would be a larger, looser outer network of SOF assets from many nations that would perform such other missions as fire support, infiltration, intelligence gathering, hostage rescue, peacetime advising of new partners, civil affairs, and psychological operations. The SOF assets of this outer network need not be collocated, but they would form a networked posture, and they must meet NATO standards and be available for commitment when the need arises.

The entire posture of inner core and outer network likely would include no more than 1,000 troops, which could be one-third U.S. forces and two-thirds European. Although an NSOF would not be a big consumer of logistic support and airlift, it must have assets that enable it to move quickly and sustain itself at long distances. In addition, it would need UAVs, some gunships, and other specialized assets.

Such a two-part NSOF offers the potential to add significantly to the NATO warehouse of usable capabilities. Ample national SOF already exist, so additional forces do not have to be created, nor do individual skills have to be greatly improved. The cost of an NSOF headquarters, training facilities, new equipment, and exercises would be modest, and certainly much less than the NRF.

This proposal could be adopted at a NATO ministerial session and implemented in a few years. Within a short time, NATO would have a superbly trained NSOF that could operate independently or with the NRF and other NATO forces. Alliance capacity to handle situations demanding swift application of small amounts of SOF power would be greatly enhanced.

NATO Response Force

Approved at the Prague Summit in 2002, the NRF speedily reached initial operational capability in fall 2004, and is now undergoing tests and exercises to develop its capabilities. It will reach full operational capability in 2006, well ahead of its original schedule. Currently, it is composed of about 17,000 troops; by 2006, it will have its full complement of ground forces and reach its target of about 20,000 troops. The NRF is an elite, joint force configured for high-tech strike operations. It will be available within 5 to 30 days and will have 1 month of staying power before replenishment is needed. It can be used on its own, or it can be a spearhead for larger NATO forces. It is to be composed of one ground brigade, plus commensurate air and naval forces, and backed by the mobility forces and logistic support assets needed to operate far beyond European borders.[7]

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The NRF is a rotating force drawn from NATO's High Readiness Forces. At any time, one contingent of 20,000 troops will be on duty, in high readiness status for 6 months; another will be standing down from recent duty; and another will be preparing for future duty. Membership in the NRF is open to all NATO members. Multiple countries, including France, are participating enthusiastically. For example, in late 2004, the NRF consisted of naval units from the United Kingdom, plus ground and air forces from the southern region. The rotational nature of the NRF means that a dozen or more nations can participate significantly over a 2-year period. Over a longer period, all NATO members will be able to participate if their forces and assets meet NRF standards. High-level command of the NRF is being rotated among the NATO Joint Force Commands in Brunssum and Naples and its Joint Headquarters in Lisbon. In a contingency, the NRF is to be led by a Deployable Joint Task Force. During 2003–2004, NRF 1 and 2 were activated as prototypes and test beds. Certification and evaluation are taking place during NRF 3 and 4 (2004–2005.) Full operational capability will be reached during NRF 5 and NRF 6 (2005–2006.)

For all of its progress, full NRF development cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, senior NATO officials must carefully monitor its evolution to ensure that it does not fall short of its promise. Part of the challenge comes from meeting its dual-purpose agenda. The NRF was intended not only to be an operationally ready strike force, but also to be at the cutting edge of NATO transformation in ways that send ripple effects to other European forces. For this purpose, it needs not only modern weapons but also advanced information networks, sensors and munitions, joint doctrine and training, and mobility assets. Fulfilling both agendas does not come naturally. The demands of operational readiness can discourage experimentation with new weapons, doctrines, and structures. Many of these transformational purposes can be accomplished before assigned units combine to form the NRF and during the 6-month period when they are undergoing training for duty. Even so, a careful balancing act will be needed to ensure that neither operational readiness nor transformation is neglected.

Equally important, the NRF cannot be "a force for all seasons." While it was originally intended to be a high-tech strike force for use in combat, the natural tendency (already evident in official NATO documents) is to use it for other purposes, including peacekeeping, hostage rescue, noncombatant evacuation, embargo operations, security for events such as the Olympics, counterterrorist operations, and stabilization and reconstruction missions. Here, too, a balancing act will be necessary. If the NRF tries to be capable of performing all of these missions, it is likely to be proficient at none of them, including crisis response and high-tech strike missions. If NATO needs additional quick-response forces for a wider spectrum of missions, it should create them (for example, the NSOF) and allow the NRF to focus on its main purpose.

Finally, the NRF was intended to be mainly a European force, but it cannot be exclusively European. Initially, the United States played a low-profile role because it wanted the Europeans to take the lead in creating the NRF. Now that this goal has been accomplished, the United States must make regular contributions to NRF rotating combat forces. U.S. contributions are expected to increase during prototypes NRF 5 and 6, and thereafter. The United States must also provide help in such areas as advanced command, control, comunications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C^4ISR) networks, airlift, and logistic support until the Europeans become self-sufficient in these areas. Initially, some Europeans criticized the United States for not participating enough in the NRF, but this problem appears headed toward solution.

NATO High Readiness Forces

Analyses of defense priorities for new-era missions often gloss over NATO main combat formations, the HRF for major deployment for defense under Article V or crisis response operations. The reason normally is a set of erroneous assumptions: that HRF forces for major combat operations are irrelevant for expeditionary missions outside Europe, or already are adequate for the task, or are too hard and expensive to reform. Ignoring these forces would be shortsighted because they may well be called upon for expeditionary missions that cannot be handled by the NRF. NATO concepts call for a brigade-size NRF deployment to be reinforced by a corps-size CJTF when operations expand in terms of opposition or geographic scope. The HRF is also intended to provide for rotational depth for long-term operations. Indeed, they were used in the Kosovo war, and today are being used in the Balkans and

Afghanistan for peace enforcement. At present, much of the HRF is not adequately capable of projecting power swiftly and performing major combat operation missions in distant areas. Reforming these forces is not beyond reach. The NATO Defense Capability Initiative did not achieve this worthy goal because it was scattered across too many forces and measures, and the Prague Capabilities Commitment evidently is encountering similar troubles. But NATO can succeed if it focuses on a small set of HRF units that are earmarked for overseas deployment, and improves them with high-leverage, affordable programs. Once again, the United States should provide about one-third of the troops for HRF for major combat operations outside Europe.

