Why NATO is Still Best

Future Security Arrangements for Europe

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The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union have generated extensive interest in redesigning Europe's security structures. Cold War dangers have dramatically receded, raising questions about the continuing necessity of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). New dangers in Central Europe, already too apparent in the former Yugoslavia, have fueled doubts about the ability of Europe's institutions, including the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the European Community (EC), the EC's defense component—the Western European Union (WEU)—as well as NATO, to manage the dangers of post-Soviet Europe.

Although discussion of various institutional arrangements is already extensive, little systematic analysis of their relative strengths and weaknesses is available. This article attempts to fill the gap: it first explores U.S. and Western European interests and potential threats to these interests; it then assesses the ability of specific proposed security arrangements to confront these threats.

The first section distinguishes three types of current or future war the West might face. The first danger is of deliberate attack from a major power in the East—a resurgent Russia. The second is war in the East, including wars that begin in Central Europe but could draw in the West. The third is war within Western Europe, possibly exacerbated by war in the East.

The dangers that these wars pose to the West depend on their probability and on the Western interests they would threaten. Based on the current state of debate, my assessments are that the probability of a resurgent Russia is small but is not necessarily decreasing; that the probability of more wars in...
the East is significantly higher than during the Cold War; and that the probability of war between the West's major powers in the near future is virtually nil, although uncertainty exists about whether this peace is guaranteed indefinitely. Even readers who disagree should nevertheless find my analysis useful: because I explicitly link my analysis of security structures to conclusions about specific threats, they should find it straightforward to revise my policy conclusions.

In designing policies for dealing with these dangers, particularly war in the East, the West must decide what types of interests are at stake—is Western policy intended to protect security, economic, or humanitarian interests? Clarifying the nature of Western interests informs decisions about the magnitude of the costs and risks the West should be willing to undertake.

The second section assesses the capability of five significantly different security structures to deal with the types of war discussed in the previous section. One option is to preserve NATO, while transforming it to deal with post-Soviet realities and possibly expanding its responsibilities. A second possibility is that an increasingly integrated Western Europe will take predominant responsibility for its security, with formal military links to the United States essentially eliminated. For example, under the direction of the EC, the military capabilities and political influence of the WEU could significantly increase, while the United States withdrew from Europe. Third, a leading candidate for replacing a Western alliance, whether NATO-based or EC-based, is a continent-wide collective security system in which all European countries agree to oppose any aggressor in the hope of posing an overwhelming deterrent. A fourth possibility is a concert in which the major powers coordinate their foreign policies to minimize potential conflicts among themselves. A fifth option, which I term defensive unilateral security, emphasizes defensive military capabilities in an effort to minimize the tensions that offensive capabilities can generate: instead of all countries committing to oppose any aggressor, all countries reduce their ability to attack one another, while maintaining their ability to defend themselves. Although some of these options are incompatible with each other, others—for example NATO and WEU—could be complementary.

The final section draws together conclusions. The theme running throughout my analysis is that the West should be willing to invest in hedges against

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1. Some observers believe that Europe requires multiple, interlocking institutions, including not only NATO and the WEU but also the CSCE, the UN, and regional security organizations. See
war with Russia and war within the West: even though these wars are unlikely, their extremely high costs justify buying insurance. I find that NATO is likely to provide a better hedge than any of the alternatives. NATO can meet Western requirements in all three types of war—hedging against a resurgent Russia, providing the means to extend security guarantees to Central European countries, and reducing the already low probability of future tensions within Western Europe—both by preserving America's role in Europe as a defensive balancer and by maintaining institutions for concert-like coordination within the West. A Western European alliance could serve some of these functions but, by excluding the United States, would not provide the reassurance that NATO offers Western Europe. Beyond NATO, the West needs concert-like arrangements with Russia to ensure that Western policies do not generate Russian insecurity. Collective security and defensive unilateral security turn out to be useful primarily for attempting to preserve good political relations within the West. In solving this problem, however, they suffer a variety of military and political shortcomings.

The case for NATO is best viewed as an extended transition strategy—the preservation of NATO for a couple of decades into the post-Soviet era is prudent in the face of uncertainties surrounding both Russia and Western Europe. If thereafter the potential dangers appear even more unlikely than today, the West will then be better prepared to reevaluate different arrangements. Nevertheless, with the end of the Cold War having eliminated major divisions between East and West, the preservation of NATO will require increasingly effective political leadership on both sides of the Atlantic.

