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Nato Strategy and Force Postures for the Next 20 Years

by
Kenneth Hunt

Nato strategy and its force posture in the central sector in Europe have been under criticism for some time. The strategy is attacked for being too heavily reliant on the early use of nuclear weapons, or indeed for being nuclear at all; the force posture because it is not strong enough to give confidence that Nato could defend Europe should deterrence break down. Yet the Alliance has greater resources at its disposal than has the Warsaw Pact and enjoys an advantage in high technology.

So many think that something should be done, in fact should have been done some years back.¹ It seems likely there will be some movement before too long, since the pressures will grow. It is possible to do a lot in twenty years if the will is there and agreement can be reached on the steps that should be taken. Change will not come overnight, however, as the Alliance moves only slowly and modern weapon systems can have lead times of a decade or more. There will be choices to be faced between technological leaps forward with attendant risks and an incremental approach that is safer but may be slower. The needs of arms control will have an impact as well; for example, Europe is at present almost totally preoccupied with finding a satisfactory outcome to the intermediate nuclear force (INF) issue and will not give much attention to other security matters for the moment.

There is a need to find new strategic concepts or at least to modify the present ones. It should not, though, be necessary to renegotiate the allied strategy of flexible response, with all the pain that that would cause; such change as is required can be accommodated within it. But if this particular political hurdle can be avoided, others cannot; the Alliance will need to hammer out an agreed policy for living with the Soviet Union and a matching one for arms control, the other side of the coin of strategy. Unless this is done the Atlantic relationship, under some strain on these issues, will suffer and European security be harmed. Without agreed political goals, military strategy will be made in a vacuum.

America's own nuclear strategy towards the Soviet Union is the context for the strategy in Europe. On the whole, the broad lines of this are probably

established—balance and a secure second-strike capability—whatever the force levels may turn out to be in the next twenty years. But it does touch Nato in one very important way: the degree to which escalation to the strategic nuclear level appears as an element in the European calculus. In this paper it is assumed that it does play a part; the extent to which it is relied upon as a measure of allied deterrence will have an impact on the other steps, nuclear and conventional, taken at the theater level.

Strategic Problems

The Center. The relative weakness of the conventional defenses, to which many have pointed, means that Nato could be uncomfortably reliant on nuclear weapons to stem any major attack on the central sector, possibly very early.² The fear that this would lead to a general nuclear war has led to proposals for a strategy of No First Use (NFU),³ nuclear weapons then being held only to deter Soviet first use and for retaliation. The aim of a NFU declaration by Nato would be to prevent a war from becoming nuclear, though it is far from certain that it would achieve this since the course of a war once started is wholly unpredictable. The problem is that to declare NFU beforehand might be the wrong way to stop a war from starting in the first place, and the most important thing is to *avoid* war.

The European allies have not wanted a purely conventional defense, which is what NFU means. Not only could this lead to a protracted war on their soil but they also reason that the Soviet Union is much more powerfully deterred by the risk of the nuclear devastation of its own homeland than it is by the costs of fighting a conventional war in West Germany. Therefore, there is extreme reluctance to give up the deterrent value of the threat of possible first use.

Nevertheless, there is now fairly wide acceptance that it would be better if the conventional forces were stronger. This would then allow for a decision-making process in which a decision for using nuclear weapons would not have to be faced so soon, and then Nato would be able to implement what has been called No Early First Use (NEFU). Or even that the defenses should be sufficient so that Nato would be in a position to be able to implement NFU, *but not declare it*. While NEFU means a stronger initial defense, the meaning of NFU is drawn-out war which Europeans desperately want to avoid. It has always seemed somewhat easier to contemplate this from Cambridge than from Cologne.

Given Nato's conventional strength, neither NFU nor NEFU is for tomorrow. The issue at hand is whether and by how much to build up the conventional defenses. Ironically this problem is often made harder by the people and parties which oppose nuclear weapons, since they also tend to oppose the higher defense spending needed to be able to rely on them less.