NATO today suffers from no lack of European HRF for major combat operation missions. HRF have a readiness status that calls upon them to be available within 90 days of call-up. Other NATO forces are Forces of Lower Readiness, available within 90 to 180 days, and Long-Term Buildup Forces, available after 365 days. Current HRF troops can be divided into two categories: many are "in-place forces" for local use, but some are "deployable forces" that ostensibly can be used for operations beyond their immediate locales. (See table 1.) The ground forces and command structures that fall into the latter category are products of history and strategic logic. In the early 1990s, NATO created a single corps headquarters for ground missions, the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, which was designed to command three to four divisions. Later, it designated five additional corps headquarters as operationally ready commands to provide for concurrent contingencies and rotational duties: the German-Dutch Corps, the Eurocorps, and one corps each from Italy, Turkey, and Spain. Today, if one or more of these corps headquarters is called upon to deploy outside Europe for major combat operations as the land component of a NATO CJTF, in theory they could draw upon an estimated pool of 12 active divisions (or the equivalent in brigades) provided by multiple countries. Joining these ground forces are fighter wings that provide about 500 to 600 combat aircraft, and about 100 combat ships in NATO Task Groups. By any measure, this is a sizable pool of joint forces that totals 400,000 to 500,000 military personnel.[8] The problem is that while most of these ground forces can operate on the European continent, they lack the logistic support and lift needed to deploy outside Europe quickly. As a practical matter, the Europeans today could rapidly deploy only one or two of these divisions to long distances.

Table 1. European Divisions Available to NATO*

Total Divisions	57
HRF Divisions	25
"Deployable" HRF Divisions	12**

* Unofficial estimates by authors drawing on open sources, including *The Military Balance 2003–2004* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003).
**Total is 36 brigades, or 12 division-equivalents.

How many of these forces does NATO really need to be well prepared for expeditionary missions outside Europe? NATO military commanders contend that they must be capable of responding to multiple concurrent contingencies (for example, two major combat operation missions and a peacekeeping mission). While this requires three NATO CJTF headquarters, it no longer requires the massive combat forces of the past. In current less-demanding contingencies and information networking for joint operations, relatively small forces can perform most missions. NATO will be adequately prepared if, in addition to units assigned to the NRF, it has a rapidly deployable European force of 5 to 6 divisions (15–18 brigades), 275 to 325 combat aircraft, and 50 to 60 naval combatants. These European forces will join with still-substantial U.S. military commitments of one to two divisions, plus air and naval assets (discussed below), to create a powerful NATO capacity for expeditionary warfare. Such a posture might not meet all plausible requirements in the eyes of NATO military commanders, but it would roughly triple European capacity for power projection, and it would put Europe into the ballpark of being able to work closely with the United States in expeditionary missions.

much of the HRF is not adequately capable of projecting power swiftly

NATO can easily field this number of European forces by drawing upon one-half of its existing pool of "deployable" HRF units. Most of the forces in this pool, however, are not truly deployable outside Europe. Their problems are threefold: they cannot travel swiftly to long distances, sustain themselves for long periods, or achieve adequate interoperability with U.S. forces. While these problems especially apply to ground forces, they also are serious impediments to many air and naval forces. Fixing these problems should be a main NATO agenda. The task does not promise to be prohibitively expensive—that is, *if* NATO focuses only on this limited set of forces, *rather* than squandering resources on other forces and priorities. These HRF units are already fully manned and regularly train and exercise at proper levels for proficiency in combat. As a general rule, they also are well armed, with modern weapons systems and a growing number of smart munitions and sensors. Some new acquisition programs will be needed, but not enough to bankrupt European defense budgets, if savings are found elsewhere or parliaments begin funding annual real increases in spending. Some NATO members will be better able to contribute because their forces are generally well armed and modern, but other countries can participate by contributing combat units or support assets in niche areas.

A NATO improvement program should begin with information networks, which are vital to carrying out joint operations that blend ground, naval, and air forces. Fortunately, the Europeans are already well along in this enterprise as a result of recent decisions to acquire a set of tactical and strategic systems for intelligence, wide-bandwidth communications, and management of operations. The Europeans are not aspiring to the U.S. standard of network-centric warfare, but they are aiming for "network-enabled warfare" or a similar concept, with networks that are fairly sophisticated and, above all, that can plug into U.S. networks to permit combined U.S.-European operations. The Europeans likely will achieve this standard in a few years, but NATO will need to ensure that new national networks can be integrated to form multinational networks and that European and U.S. networks are fully interoperable.

In addition, a NATO improvement program should focus on creating new structures for deployable High Readiness Forces. Modern ground operations are transitioning from their earlier emphasis on divisions to a growing emphasis on brigades. In the U.S. Army, for example, many combat and support assets formerly assigned to the division commander are being dispersed to his three brigades. The goal is to create brigade combat teams with the full set of assets needed to operate independently on the battlefield, miles from each other, and without looking to higher echelons for help. Because such brigades will be highly modular and adaptable, different combinations of light, medium, and heavy units can be quickly packaged to handle a spectrum of situations. Air forces are undergoing similar changes. In the U.S. Air Force, the emphasis is on the packaging of fighter aircraft, bombers, airborne warning and control systems, joint surveillance target attack radar systems, electronic warfare aircraft, and other support aircraft to create self-contained units for expeditionary warfare. The same practice of force packaging applies to naval warfare, where the U.S. Navy has blended carriers, amphibious assault ships, surface combatants, submarines, and support ships to create formations for expeditionary operations.

a NATO improvement program should begin with information networks

NATO and European militaries should carefully study these changes being pursued by the U.S. military, not because they are "made in America," but because they make operational sense on the modern battlefield. Indeed, some European militaries are already pursuing them by creating independent brigades. European HRF need not mimic U.S. forces in the particulars. If they adopt similar concepts, they will go a long way toward making the transition from old-style continental operations, in which force components fought separately, to new-style expeditionary missions, in which all components are not only well structured but can also fight jointly.