The hardest decision facing the West is whether to provide security guarantees to the countries of Central Europe and certain former republics of the Soviet Union. Calls for collective security neglect this issue, simply assuming that the West has security interests in keeping peace throughout Europe. In fact, as I explain below, Western security interests call only for rather narrow security guarantees that are designed to deter Russian expansion into Central Europe, but not to prevent all wars between the smaller countries of Central Europe. Furthermore, if making these security commitments would appear threatening to Russia, NATO should consider forgoing them entirely, since such a policy could be self-defeating. Other wars in Central Europe threaten

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primarily Western humanitarian interests, but not security interests. In these cases, the key question is not about appropriate institutional arrangements. If the West decides that protecting these interests warrants military intervention, a Western alliance would be adequate. Failure to intervene would most likely reflect inadequate Western concern, not inadequate means.

Purposes of a Security Structure: What Interests are Threatened by War?

To lay the foundation for assessing security structures, I first address America's interest in European peace and next examine the types of European war that a security structure should be prepared to deal with.

AMERICA'S CONTINUING SECURITY INTEREST IN EUROPEAN PEACE

From an American perspective, a basic question is whether the United States still has security interests in Europe. The end of the Cold War is fueling calls for American withdrawal from Europe, adding arguments to the already extensive debate over American grand strategy.\(^2\) Isolationists believe, now more than ever, that whatever dangers might threaten Europe will not threaten the United States.\(^3\) During the Cold War, the most serious challenge to the traditional case for American involvement flowed from the nuclear revolution, which undermined geopolitical arguments for opposing a European hegemon. Isolationists now add that we can be confident that Western Europe will be free from military conflict, because the passing of the Soviet Union has eliminated the only serious external threat, and relations within the West are so good that military conflict is virtually unimaginable.

However, although the lack of an imminent Soviet threat eliminates the most obvious danger, U.S. security has not been entirely separated from the future of Western Europe. The ending of the Cold War has brought many benefits, but has not eliminated the possibility of major power war, especially

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since such a war could grow out of a smaller conflict in the East. And, although nuclear weapons have greatly reduced the threat that a European hegemon would pose to U.S. security, a sound case nevertheless remains that a major European war could threaten U.S. security. The United States could be drawn into such a war, even if strict security considerations suggested it should stay out. A major power war could escalate to a nuclear war that, especially if the United States joins, could include attacks against the American homeland. Thus, the United States should not be unconcerned about Europe’s future.

HEDGING AGAINST A RESURGENT RUSSIAN THREAT TO THE WEST

The probability of a resurgent Russia launching a deliberate attack against the West in the foreseeable future is now generally believed to be extremely small: probably most important, Russian goals, unlike those of the Soviet Union, do not threaten the West. In addition, Russia’s capability for threatening the West is significantly reduced, because it is laboring under the weight of economic and political turmoil and because its conventional forces are being reduced and withdrawn from Central Europe. Nevertheless, most analysts believe that such a war is more probable than a war within Western Europe, since they see the latter possibility as virtually non-existent for the foreseeable future.

Whether the probability of eventual Russian attack is sufficiently large to warrant Western efforts to insure against it is another question, however. Some analysts believe that the probability is so low that the West should ignore it completely. The more prudent policy, however, is for the West to buy insurance until the on-going transformation of the former Soviet Union has run its course. If Russia’s growing economic troubles or intensifying nationalist interests bring leaders to power who favor more assertive foreign policies, the West will be glad that it continued to keep up its guard. If, on

the other hand, Russia evolves into a stable peaceful democracy, the West can reconsider its insurance policy.

In addition to providing adequate deterrence and defense, Western military policies for dealing with the possibility of a resurgent Russia should satisfy two criteria. First, to encourage continued improvement of political relations with Russia, the West should be careful not to threaten the military capabilities that Russia believes are necessary for its defense. Increasing Russia’s insecurity could create pressures for an expansionist foreign policy, in turn straining its relations with the West. Paying attention to these military considerations may appear unimportant today, when Western economic cooperation and diplomatic policies are likely to play a more important role in influencing Russia’s future foreign policy. If relations ever begin to sour, however, Western military policies that appear threatening to Russian leaders could fuel growing tensions. This dimension of hedging is just as important as making sure that the West is not caught militarily unprepared.