A distinction therefore has to be made between the question of a NFU declaration and the principle of placing greater reliance on conventional

forces.⁴ Whether the Alliance will follow a policy towards NEFU remains to be seen. The United States has always tended toward it but the European reluctance to downgrade the role of nuclear weapons has always worked against it and may be slow to disappear. This paper assumes that there will be a move in this direction, though not with the intention of making a declaration of NFU.

By definition, neither NFU nor NEFU renounces the nuclear option. Both would retain nuclear weapons in order to deter Soviet first use and, in the case of NEFU, to deter war and to hold Soviet conventional forces at nuclear risk, thus forcing them to stay dispersed on the battlefield. Since in both concepts nuclear weapons would not be intended for use at an early stage they would need to be survivable, which many of Nato's present weapons are not. This will in practice mean that there would have to be a greater separation than there is now between the conventional and nuclear forces on the battlefield in the Center. Thus both call for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the forward area, an issue to be returned to later.

The Flanks. It has always seemed probable that the strategy on land in the *Southeast* could unfold somewhat differently from that in the Center, since the possible use of nuclear weapons might not be so closely built into the initial battle. Furthermore the point when nuclear weapons might be considered in the Southeast could well have to do with the timing of any use in the Center. Put another way, nuclear weapons might not be used in the Southeast if they had not already been used in the Center, where American forces are most heavily involved. Indeed Greece, under its present government, has talked of a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans. If the Center moves towards NEFU, the Southeast is likely to do the same. The nuclear deterrent element of flexible response would stay but the emphasis is likely to be on improving the ability of the conventional forces to hold Greek and Turkish territory, especially the area of the Black Sea exits. And of course the strength of the defenses in the Southeast is bound up with the strength of Nato naval forces in the Mediterranean, which forms the communication corridor to the region (and to the Persian Gulf), and with speedy reinforcement from outside, notably by fighter aircraft.

North. Though for different reasons, no change of strategy is to be expected in the North either. Here, Norway and Denmark have chosen for political reasons to organize their defense somewhat differently from the allies in the Center. There are no forces from other allied countries stationed in the North and though reinforcements from outside are counted on, the arrangements for them have until quite recently been rather hesitant. Only in the last year or two have some stocks of fuel, ammunition and equipment for reinforcing units been established in Norway. This is in marked contrast to the Center, where parent formations from reinforcing countries are on the ground ready to receive

incoming units, whose heavy equipment is prepositioned for them, so that they can move to Germany by air and quickly be deployed operationally when they get there.

Above all, there are no nuclear weapons on Norwegian or Danish soil and, in the case of Norway certainly, no intention that any should be brought in. The defense of North Norway is based on conventional forces only, able to use the nature of the terrain and perhaps the climate to fight for time. Flexible response has therefore always had a different emphasis in the North and this is likely to remain. The initial handling of any crisis would almost certainly be governed by special Nordic sensitivities and the determination to keep tensions as low as possible for as long as possible.

However, it should be noted that there are strong links between deterrence in the Center and in the North. Though the two sectors are to some extent militarily compartmented they are not strategically separate. The North—and North Norway in particular—has importance not only for the strategy in Europe but also for the central strategic balance, because of the concentration of Soviet maritime and strategic nuclear forces in the region. It is also a zone through which the strategic bomber routes pass. In the Kola Peninsula is based the Soviet Northern Fleet, the largest in the Soviet Navy, with about a quarter of the major surface ships, half of the submarines including almost two-thirds of those armed with ballistic missiles (SSBN), and strong air forces in support. The Baltic Fleet is much smaller but still powerful and able to operate against the North and the Center.

Nato must give high priority to being able to control the Baltic exits for if the Baltic Fleet were to break out it could menace shipping en route to the North or the Center. It would have to be countered while in the Baltic as well, so as to prevent it from supporting land operations against either sector.