If new European force structures are to be capable of fighting alongside U.S. forces, they must be equipped with the array of assets needed for major combat operations in the information age, which are complex and fast-paced. Rather than bludgeon the enemy through battlefield-wide attrition, they endeavor to fracture enemy cohesion through rapid maneuver and precise delivery of firepower. They require forces to operate simultaneously rather than sequentially, and to disperse widely rather than mass at central locations. European forces possess some of the assets needed for such operations, but not yet all of them. Acquiring the rest must be a goal of procurement plans that focus, first and foremost, on equipping the limited set of forces being prepared for expeditionary warfare. Equally important, the Europeans will need to strengthen all three components of ground, naval, and air forces, rather than emphasizing one to the exclusion of the others. This especially holds true for integrating ground and air forces so that they can work closely together; thus far, Europeans have devoted less effort than Americans to employing air forces to contribute to ground battles. Many European countries do not have large navies, but such countries as Britain, France, Germany, and Italy have modern navies that are blue-water capable and can be used for joint expeditionary missions.

An emphasis on all three components of ground, naval, and air forces is necessary because they play important roles in expeditionary warfare, interact considerably in joint operations, and depend on each other. In order to conduct expeditionary warfare and joint operations, modular and adaptable European ground forces should field a mixture of heavy, medium, and light units that are equipped with a combination of weapon systems for direct fires, indirect fires, and standoff fires at long distances. Emphasis is shifting from heavy armor to lightweight armor, but all vehicles must have the firepower, survivability, and tactical mobility to defeat well-armed opponents. Because of growing ground-air interactions, European air forces must be capable of not only defending their airspace but also contributing to land battles by fielding assets for all-weather/day-night operations, precision strikes, and close air support. Modern aircraft are necessary, but so are sensors, munitions, and support assets. European naval forces must be capable of both defending the seas and carrying out littoral operations and launching cruise missiles as part of the joint campaign in support of ground and air forces. European warships typically are smaller and less well armed than U.S. counterparts, but they often possess important capabilities in such areas as countermine warfare and littoral patrolling. Britain's plan to acquire larger aircraft carriers is an example of efforts that can help transform European navies for expeditionary warfare.

For all three components, NATO needs to determine the European forces and capabilities that will be needed for new-era missions. It should next assess existing European assets and make judgments about where additional capabilities are needed to close existing gaps, and then communicate appropriate force goals and priorities to European members for the crafting of appropriate programs and budgets under NATO guidance. Keeping a tight focus on critical High Readiness Forces, capability requirements, and program priorities will be essential. What must be avoided is the past tendency to scatter improvement efforts across the entire European force posture, including stationary units that are not intended for deployment missions. Indeed, the Europeans could save money for investments in deployable HRF by disbanding sizable numbers of other forces or moving them into reserve status. At a minimum, stationary forces should not be targets for expensive modernization any time soon.

Finally, a NATO improvement program must remedy shortfalls in mobility assets and logistic support. NATO has been working on these two problems for several years, but much remains to be done. For example, the recent agreement to secure commitment of 10 RO/RO ships from various nations is helpful, but movement of a single division could require 20 cargo ships. An inexpensive solution is access to more cargo ships and wide-bodied air transports from Ukraine or the commercial sector. Likewise, NATO combat forces need multinational logistic support that is tailored to the unique demands of expeditionary warfare. Logistic support is critical for expeditionary operations because combat forces must be self-sustainable: they cannot draw upon their European economies or local economies in underdeveloped countries. The solution is not to create ponderous support structures composed of many truck transport, supply, and maintenance units coupled with huge stocks of war reserves. Instead, the solution is to take advantage of such new-era concepts as *just-in-time* and *sense-and-respond* logistics to create lean support structures that can deploy quickly and get the job done proficiently. The practice of fielding multinational logistic structures, rather than purely national structures, has many attractions. It will enable countries to specialize in niche areas of comparative advantage and permit efficient use of resources, thereby reducing the size and weight of logistic support assets and increasing their speed of deployment. Multinational logistic systems can reduce by one-half the manpower and stocks that otherwise would have to be deployed for logistic support.

expeditionary operations often do not end once major combat is concluded

In summary, creating better HRF units for expeditionary missions and major combat operations is not only important, but also a realistic proposition as long as NATO focuses on a small set of forces—an approach that has worked for the NRF and can work for the HRF. This agenda cannot be accomplished overnight. But over the course of a few years, a great deal can be done to transform Europe into a serious participant in power projection and major expeditionary warfare by 2010. The tasks of acquiring modern information networks, creating new force structures, fielding a diverse array of assets, securing sealift and airlift support from the commercial sector, and creating streamlined logistic support may be complex, but they do not require huge spending of scarce investment funds. While some new acquisition programs will be needed, this agenda mainly requires organized effort, multilateral cooperation, and a capacity to innovate. Thus far, the Europeans have not shown the necessary willpower to overcome barriers, but in recent years, they have been making encouraging progress. If they are willing to pursue the remaining measures, NATO can provide a forum for them to succeed in a relatively short period.

NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force

The experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq make clear that expeditionary operations often do not end once major combat is concluded. When long occupation or presence follows, the task becomes one of stabilization and reconstruction, which helps guide the transition from battlefield victory to enduring peace. *Stabilization* refers to the process of ending the resistance of enemy forces, insurgents, terrorists, rebellious political activists, and common criminals. *Reconstruction* refers to the process of restoring a functioning government, society, and economy. The stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) process is intended to lay a solid foundation for a longer-term effort aimed at building democratic governments, civil societies, and functioning market economies. S&R missions often are anything but easy; they can involve prolonged low-intensity fighting against insurgents even as efforts are under way to rebuild destroyed infrastructure and to create new governmental institutions. Nor is success guaranteed: as of this writing, Afghanistan seems headed toward a favorable outcome, but the fate of Iraq is hanging in the balance. The enduring lesson is that much depends upon the effectiveness of the S&R operation, including its strategy and implementation.[9]

In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States and its European allies tried to perform S&R missions by *re-roling* their military forces—that is, they endeavored to switch their forces from combat operations to S&R tasks. This transition has proven to be difficult because combat forces lack a full measure of the unique assets needed for reconstruction—military police, civil-military affairs, civil administrators, medical aid, civil engineers, construction teams, psychological operations, and specialists capable of speedily processing contracts with commercial businesses. For example, a combat engineer battalion will possess the assets needed to create defensive positions, keep roads open, and clear battlefields of mines. But it may lack the S&R assets needed to repair damaged office buildings, reconnect electrical power grids, and restore sewage and water systems. The same applies to medical care. While military units will have the capacity to care for troops wounded in battle, they may lack a comparable ability to contain infectious diseases among large populations, to distribute drugs and other supplies across a large countryside, and to run civilian hospitals in damaged urban areas. For these reasons, even combat service support units cannot always be re-roled to perform S&R missions.

Because re-roling has proven to be a shaky practice for reconstruction missions, a major implication is that the U.S. military should organize special assets for quickly performing S&R missions even as major combat is giving way to fighting against insurgents. Equally important, NATO and the European militaries should be prepared for S&R missions too. Senior NATO military authorities are aware of this need, and some European countries, such as Italy and Germany, are beginning to reshape their forces for S&R missions. But not enough countries are doing so, and even if robust national efforts were under way, they would need to be brought together into multilateral formations to forge their capabilities into a cohesive whole. While many details must be studied carefully, NATO should perform this integrating function.

In some quarters on both sides of the Atlantic, concern exists that the act of creating S&R capabilities will draw the Europeans away from paying proper attention to the NRF and HRF for major combat operations. A close look suggests that this fear is unfounded. As shown in table 2, the entire *combination* of NSOF, NRF, HRF, and S&R assets would consume about 242,000 to 272,000 military personnel. This is only about 10 percent of Europe's total of 2.4 million active military personnel, and about 16 to 18 percent of Europe's active ground manpower, which totals 1.5 million troops. The Europeans can readily meet this requirement without drawing manpower from other missions, including continental defense. Britain and France aside, several European countries could reduce their military manpower by sizable amounts and still easily meet these requirements. Creating S&R forces does not require large diversions of funds for equipment acquisition and modernization. The main task is one of reorganizing manpower, units, and forces that already exist in European combat support and combat service support structures.

NATO should create a special S&R command staff for establishing coordinated force goals for member countries and organizing S&R forces into multinational formations capable of prompt deployment into occupied countries. A command staff, for example, could quickly assemble forces and assets for contingencies such as Afghanistan, where laborious efforts were needed to bring together the few helicopters and infantry units needed to create Provincial Reconstruction Teams. How many European-manned S&R forces are needed? An initial estimate is that two division-size formations, composed of independent S&R brigades plus light infantry units, would be adequate. Such a posture would provide the necessary mix of S&R assets, as well as the flexibility and modularity to respond to a range of contingencies. For example, this posture would enable NATO to deploy fully six S&R brigades to a single large contingency, or to sustain indefinitely two brigades in a single smaller operation. If the United States also creates similar formations, between them enough S&R assets should be available for most situations.

NATO should create a special S & R command staff

Some European countries understandably will be reluctant to create special S&R units. Examples are Britain and France, whose scarce military manpower is needed to populate combat forces that will be critical to NATO warfighting strategy in expeditionary missions. But other countries that provide fewer combat units may find opportunities in contributing S&R assets to NATO. Italy and Germany are examples, as are Poland and other new members from Central Europe. Southern region countries such as Spain, Greece, and Turkey also have the manpower to permit specialization in S&R functions. In addition, the Europeans need to consider how civilian assets can be mobilized for reconstruction missions that will not be performed by military forces. If Europe rises to the challenge, it should have little difficulty creating the necessary assets in a few years.

Table 2. Proposed European Ground Forces for Expeditionary Missions*

	Brigades	Ground Manpower
NSOF	1	2,000
NRF	3	30,000
HRF for MCO	15–18	150,000–180,000
S&R	6	60,000
Total	**25–28**	**242,000–272,000**

* Proposed by authors.

NATO Defense and Security Sector Development

Once the S&R mission is ongoing or has been effectively performed, there remains an additional requirement that is as crucial to long-term security: political and economic transformation to a viable, democratic, stable nation with accountable and competent governance. This requirement, which can take years or even decades, must include the creation of clean, lean, and able defense and security forces and institutions. *Clean* means forces and institutions that respond to governmental direction, respect democratic values, enforce the law fairly, and are free from internal corruption. *Lean* refers to the need for these forces and institutions to operate efficiently, free from bloating that can consume too many resources and strangle economic recovery. *Able* refers to their ability to perform their jobs of military security and law enforcement.[10]

The need for NATO to help perform defense and security sector development is not confined to postwar situations. Indeed, it commonly arises in peacetime, when NATO endeavors to build partnership relations with countries that are trying to leave the past behind. As NATO considers its objectives and policies toward other regions, it may want to increase its involvement in this enterprise, and the opportunities may grow as well. After all, much of the world has yet to go through the democratic transformation that has occurred in Eastern Europe over the past two decades. There is now overwhelming evidence—from places as diverse as the former Soviet Union, sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, and Southeast Asia—that failure to overhaul defense and security establishments can retard, if not derail, broader political-economic transformation to democracy and market economies.

NDSSD is a complex enterprise that requires an adroit blending of carrots and sticks. Fortunately, NATO and some of its individual members have considerable experience in this arena. The bulk of this experience comes from the PFP effort to help the former communist nations of Eastern Europe and former republics of the Soviet Union develop capable, professional, accountable, and affordable defense establishments and military forces. Currently, NATO includes countries with experience in both giving and receiving this type of PFP support. In addition, the United Kingdom, relying on interministerial collaboration under its "global fund" program, has accumulated valuable experience in providing comprehensive security sector reform in a number of developing countries, such as Uganda, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka. The same can be said for France, which has longstanding ties to numerous countries in North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. The United States, of course, has been in this business on a global basis for many years and brings the benefits of its successful experiences in Asia, where it has helped guide several militaries into the modern era.