Second, the West’s insurance policy will have to be far less expensive than its Cold War defense policy, so that the costs of defense are more in line with current risks. Policies designed to deal with a vague future possibility of a Russian threat will be politically sustainable only if they are far less expensive than those that were required during the Cold War to deal with a clear-cut, immediate Soviet threat.

PREVENTING WAR IN THE EAST, OR AVOIDING WESTERN INVOLVEMENT
Whereas many observers consider the possibility of a resurgent Russia threatening the West to be more hypothetical than real, wars are already raging in the East. The dissolution of the Soviet Union has added to the possibilities for war that already existed within Central Europe; tensions and disagreements between Russia and Ukraine highlight the possibility of a major power war in the East.

Whether to extend security guarantees to the East is now the key security question facing the West. Because war in the East is likely, Western commitments would likely be put to the test. Western intervention could carry substantial risks. Intervention in a Central European war could involve the West in a war that becomes unexpectedly large, including the possibility of

an unintended clash with Russia. The probability of such a clash, although small, is likely to be larger than the probability of a NATO-Warsaw Pact war during the Cold War.

The question is still more important because there is apparently extensive American discussion about extending security guarantees to the East. For example, a high-level draft of the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance identified possible military responsibilities for American forces in the East: “The U.S. could also consider extending to the east–central European states security commitments analogous to those we have extended to Persian Gulf States. . . . Should there be a threat from the Soviet Union’s successor state, we should plan to defend against such a threat in Eastern Europe, should there be an alliance decision to do so.”

Although the document was quickly disowned by the Bush administration once leaked to the press, it was the unilateral tone of the document and the cost of preparing for ambitious military missions that caused controversy; the possibility of expanding Western commitments into the East did not excite much opposition. In addition, according to news reports, the United States signaled willingness to discuss limited military cooperation with Ukraine once it resumed movement toward denuclearization.

Western offers of security guarantees would likely be welcomed by eastern countries, which have expressed interest in joining NATO or at least receiving its protection. Ukraine has noted that once all of its nuclear weapons have


been sent to Russia—which it agreed to do, under pressure from the West—its security will require "some guarantees from the world community."10

In assessing the dangers posed by war in the East, and therefore the appropriate Western response, the West should distinguish between types of wars: at one end of this broad spectrum are wars between smaller states, such as the war involving states of the former Yugoslavia; at the other end are wars in which Russia fights a medium-to-major power, such as Ukraine.

To assess the danger that these types of war would pose to Western interests, it is useful to distinguish Western security interests from other Western interests, which include humanitarian and economic interests. The type of interests that are at stake influences the costs and risks the West should be willing to run to protect them. For example, protecting security interests tends to justify risking large-scale military conflict, whereas accomplishing humanitarian objectives may warrant the investment of Western resources, but rarely extensive military casualties.

SECURITY INTERESTS. Western security might be threatened by war in the East in three principal ways; however, only the last of the three poses a major danger. First, fighting in the East could spread to the West; that is, once involved in an eastern conflict, a participating country might decide to attack the West. However, although the term "spread" suggests that this type of expansion would occur through some natural unavoidable process, why and how an Eastern war should spread to the West is actually far from obvious. As long as the West makes clear its intention not to intervene, the warring states would have little incentive to attack the West to protect their ability to achieve war aims in the East. Moreover, if the West maintains adequate deterrent capabilities, these states should not see the war opening possibilities for opportunistic expansion into the West.11

Second, fighting in the East could draw in the West; that is, western countries could decide to intervene to protect their interests. However, most wars in the East—especially wars between smaller states, and civil wars—would not directly threaten Western security interests; in such cases, the West could stay out of the war without jeopardizing its security. Thus, these wars pose a security threat only if the West might intervene for non-security

reasons and if, following Western intervention, the war could expand further, resulting in a clash between the West and a major power (or several of them) in the East. For example, if the West might intervene to stop a war between Hungary and Rumania, to save lives or to reduce the influx of refugees, and if then Russia or Ukraine might intervene on the opposite side, then a war between Hungary and Rumania would pose an indirect threat to Western security. The possibility of this type of escalation should count against Western intervention for humanitarian or economic reasons, an issue I turn to in the next section. On the other hand, if the West might nevertheless intervene for these non-security reasons, then these indirect security dangers increase Western incentives for trying to prevent these Eastern wars.