Important as that task would be, the prevention of Soviet SSBN and attack submarines (SSN) from moving out from their northern bases into the Atlantic would be even more so. The territory of North Norway offers an area from which surveillance of Soviet activity can be carried out and provides airfields from which defense against Soviet maritime operations can be mounted. Some missiles on the SSBN have the range that would enable them to be launched from the Barents Sea, so that the submarines would not have to pass through the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) gap, the main line of Atlantic defense. But many of the submarines and surface vessels would have to make this transit, to be able to operate off the American coasts or against allied shipping in the open seas, and for this purpose the Soviet Navy would no doubt try to control the seas north of the gap, including the Norwegian Sea. Norway is in effect a barrier between the Atlantic and the Kola Peninsula region, providing a means of defense forward of the GIUK gap. Norwegian territory is thus very important for Nato naval operations designed to keep open the sea lanes across the Atlantic and for maritime operations in the Eastern Atlantic. In

turn, Nato naval strength helps Norway and the stronger the North the stronger the Center. The steps taken in the next decades must be designed to strengthen this symbiotic relationship and the problem of dealing with Soviet forces operating from the Kola Peninsula is part of this.

Maritime Operations. A NFU declaration would apply to naval operations as well. The main argument against first use, i.e., that it risks rapid escalation, seems harder to sustain where operations at sea are involved, as distinct from naval bombardment of land, populations would not be endangered and thus the stakes are materially different. It does not seem self-evident that nuclear operations between ships at sea would automatically lead to nuclear weapons being used on land. Be that as it may, improvements in conventional weapon systems, surveillance and target acquisition capacity seem likely to reduce the role that nuclear weapons may play in naval warfare. In some theaters, the Indian Ocean for example, nuclear weapons might not be useful since US forces, with their eggs in few baskets, would be very vulnerable to retaliation. Diego Garcia would obviously be at risk. Soviet forces, on the other hand, might mount air operations from third countries or from Soviet territory, against which the United States might be reluctant to retaliate for fear of this leading to a strategic nuclear exchange. On balance, the nuclear content of maritime strategy—excluding, of course, the role of the SSBN—seems likely to be deemphasized in the future, the weapons being for deterrence and for last resort. Advanced conventional weapons, including those carried by shipborne or land-based air, seem likely to be given more attention just as stronger conventional forces will be on land. If NEFU is to be the preferred strategy on land, it is likely to be at sea too.

Out of Area Contingencies. Operations outside its boundaries are formally not a matter for the Alliance and there is general agreement that it would be politically unrewarding to try to change this. Yet of course, threats from outside the area cannot simply be ignored since they may affect allied security almost as much as would actions inside. So if Nato as such is not involved, some of its member states could be. Allies, not Alliance, is the watchword.

This approach to the problem—the only practical one in the circumstances—avoids the difficulty of having to obtain Alliance agreement for precautionary or preparatory planning, or when forces are deployed in emergency. But it does tend to mean that meeting such contingencies is mostly now left to the United States, perhaps with some military help being given by Britain or France and facilities provided by some other allies. This is far from an equitable sharing of the burden given that Europe may have more at stake than the United States, as would be the case with Persian Gulf oil.

There is the difficulty, however, that out-of-area politics are often very complex. In the Gulf, for instance, the more obvious threats arise not from

East-West but from regional sources of tension, on which different allies can have different views and where they may have different interests. Action to counter threats has to be political as well as military, with the former of more immediate concern and, if effective, helping to avoid the need for military measures. European allies, some of whom have long experience with the Middle East, have not always seen eye to eye with the United States over the policies that should be adopted, and have been critical in particular of the emphasis given by Washington to the East-West and military aspects of Gulf problems. But they are not necessarily far apart over what needs doing, as witness the European part being played in Lebanon. The Alliance must certainly try to reach agreement on the goals—political, economic and military—that member countries should adopt, so that they are broadly in harmony. They need not be exactly the same for there is virtue in using the comparative advantage that different countries have in particular regions, such as France in Francophone Africa, provided that this is not to the detriment of the West as a whole. The implications for Nato planning of any possible military steps, such as those involving forces and facilities of concern to the Alliance, should be worked out as far as possible in advance, so that disagreements and delays do not arise when there is an emergency. There should be some sort of Alliance “machinery” to accomplish this.