One example of how an NDSSD capability might be used is in conjunction with the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), an offer to establish military partnership relations with interested countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Persian Gulf. The ICI is meant to be different from the NATO Partnership for Peace, which has been operating successfully in Eastern Europe and adjoining regions for nearly a decade. For many participants, PFP became a process of preparing for entrance into NATO: all 10 new members participated in ways aimed at enhancing their ability to meet requirements for admission. By contrast, the ICI is not aimed at preparing Middle Eastern countries for admission to NATO. Instead, it is aimed at helping their military establishments carry out modernizing reforms and acquire legitimate capabilities in areas of mutual interest. For example, the ICI might help these establishments learn techniques for planning and budgeting, training and exercising, protecting borders, safeguarding against terrorism, carrying out hostage rescue, and performing disaster relief. Although the ICI is new and untested, it can provide a framework for interested countries to work closely with NATO members under Alliance auspices.

NATO should concentrate on what it knows best, defense and military transformation, and leave reform of police to other agencies

Even in peacetime settings, the difficulty of this enterprise should not be underestimated. In many countries, defense and security institutions may be change-resistant—indeed, more resistant than other sectors of their governments and societies. But unless military and other security institutions can be fundamentally transformed, efforts to train and educate individuals or small groups may be inadequate to prevent old cultures and practices from surviving. Large carrots and sticks may be needed to induce institutional reform, including leadership changes.

Whether as part of a wider political transformation or simply to develop more competent military and security institutions, NATO members must be capable of offering assistance in this arena. NATO can determine how and where to offer such efforts only on a case-by-case basis. To ensure that NATO performs effectively when called upon, it needs enduring capacity and options. NATO should concentrate on what it knows best, defense and military transformation, and leave reform of police and other security institutions to other agencies. NATO likely will need to expand upon its PFP staffs by creating assets to perform this function in regions outside Europe. It should begin by taking an inventory of its members to determine their relevant experiences, activities, and capabilities. (Some of the best talent and experience may well come from new members, having just gone through similar defense and security transformations themselves.) NATO then should make decisions about how capabilities should be organized collectively, how national capabilities can contribute, where NATO can make valuable contributions, and how improvements can be made.

Matching the NATO Defense Framework with U.S. and EU Efforts

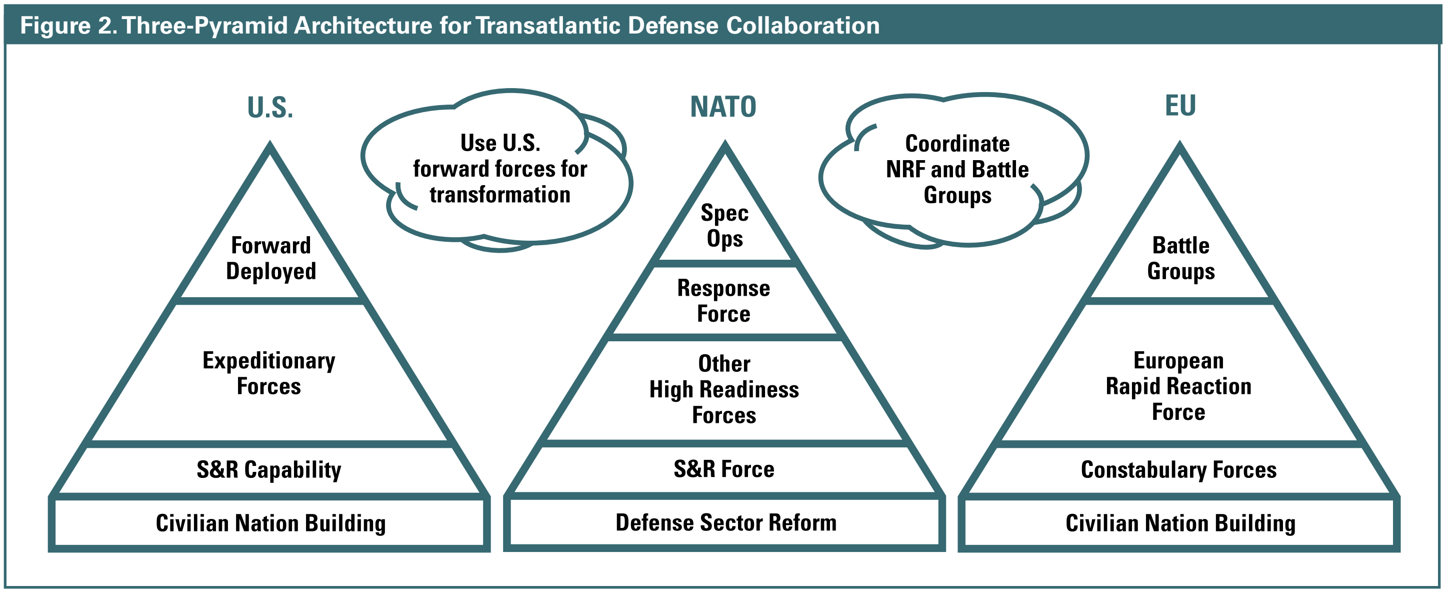
As the United States and Europe seek to revitalize their partnership through defense collaboration, they should not focus on NATO military preparedness in isolation from the larger setting. They also will need to take stock of two other key issues: how the future U.S. military commitment to NATO and Europe can take shape in ways that contribute to NATO preparedness, and how emerging EU defense efforts can be channeled toward enhancing NATO military strength and cohesion. The goal should be to forge collaborative relations among NATO, the U.S. military, and the European Union so that all three not only perform healthy roles individually but also create a unified whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Because achieving this goal will not be easy, it will require sound planning and hard work by all participants.