Third, war in the East could increase the military threat to the West. For example, if Russia were to conquer Ukraine and then in another war further extend its control over Central Europe, Western Europe could face a conventional threat that more closely resembles the one it faced during the Cold War than the greatly reduced threat it faces today. This military capability would be all the more worrisome, since Russian aggression would be taken as clear testimony of its malign objectives.

Consequently, the West has security interests in preventing Russian expansion into Central Europe, and might therefore want to make extended deterrence commitments to protect these countries from Russian attack. Although this logic could support Western guarantees to prevent Russia from conquering Ukraine and Belarus (since these moves could constitute the first step in westward expansion), the West has grounds for choosing not to extend guarantees to former Soviet republics, while extending them to, for example, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. The rationale for this distinction would be two-fold: the West’s security interests in the former Soviet republics are smaller, since they are further from the West;

12. On this possibility see James E. Goodby, “Peacekeeping in the New Europe,” Washington Quarterly, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 154-155. War in the former Yugoslavia is suggestive of the complex ways in which a war could draw in the West. A commonly suggested scenario worries that Serbia might attack Kosovo and Macedonia, which could draw in Albania, Turkey, and Greece, which could create additional pressures for broader Western intervention and Russian counter-intervention in support of Serbia.
13. Another rationale for extending deterrence is to prevent nuclear proliferation in Central Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union. According to this argument, extending deterrence can prevent proliferation by increasing countries’ security, thereby reducing their need for nuclear weapons. If nuclear proliferation in the East poses a security threat to the West, then the benefits of slowed proliferation must be weighed against the risks of involvement that are discussed in the text.
and the risks of extending these guarantees are greater, since relations between the republics of the former Soviet Union are still evolving, tensions between them are greater, and Western involvement is especially likely to irritate and provoke Russia.

In short, most wars in the East would not threaten Western security and, consequently, extending security guarantees in these cases would not be justified by standard security considerations. The key exception appears to be wars launched by Russia to reestablish the subjugation of Central Europe. This line of argument suggests that the West might offer conditional security guarantees to some of the countries of Central Europe—the West would offer to protect them against Russia, but not each other.

The West, however, needs to proceed with caution in making even these conditional security guarantees, since they could bring two types of danger. First, policies that increase Russian insecurity could be self-defeating. If Western policies for guaranteeing Central European security appear threatening to Russia, then these policies could pressure the Russians to pursue the very actions they were designed to prevent. Extending the West’s military sphere of influence into the East could raise Russian concerns about Western intentions, increasing the value it sees in controlling additional territory. Stationing NATO or Western troops in Central Europe, for example, would seem especially likely to generate this reaction. Thus, if extending security guarantees would require the West to adopt military policies that might appear quite threatening to Russia, it might be better off forgoing them altogether. The case for this approach is enhanced because, at least under current leaders, the probability of Russian invasion of Central Europe in the foreseeable future is quite low.

Second, assuming the West would actually meet its commitments, extending security guarantees increases the likelihood that the West will be drawn into a major war with Russia. Thus, if one doubts that Western efforts to deter will be effective, either because these commitments lack credibility or because Russia is highly motivated to expand, then the West would be better off not extending security guarantees.15

14. On NATO’s sensitivity to this type of danger, see Flanagan, “NATO and Central and Eastern Europe,” p. 144.
15. On the other hand, if once such a war starts the West is very likely to intervene even if it has not extended security guarantees, then the best policy is to gain whatever deterrence is possible by announcing Western intentions.
In this case, the West would rely on essentially the same strategy it used successfully during the Cold War—not protecting Central Europe, but planning to deter attacks that Russia might launch from there. The prospects for success should be even better than during the Cold War, since Russia is likely to remain weaker than the former Soviet Union and it would be drained by possession of a hostile (and impoverished) empire.

**NON-SECURITY INTERESTS.** Although Western security interests would not be directly jeopardized by the Central European wars that are most likely, the West has other interests in preventing these wars and in reducing death and destruction if they occur. Probably most obvious are humanitarian interests. In addition, war in the East could increasingly damage Western economic interests, especially German interests, as Western direct investment and trade with the East grows. War in the East could also increase immigration to the West, straining Western economies and generating domestic turmoil.\(^{16}\) Such non-security interests in some combination appear more likely to draw the West into smaller eastern wars than do security interests.