Future Posture Changes

The Center. The deficiencies in the force posture in the Center are well known⁵ even if there can be legitimate arguments about their precise extent. The assessment of relative conventional strengths is not an exact science and comparisons of numbers of men and machines, even if they can be made accurately, are only a partial indicator of whether there is balance or not. Nevertheless, there is a fair degree of agreement that there are not enough men on the ground to give confidence that the defense could hold. Reserve formations are too few, there is little depth, and munitions stocks are sufficient only for a few weeks at best. The consequences of this lack of sustained fighting power are a reliance on rapid air and ground reinforcement and, worse, on possible recourse to nuclear weapons fairly early, possibly in days rather than weeks.

At present, something like 60 percent of the short-range nuclear weapons, the dual-capable artillery, have ranges of 30 km or less. Their nuclear warheads, in storage sites, have to be fairly near at hand. These weapons would clearly be vulnerable to conventional attack and to being overrun, yet the guns have to be well forward for their conventional artillery role, for which Nato has markedly fewer guns than the Warsaw Pact. If the conventional battle had to last longer, as with NEFU it could do, there is a risk that these nuclear systems would be unusable if the time came or that the warheads would be lost. Thus there is a compelling need for nuclear systems to be withdrawn from the forward area.

The guns themselves would stay there for the conventional task and their nuclear role would be taken over by a small number of longer-range systems, sited well back and preferably mobile so as to be more survivable. The function of the new systems would be to continue to hold at risk the Soviet forward troops so as to force them to stay dispersed, for if they could concentrate freely they could increase at will the numerical odds against the defenders at any chosen point. The new system would need to be able to strike tactical targets in the battlefield area as the short-range systems can now, but the numbers of warheads needed would be nothing like those on the existing short-range systems. The remainder of the nuclear role that short-range systems now play would be taken over by new conventional weapons described below. When these were in place, the warheads of the short-range nuclear systems could be withdrawn, perhaps 2,000 of them. Indeed a number of nuclear warheads could be taken away now (including nuclear mines and air defense weapons) as being no longer needed. This could be done unilaterally, as a gesture, or as part of some arms control bargain, which may be more practical.

A major concern, then, would be to augment the conventional fire power so as to take over the last resort function the short-range (and other) nuclear systems now have, which is stop the enemy advance if all else fails, but to do this with conventional munitions instead. Another task for which conventional weapons should substitute for nuclear, is the suppression of Soviet tactical air operations in support of ground forces, by attacking forward airfields; and an additional one is the prevention of the movement forward of Soviet reinforcing divisions towards the front line. At the moment these two tasks, which involve engaging targets well behind the front line, would largely be carried out by Nato dual-capable fighter aircraft, using nuclear weapons if need be. There are not enough aircraft to ensure that these tasks can be performed conventionally. The air equation may not be sufficiently favorable, given the dense Soviet air defenses that threaten Nato air forces with heavy casualty rates, therefore, something else must assist them.

There have been various proposals to make use of high technology to enable conventional fire power to take over the tasks that nuclear weapons may now have to do, artillery, air or missile delivered. One such proposal that has been well worked out and documented⁶ would have three component phases of operations:

Phase I. Ballistic missiles, as for example the Pershing II,⁷ carrying a dispenser containing terminally guided sub-munitions with conventional warheads designed for earth penetration would strike (immediately on a Soviet attack). Soviet main operating *airfields* and the *fixed choke points* through which reinforcing formations, from the Soviet Second Echelon forces, would have to pass to reach the battle area. All the targets are fixed and in Eastern Europe. The aim would be to suppress temporarily all air operations against Nato forward troops and to prevent Soviet front line (First Echelon) forces from

being reinforced. Nato aircraft, carrying the same sub-munitions, would help in this phase.