The three-pyramid architecture illustrated in figure 2 provides a conceptual framework for orchestrating this complex enterprise. If the defense preparedness efforts in the NATO pyramid, discussed above, and the U.S. and EU pyramids focus on creating similar types of forces, capabilities, and improvement priorities, the outcome can be a triangular relationship that works to the advantage of all three participants.

Future U.S. Military Presence in Europe

The United States maintains military forces in Europe both for national purposes and to meet NATO commitments and to help influence how NATO military forces undergo transformation. Careful attention must be paid to the future U.S. military commitment—not only U.S. forces in Europe but also NATO-committed forces stationed in the United States—because of the changes that will be taking place during the coming years. Since the early 1990s, the United States has deployed about 109,000 troops in Europe in multiple headquarters staffs, 4 heavy Army brigades and an airborne contingent in Italy, and over 2 U.S. Air Force fighter wings and support aircraft at various bases, plus Navy bases, mostly in the Mediterranean, to support regular deployment of a carrier bat-

Figure 2. Three-Pyramid Architecture for Transatlantic Defense Collaboration



tlegroup and an amphibious ready group. The purpose of this large, multifaceted military presence has been threefold: to help defend an expanded NATO in a period of uncertain change; to provide U.S. force contributions to NATO operations on Europe's periphery (for example, in the Kosovo war of 1999); and to provide forward-deployed forces for purely U.S. military missions, or for coalition missions outside NATO, in regions adjoining Europe, including part of the Middle East.

U.S. forces in Europe should be designed to create a strike force similar to the NRF

While this U.S. presence has served remarkably well over the past decade, it is about to undergo important changes. In fall 2004, the Department of Defense (DOD) announced the results of a review aimed at better aligning overseas deployments with future missions and priorities. Total U.S. military manpower in Europe will decline to 50,000 to 65,000 troops, although regular training and exercises by forces in the continental United States (CONUS) occasionally will raise the total temporarily. Headquarters staffs will be trimmed and consolidated. The four Army heavy brigades will be replaced by a single Army Stryker Brigade, plus an airborne contingent in Italy. The Air Force presence will also be trimmed, but details are unclear, and some units may periodically deploy to Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and other new NATO members. Naval bases in the Mediterranean may also be consolidated, but the Navy will continue to maintain regular peacetime deployments of warships there.

The new presence will be smaller and distributed differently. While the U.S. military will retain main operating bases at traditional locations in Europe, it will develop new forward operating locations and cooperative security locations in Eastern Europe and the Balkans in order to enhance the capacity of the American military to train and exercise with new NATO members and to provide additional jump-off sites for power projection operations outside Europe. Although the United States will not permanently station large forces in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, small units might reside there, and increased training and exercises in Poland and other countries will result in temporary surges. As a result, the U.S. military center of gravity will shift from its Cold War locations in Western Europe toward the east and southeast, reflecting growing U.S. relations with multiple countries there.

Will this plan (actually, still a concept) properly support a parallel effort, partly led by the U.S. Government, to improve NATO and European military forces and capabilities for new-era expeditionary missions? If it does not, modification is likely as it undergoes further study and review.

The new U.S. military presence in Europe should be anchored in a coherent strategic concept that squares with ongoing NATO preparedness efforts and fosters close U.S.-European military ties. Accordingly, future U.S. forces in Europe should be designed to create a strike force similar to the NRF, when they are not part of the NRF. That is, they should contribute to the NRF in normal rotations, but they also should field a separate, joint, brigade-size strike force so that NATO would have two quick response strike forces—the NRF (in which U.S. forces participate some of the time) and a separate similar U.S. strike force assigned for NATO missions—that would double its options and flexibility in a crisis. In peacetime, these two forces could train and exercise together, thereby benefiting the transformation of both. Whether the DOD plan provides the ingredients for such a strike force can be determined only when details become available. The question arises whether a single Army Stryker Brigade in Germany, plus airborne troops in Italy, is the best choice. Perhaps a better plan would be two composite brigade combat teams: a heavier brigade in Germany and a lighter brigade in Italy. Both brigades would be equipped with a mixture of assets for close combat, indirect fires, and long-range standoff fires. Such a revised U.S. ground presence might be better able to work closely with the NRF.

As the pyramid architecture of figure 2 suggests, the future U.S. commitment to NATO should not be viewed solely through the lens of peacetime presence. Additional commitments of CONUS-based forces should also be tailored to help support NATO defense preparedness efforts and priorities. CONUS-based forces will continue to be assigned to NATO war plans and provide reinforcements that can take part in NATO expeditionary operations. A regular program that deploys forces to Europe for training and exercises every year, as often occurred during the Cold War, can promote interoperability with European forces. Likewise, European forces could come to the United States more often for training and exercises, not only with NATO-assigned U.S. forces, but also with other forces. In the coming years, European forces may work closely with U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) forces that perform missions in the Persian Gulf and surrounding regions. A closer European/NATO relationship with CENTCOM has begun to emerge recently and should grow in the coming years.

the future U.S. commitment to NATO should not be viewed solely through the lens of peacetime presence

A formal U.S. commitment to NATO of two to three Army divisions (or Marine units), plus four to five fighter wings, and one to two carrier strike groups and amphibious strike groups would combine with strengthened European forces to give NATO a solid portfolio of diverse capabilities for expeditionary warfare, crisis response, and other operations. In addition, the U.S. military in CONUS should develop S&R forces that match those fielded by Europe to meet U.S. national needs while also giving NATO a sufficient portfolio of flexible assets for this important mission. Beyond this, the United States should develop civilian S&R assets and improved counterterrorism capabilities. For example, the proposed Lugar-Biden bill aspires to create a permanent S&R agency within the State Department.

Finally, the U.S. counterpart of the NATO Defense and Security Sector Development consists of a set of capacities and activities associated with political-economic-institutional development. These functions are performed by the State Department, including the Agency for International Development, and the DOD (for example, the Marshall Center in Germany and other international schools and institutions). In addition to building some multilateral capacity in this domain, NATO could provide tighter linkage between U.S. and European efforts.