Phase II. Similar missiles—again with terminally guided conventional sub-munitions but this time designed for use against tanks—would attack the Second Echelon forces themselves, to destroy as many of them as possible. Since the targets would be mobile, real-time surveillance and targeting systems would be needed to locate them and to pick out armored vehicles.

Phase III. A short-range multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS) would launch similar terminally guided conventional warheads designed against tanks, against the Soviet armored formations in the immediate front line (from 0-30 kms) to break up attacks on Nato forces and so relieve the pressure on the defense. This is the role now to be carried out in the last resort by the nuclear artillery, and these new systems would be a direct substitution for the short-range nuclear systems now deployed.

Much of the technology described by Cotter is near at hand and tested, though that for Phases II and III is still some time away. The problem still remaining is the development of the necessary surveillance and targeting systems. It is claimed that if the money were committed now, the system for use against fixed targets could be operable in some three years; that for mobile targets could be developed in perhaps five years. Presumably, that is, if things work as they should when they should, which is not always the case with new, high technology systems.

There are some obvious problems. One is that about one hundred ballistic missiles would have to be deployed in West Germany, at a time when arms control negotiations put missile reductions rather than increases in the mind of the electorate. There would no doubt be environmental objections. Then there could be arms control difficulties: the Pershing II has been suggested by Cotter as a possible missile for the conventional role because it will soon be available and has a suitably large payload, but of course it has also been chosen for the nuclear INF role and there could be difficulties distinguishing between the two. Certainly the public debate would fasten on the issue. To avert this problem, Cotter has suggested alternative missiles, for example the Patriot, so far only associated with the conventional air defense role. But this has a smaller payload and so more would be needed.

Cost would be a big hurdle, including that for extra manpower. Cotter gives a figure of a minimum of \$10 billion over a ten-year period. If this were to be spent largely on US-built systems there would be considerable opposition from the European allies, who are already restive over the one-way nature of the arms trade within the Alliance, notably unwelcome at a time of recession. The new systems would also have to compete for resources with others already planned for similar roles (albeit much less comprehensively), such as fighter aircraft and their associated ground-attack missiles. Indeed Nato budgets are substantially set for some time to come. Given the long lead times for major

weapons and the high cost of conventional manpower, there is in many national budgets flexibility only at the margin for many years ahead. So new money is needed.

The alternative to such a high-technology approach is the incremental improvement or introduction of tried and simpler systems. This is safer than a leap into the relatively unknown and the expenditure of very large sums on products as yet not fully proven. Yet Israel has recently demonstrated the dramatic results that high technology can yield, in its actions against Syrian tanks and aircraft, in which extraordinarily high losses were inflicted and almost none sustained.

An incremental approach and some associated costs were well set out in the essay by Robert Komer in the *Naval War College Review* and there seems no point in duplicating here what is an authoritative survey.⁸ Saceur, General Bernard Rogers, has himself set out such an approach too, though he has commended the development of the new sub-munitions.⁹ He will be aware, though, of the difficulty of getting such a radical new system through the full Alliance machinery without inordinate delay. Nations tend to be comfortable with what they have already decided or with what they are already doing, although this did not rule out the introduction of notable high-technology systems such as AWACs.

Saceur has on a number of occasions said that a viable conventional defense, one which would enable the adoption of NEFU in some degree or other, could be provided by the increase in Nato defense budgets of some 4 percent in real terms each year. Yet few nations are now meeting the 3 percent annual increase pledged a few years back, at this time of economic stringency. The new missiles could require a little more although this would depend on whether other competing systems were cut back.

Both high-technology and incremental approaches are designed to achieve the same ends, a more durable and sustained defense. They do however, in the example described above, have one notable difference: the missiles and sub-munitions would enable Nato to counter a Soviet attack well inside Eastern Europe; the incremental improvements are more likely to produce systems which thicken up the defense on or near the Nato side of the border. The new conventional missile system would carry the battle to the enemy, something Nato has been unable to do conventionally since improved Soviet air defenses began to make air interdiction potentially very costly.

In conjunction with this possibility of missile cross-border operations there is also a revised concept of ground operations under study, namely the US AirLand Battle.¹⁰ In the past the US Army has planned largely for a battle of attrition, using conventional firepower to break up enemy formations as they arrived in front of the defenses, canalized perhaps by natural obstacles into fairly narrow approaches such as the Fulda Gap. The emphasis in the AirLand Battle is on more mobile tactics, including cross-border operations on the

ground, to attack the Soviet formations already likely to be in disarray from the missile strikes. Though maneuver is a cardinal feature of this new doctrine, the defense would still essentially be a forward one. The concept of forward defense remains inviolate, politically mandatory but militarily manageable.

The idea of carrying the battle to the enemy (once his attack was launched but not before) has the attraction of keeping some of the destruction away from Nato territory. But two points about it have to be registered. The first is that what will inevitably be a well-publicized plan for Nato, a defensive alliance, to acquire the means to hold large areas of Eastern Europe at risk—albeit with conventional weapons. Understandably, this would not be without its political problems. Some might see it as a destabilizing step, making arms control more difficult and souring relations between East and West Europe. There would be sharp opposition to any ideas there might be of using the new capability preemptively. The second point is as Henry Kissinger has suggested, if the Soviet Union recognizes that Nato is on the road to possessing the ability to denying it victory on the conventional battlefield it might adopt a preemptive nuclear strategy instead, making clear that no war in Europe could be assumed to remain conventional.¹¹

To the first point the reply must surely be that the Soviet Union now holds the whole of West Europe at nuclear risk; and that in MBFR negotiations lies the potential solution to the political and military problems in Europe—remove the threat of rapid armored attack and the need to counter it is gone. To the second, the answer is to stay firmly away from a NFU declaration and be ready to match the Soviet nuclear option.

However it may be achieved, the strengthening of the conventional defenses seems likely to be the course the Alliance will take in the next twenty years, to restore the flexibility to flexible response. The United States has long advocated this and Europeans may now be more ready to accept it, provided that a nuclear element remains.¹² An essential part of this strengthening will be to improve the capacity to reinforce quickly. A greater use of European reserves would make much sense. Large numbers are generated by conscription and even by volunteer systems; they would need annual training and of course equipment, but they could be quickly mobilized. Some could augment regular formations, with the aim of having defending forces at least half the size of the attacking formations in all key sectors, so that the ratio obtained by Soviet forces could be kept within acceptable limits. Others could form lighter units for use in depth or in areas off the likely main axes of attack, notably in the antiarmor and air defense roles but also for logistic and other support.

High technology would not only be needed for weapon systems, but for improved C³ and for electronic warfare. Nato forces would also have to pay great attention to concealment and protection against electronic and infrared scanning, if they are to be able to use their mobility for maneuver.

Fortifications are often suggested as a means of enhancing the defenses and saving manpower. Objections to them point to the fate of the Maginot Line, to environmental and other problems, and also to the symbolism they would have as appearing to harden further the division of Germany. For these reasons they seem unlikely to be built. Tactical obstacles on the other hand, created when needed, will attract more attention. There are technologies now available that would enable defenders to impose delay or canalize enemy approaches much as minefields, sown when wanted, would do.