Such a set of capabilities would enable the United States to meet its future commitments to NATO despite its smaller peacetime presence in Europe. It also would place the U.S. military in a strong position to help encourage European military transformation so that U.S. and European forces can work together to carry out future expeditionary missions with both sides making substantial contributions. A key point is that while Europeans must do their part in bolstering NATO for expeditionary missions, the United States must do its part as well, rather than focusing so exclusively on its own purposes and priorities that it loses sight of its still-important role as a leader of NATO.

EU Forces and Capabilities

The EU plans to create military forces and capabilities should not be seen in isolation but judged in terms of the implications for NATO defense preparedness and the health of the Alliance. During the 1990s, the United States and many NATO officials mainly focused on ensuring that EU military efforts not impede, dilute, duplicate, or divert attention from NATO preparedness. This philosophy of damage avoidance offered no vision of how EU–NATO relations were to become collaborative. A positive step forward came when the "Berlin Plus" accord, initially forged in 1996, was finalized in 2002. Berlin Plus is a NATO–EU agreement that allows the European Union to draw upon NATO assets and capabilities, under the command of the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (a European officer), for EU-led crisis operations that NATO declines to undertake. EU forces, of course, can also be deployed without drawing upon NATO assets, by employing the "lead nation" concept that has already been used for some operations.

The initial EU foray into force development came in 1999, when its Helsinki Headline Goal envisioned creation of a European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) for the so-called Petersberg Tasks. The ERRF, declared operational in June 2003, is a corps-size ground force with supporting air and naval units that is to be available within 60 days and could sustain operations for a full year. In 2001, the EU Council approved a European Capability Action Plan (ECAP) that called upon members to improve their military capabilities for crisis response by remedying shortfalls in such areas as airlift, logistics, precision strike, rescue helicopters, and C^4ISR. In 2004, the EU Council approved a new 2010 Headline Goal that called for efforts to acquire still-missing capabilities in many areas originally earmarked by ECAP. In addition, the EU Council also called for creation of a European Defense Agency to harmonize armaments acquisition, a European Airlift Command, an on-call military operations center for crisis management, and a number of small, deployable "Battle Groups" to be fielded by 2007. In addition, it called for an aircraft carrier to be made available to the ERRF by 2008, improved communications systems, and benchmarks for measuring progress toward the 2010 Headline Goal.

Although these declarations suggest the European Union is building a fully integrated military command and force posture, most of them have not yet been translated into reality. However, the EU is already engaging in overseas security operations: Operation *Concordia* in Macedonia in 2003, Operation *Artemis* in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003, Operation *Althea* in Bosnia-Herzegovina to replace NATO forces in 2004, and the Rule of Law Mission to Georgia in 2004. While the EU has a considerable distance to travel before it reaches its ambitious goals, it can be expected to make progress slowly in the coming years. The central issue is determining the type of military forces and capabilities that it should acquire and how they should relate to NATO.

To avoid a potential problem of force availability during crises, European forces assigned to an upcoming NRF rotation and other top-priority missions should not simultaneously be assigned to EU units. If deconfliction measures are instituted, NATO preparedness and EU preparedness need not be at odds. Indeed, the expeditionary force enhancement measures contemplated here will expand the spectrum of usable European military capabilities greatly, thereby providing a larger pool of assets for both NATO and the EU to draw upon. Likewise, savings realized by retiring unnecessary forces, and channeling of these savings into investments in new-era forces, will reduce the risk that NATO and the EU will compete for scarce funds.

In an effort to help determine whether and how the EU can potentially contribute to NATO preparedness, our pyramid starts at the top with the new Battle Groups. Each of these formations is to be battalion-size, with about 1,500 combat and support troops. The EU plan calls for 13 of them to be fielded, some as national units and others as multinational units. These Battle Groups are intended to be light infantry and easily deployable, ready to move within 5 to 10 days. The EU aspires to be able to deploy two Battle Groups at a time, perhaps under a United Nations mandate. Their mission is to perform limited crisis interventions in such places as sub-Saharan Africa to restore order to chaotic situations, prevent genocide, and protect European citizens and economic interests. Initial operational capability for some units is to be achieved in 2005, and full operational capability in 2007, with the entire force fielded by 2010 or thereafter. In their emphasis on swift reaction with small forces, these Battle Groups bear a resemblance to the NATO Response Force, but as yet, they are not being configured with the sophisticated networks, joint forces, and advanced weaponry to match the NRF. Even so, they could help contribute to NATO forces and capabilities for operations demanding a lesser response than the NRF. Regardless of whether they are made available to NATO, they will provide a useful addition to Europe's warehouse of new-era capabilities.

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Below the Battle Groups on the EU pyramid is the ERRF, which is intended to be a joint force, with a ground corps of 60,000 troops, plus air and naval assets that raise the total to 100,000. In a crisis, this force is to be assembled by drawing upon a large pool of forces made available by EU members; none of these forces are placed under EU command in peacetime. As originally conceived, the ERRF was intended to perform Petersberg Tasks of humanitarian assistance, rescue, peacekeeping, crisis management, and peacemaking. These tasks fall short of major combat operations in wartime. But ERRF forces configured for Petersberg Tasks could perform NATO missions that fall within the realm of their core competencies. This is an area where NATO has not specialized, and the Europeans have an opportunity to make useful contributions. The European focus appears to have shifted from the ERRF to the smaller Battle Groups, but the ERRF could again become the focus once Battle Groups are assembled. If the ERRF broadens beyond Petersberg Tasks to acquire greater combat capabilities, its portfolio of potential missions will widen.

At present, the EU is not focused on creating military forces and capabilities for S&R missions. But several EU members, such as France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, have good national police forces that can be used for constabulary missions. These five countries have developed a training program in Italy for constabulary forces that might be used in future EU or NATO stabilization and reconstruction missions. There are multiple other S&R endeavors where the EU would seem to possess the potential to make major contributions. Beyond this, the EU could harness its civilian agencies and those of its members to perform important security functions that lie outside the realm of defense preparedness. For example, it could create civilian assets for S&R missions, defense and security sector development, counterterrorism, and counterorganized crime—all areas in which transatlantic collaboration will be important in the years ahead and in which the United States needs to do more.