The Soviet Union has a well-developed offensive chemical warfare capacity, for which Nato has only a passive counter that would quickly degrade the ability of its forces to operate effectively. To deter Soviet chemical use, Nato should really possess an offensive capability too, but this would be highly controversial and probably politically unacceptable in the Alliance as a whole, certainly for peacetime stationing in Europe. At the moment, such a change in the battle that the widespread use of chemical warfare (CW) would represent can be countered only by recourse to nuclear weapons. This is an uncomfortable position for Nato to be in and not wholly credible, making the need for CW arms control measures urgent.

All the above might suggest that continuous attention will be given to the Nato defenses, but of course the Alliance does not normally work quite like that unless there is a sharp rise in tension. Governments come and go and progress is by fits and starts. Soviet forces improve too, so the balance may not be easy to change markedly. But the Alliance could leap ahead using high technology, in which it has a lead, or by devoting extra resources, which it has. Whether it does so and by how much may depend on the state of East-West relations; energy may be spent on arms control rather than on security measures. The two are not exclusive, of course. Forces can be upgraded while their numbers are reduced. But it would be idle to suppose that a reequipment step as radical as that involving new conventional missiles might not be in danger of becoming a hostage to arms control negotiations, with the obvious risk of being delayed. And the Soviet Union will not easily be persuaded to bargain away the conventional advantage it now has in the Center if conventional operations are given new prominence. So Nato would have to be prepared to go ahead with the new systems despite the claims of arms control, a good enough reason being that they are replacing reliance on nuclear weapons.

The Flanks. In the *Southeast* the replacement of obsolescent weapons is the obvious requirement. The obstacles are the cost of doing so, for which the regional countries do not have the resources; and the Greek-Turk dispute, which hampers Nato defense. So change here can only be slow, with priority being given to the Center. The exception is where air reinforcements are concerned. There is reason to plan for such reinforcements, to help secure the Black Sea exits and to meet the Backfire and other threats to the US Sixth Fleet

and allied ships in the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, airfields in Eastern Turkey are potential assets in any Gulf contingency (assuming political circumstances in which the Turkish government would make them available). They need to be defended and maintained.

Enhancing the defenses in the Southeast is therefore likely to be a straight line extrapolation, taken slowly. Reinforcing aircraft will no doubt get the new technology required to compete with Backfire. Overall deterrence can thus be enhanced but it will still rest to some extent on the indivisibility of Alliance deterrence and not just on local forces.

North. In the North improvements in weapon systems, notably aircraft and their armament, will be needed as will attention to making reinforcement easier and quicker by better stocking arrangements. But the connection with maritime operations is a factor: if the Norwegian Sea is a hostile area, reinforcement and land operations become hazardous. Here the problem of the Kola Peninsula appears. Norway is careful to maintain a purely defensive posture and if offered weapons that could target the Peninsula, would no doubt refuse them. But if hostilities broke out, Nato navies could hardly leave this a sanctuary for operations against them and under these circumstances Norwegian airfields would surely be usable. Enhancement of the defenses in the North is at least a matter of improving the capacity of Nato ships to operate in Norwegian waters in the conventional role, as well as strengthening the defenses on land.

Atlantic Maritime Operations. If it is envisaged that the length of a land campaign could be increased, the role of the navies in ensuring the safe and timely flow of men and materiel acquires greater prominence. At present the Nato land forces are geared to a short war, to judge by the low levels of their munitions stocks. Nato navies, on the other hand, have been thinking about something longer, protecting a continued flow of shipping. With NEFU the tension between the two sets of priorities is lessened.

It is hardly for a soldier to tell sailors how they should operate, so only a few random remarks in relation to Europe will be offered. The first is that the value of Norwegian territory places a premium on the defense of that country and on operations north of the GIUK Gap. The second is that defenses against the threats to naval forces from the air, not least from the Backfire, may rest heavily on land-based aircraft for warning and interception in the Eastern Atlantic; shipborne defenses will need all the help they can get and aircraft carriers may have to stand well away from the shores. Thirdly, means will have to be found to deal with targets in the Kola Peninsula area conventionally, perhaps with land-based cruise missiles. Finally, the maintenance in Europe of proper strategic stockpiles would lighten the naval burden of supporting land operations in the critical early stages.