Whether in S&R or in defense and security sector development, the European Union can tap into and shape immense European talent and capacity. In turn, EU–NATO links could ensure that EU contributions in this area are used in synergy with other NATO (including American) contributions. Thus, when it comes to helping in transforming and rebuilding countries that need and want Western help—creating security conditions that lower the likelihood of conflict and terrorism—the EU is every bit as important as the United States in Alliance efforts.

This brief survey thus suggests that current EU endeavors make military sense and that there are additional areas of capability that the European Union might be encouraged to pursue and even lead. Although its current military endeavors may be fledgling, the EU seems destined to grow in importance as Europeans continue their drive to unity and integration. Much will depend on how the European Union evolves, and whether it ultimately becomes a loose body of sovereign nations, a confederation, or a federation. In the interim, the EU can be a source of military integration that helps lessen Europe's principal weakness: the inability of its countries to cooperate closely to create multinational forces and to make efficient use of scarce defense funds. If the European Union acquires a capacity to perform some military operations independently of NATO, this may take pressure off the United States and NATO to meet all plausible requirements in the coming years. If NATO and the EU can arrange a sensible division of labor that advances the interests of the United States and Europe, this step could be pursued. Beyond this, the European Union might be able to contribute directly to NATO military preparedness. There is no reason why future EU forces cannot be assigned important NATO missions, if they are properly prepared to do so. The Eurocorps has followed this path. It began as a separate endeavor but in recent years has been made available to NATO for certain missions. In theory, EU forces could follow the same path.

Conclusion

Like others, we have long argued for a "more equal, more global" U.S.–EU partnership, of which NATO would be the military arm. In such a true, new partnership, the Atlantic democracies would forge a strategy to induce orderly change in troubled regions and to use Atlantic power judiciously but, when necessary, decisively. The dangers of the post-9/11 world and intensifying strategic concern about the Middle East strengthen the case for such a partnership, such an Alliance, and such a strategy. However, despite a marked improvement in U.S.-European relations, there remain major impediments to realizing this vision. Moreover, neither the United States nor Europe has shown a willingness to do what is necessary to create such a partnership—the latter being reluctant to take on global burdens and risks, and the former being unsure of the value of limiting its freedom of action.

This does not mean that the Allies will fail to agree more often than not on when and how to use the array of capabilities at their disposal. For all the discord of late, publics and leaders on both sides of the Atlantic still applaud common action and success and are saddened by division and inaction. Therefore, it is imperative that NATO has a full range of options to act in union. Options require capabilities, not just thrown together in the event but "baked" together with common requirements, plans, programs, and training. To think that NATO can assemble whatever it needs when it needs it is to condemn the Alliance to ineffectiveness, in which case grand strategy will mean little.

NATO capabilities must be comprehensive, in the sense of leaving no major requirements unaddressed. Where there are gaps—as there are today in Special Operations Forces and Stabilization and Reconstruction Forces—they must be identifiable so that concrete initiatives can be taken to fill them. There must be accountability of members as well to do what their allies are expecting them to do. And they must be able to explain to their publics how their resources are being used to meet present dangers. For all these reasons, a clear, agreed, and comprehensive defense capabilities framework is needed, with or without a new strategic concept.

Notes

[1] In the mid-1960s, a group of NATO-appointed "wise men" drafted the Harmel Report to bridge transatlantic differences over policies toward deterrence and détente.

[2] The existing NATO strategic concept was issued at the Washington Summit of 1999. For an appraisal of the need for a new strategic concept and associated issues, see Michael Ruhle, *NATO at the Crossroads* (McLean, VA: The Potomac Foundation, March 2004).

[3] See relevant NATO press releases in these areas for this period at <www.nato.int/docu/update/index.htm>.

[4] See *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: The White House, September 2002). See also *European Union Security Strategy* (Brussels: European Union, 2003), which cites the following threats: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crime. It calls for a close working relationship between the European Union and the United States.

[5] For views of NATO Strategic Commanders, see Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General J.L. Jones, USMC, and Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation, Admiral E.P. Giambastiani, USN, *Strategic Vision: The Military Challenge* (ACO and ACT Headquarters, 2004). For analysis of NATO military transformation, see Arthur K. Cebrowski et al., *NATO Transformation: Problems and Prospects* (Washington, DC: The Atlantic Council, April 2004).

[6] The authors wish to thank RADM Raymond Smith, USN (Ret.), former deputy commander, U.S. Southern Command, for his contributions to this idea.

[7] For more detail, see Hans Binnendijk and Richard L. Kugler, "Transforming European Forces," *Survival* (Autumn 2002), 117–132; and Hans Binnendijk, "A European Spearhead Force Would Bridge the Gap," *International Herald Tribune*, February 16, 2002.

[8] For details on European and NATO military forces, see *The Military Balance 2004–2005* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2004).

[9] For more detail, see Hans Binnendijk and Richard L. Kugler, "Needed—A NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force," *Defense Horizons* 45 (Washington, DC: Center for Technology and National Security Policy, September 2004).

[10] For more detail on this mission, see David C. Gompert et al., *Clean, Lean, and Able: A Strategy for Defense Development*, RAND Occasional Paper OP–101–RC (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, January 2004).

[11] For an appraisal of European defense integration, see Julian Lindley-French and Franco Algieri, *A European Defence Strategy* (Guetersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Foundation, May 2004). For a critical view of future EU–NATO relations, see Jeffrey L. Cimbalo, "Saving NATO from Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 6 (November-December 2004), 111–120.

[12] These are primarily peacekeeping operation tasks.

[13] For analysis, see Karl-Heinz Kamp, "*Europäische 'Battle Groups'–ein neuer Schub für die ESVP?*" ("European Battle Groups: A New Stimulus for the European Security and Defense Policy"), *Analysen und Argumente aus der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 2004*, no. 15, December 15, 2004, at <http://www.kas.de/publikationen/2004/5827_dokument.html>.

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