Some Concluding Remarks

This paper has covered some familiar ground and not strayed far from the orthodox. It might be asked whether arms control agreements or the adoption of a different kind of defense in the Center could radically change things.

Of course, arms control *could*. In the next twenty years there may be agreements to reduce forces so as to achieve military balance at much lower levels and reduce the density of armor, for example. It is possible that zones could be created in which armaments were thinned out and light troops only retained, largely for warning purposes. It would be most encouraging if such things came to pass, but then there would be little need for this paper.

Ideas have often been put forward for a different style of defense in the Center, not using the heavy armored formations, aircraft and missiles and the like, but instead employing large numbers of more lightly armed men, ready to fight in depth throughout the country. These notions have attractions for being defensive in character and apparently less costly, and they have some application to less critical parts of the front. A defense must, however, take account the weight of the forces it faces; while Soviet forces are armor-heavy and strongly supported by offensive air, Nato will need broadly comparable forces if it is to be able to hold territory rather than to allow an attacker into it to be able to engage him.

Lastly, nothing has been said about the possibility of a change in the relative roles that Europe and the United States now play in Nato. In the essay last year already referred to,¹³ this author said that there was no disposition among European governments to seek other security arrangements; the present ones are considered the best available. The possibility that Europe might acquire a significantly greater nuclear or conventional role or pursue any degree of military independence was ruled out in the absence of a much more compelling Soviet threat than is seen now. It was said, however, that Europe should be prepared to assist the United States in the Persian Gulf region.

A recent report by five European Institutes of International Affairs¹⁴ has just looked in some detail at the security role that Europe might play and arrived at not dissimilar conclusions, dismissing the possibility of an independent European defense for a variety of reasons. But it goes on to say that there is a demand for a European contribution to the stabilization of critical regions, particularly the Middle East. And it goes further to recommend that there should be a stronger European identity within Nato in policy formation as distinct from the operative defense level, which should remain within the integrated Atlantic structure.

These are European views that would seem unlikely to draw American opposition; Washington has always wanted a more unified Europe. Underlying them is the assertion of distinctive European interests and if these rather than the shared Atlantic ones increasingly come to be emphasized, new strains could

be added to those that already exist in the Alliance. Adjustments in the relative burdens do seem likely in the next twenty years but it is to be hoped that they will take place amicably and not as the result of acrimonious argument.

Notes

1. See Kenneth Hunt, "Alternative Conventional Force Postures," in *NATO—The Next Thirty Years* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980).
2. For example see Robert Komer, "Is Conventional Defense of Europe Feasible?" in *Naval War College Review*, September–October 1982, pp. 80–91. Also, Bernard W. Rogers, "The Atlantic Alliance," in *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1982, pp. 1145–1156.
3. McGeorge Bundy, et. al., "Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1982, pp. 753–768.
4. I am indebted for this distinction and for other points on NFU to a forthcoming book on the subject to be published by The Brookings Institution.
5. Komer.
6. Donald R. Cotter, "Potential Future Roles for Conventional and Nuclear Forces in Defense of Western Europe," in *Strengthening Conventional Deterrence in Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 209–253.
7. Cotter's calculations discuss alternative missiles to carry the submunitions packages for Phases I and II and an air delivery alternative for Phase III.
8. Komer.
9. See for example the interview in the *Financial Times*, 12 May 1983.
10. FM 100-5, *Operations*, June 1982.
11. Henry A. Kissinger, "Strategy and the Atlantic Alliance," *Survival*, September–October 1982, p. 197.
12. Kenneth Hunt, "Military Issues within the Atlantic Alliance," *Naval War College Review*, September–October 1982, pp. 48–57.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Karl Kaiser, et al., *The European Community: Progress or Decline?*

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