The West should not necessarily rely on military means to protect these non-security interests. As with security interests, the West must weigh the risks and benefits of protecting these interests. Unlike security interests, risking Western lives to protect these interests may not often appear justified. Cast in stark terms, for example, before launching peace-making operations for humanitarian reasons the West must decide that it is willing to risk and spend Western lives to save others’ lives. A minimal criterion seems to be that the West should be confident that it can save far more lives than it will lose.\(^{17}\) The ratio warranting military intervention promises to be difficult to establish, since it depends on contentious judgments about international political and moral responsibilities.\(^{18}\) The West might reasonably decide that

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16. If, however, stopping immigration were the sole reason for intervention, then the West could probably better achieve its objective by closing its borders. On immigration see F. Stephen Larrabee, “Down and Out in Warsaw and Budapest: Eastern Europe and East-West Migration,” *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Spring 1992), pp. 5–33.


it is unwilling to incur the costs of humanitarian military intervention, even if the expected ratio of lives saved to lives lost is large.\textsuperscript{19}

Uncertainties about the risks of intervention are likely to complicate Western decisions further. Some of this uncertainty will reflect unknowns about the effectiveness of the Western military intervention, including both whether intervention can achieve its military objectives and whether successful military operations will bring about desirable political outcomes. Maybe as important, the West may be unable to anticipate how it will react if the intervention goes poorly. In theory, the West can bound the risks of intervention by planning to withdraw if it becomes clear that losses are going to be unacceptably high. However, this may underestimate the difficulty of placing limits on Western involvement, since initial losses could fuel calls for success, resulting in prolonged and costly involvement.\textsuperscript{20} Western reluctance to intervene in the war in Croatia and in the on-going war in Bosnia reflects sensitivity to these factors.\textsuperscript{21}

One way to promote humanitarian intervention is to link it to Western security. Such a link exists if failing to stop an aggressor in a smaller eastern conflict would undermine Western credibility for deterring more powerful aggressors that might challenge the West in the future. This theme, for example, underlies claims that a Western failure to use force if necessary in Yugoslavia “is a green light . . . to future aggressors everywhere.”\textsuperscript{22} The link,

\textsuperscript{19} That countries have historically been reluctant to risk lives for humanitarian purposes is suggested by the virtual lack of purely humanitarian interventions; see Walzer, \textit{Just and Unjust Wars}, pp. 101–102. That the United States expected the costs of intervention in Somalia to be relatively small helps to explain U.S. willingness to intervene in this case.


\textsuperscript{21} For example, British opposition to EC intervention in Croatia was based upon recognition that: 1) it is easier to put troops in than to remove them; and 2) the scale of initial efforts may bear no resemblance to the scale of later efforts. Alan Riding, “Europeans Not Sending Peace Force to Croatia,” \textit{New York Times}, September 20, 1991, p. 4. Against these uncertainties must be weighed uncertainties about the risks of not getting involved, including uncertainties about the extent of death and destruction that will occur if the West does not intervene. The United States has become more willing to intervene militarily in the war in Bosnia largely because the more optimistic assessments about the potential effectiveness of non-military means have proven incorrect, the war has taken far more lives than many experts initially imagined, and the Serbs still show little interest in reaching a negotiated settlement. If the West had foreseen this outcome earlier, it would have been more willing to intervene in the early stages of the war, when intervention would have been militarily easier and offered greater prospects for success.

\textsuperscript{22} Jenonne Walker, “No More Yugoslavias,” \textit{New York Times}, May 20, 1992, p. 15; see also the allusion to the failures of the 1930s in editorial, “Shame in Our Time, in Bosnia.” A closely related argument for humanitarian intervention is stronger, holding that gaining a reputation for humanitarian intervention could enable to the West to prevent other wars in which human-
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However, is weak. The West should explain that cases of purely humanitarian intervention are distinct from cases in which Western security interests are directly threatened and, therefore, that decisions on humanitarian intervention have essentially no bearing on the credibility of Western commitments to protect its security interests. From the West’s perspective, these cases are clearly different, and Western interests are best served by highlighting rather than blurring the differences. In fact, whatever link exists between Western intervention to protect humanitarian interests and Western security works in the opposite direction: as noted above, intervening for non-security reasons could involve the West in a war that, as a result of further expansion, threatens Western security.

These arguments and current Western policy toward the war in the former Yugoslavia suggest that the West will be quite reluctant to launch large military operations for non-security reasons. As a result, the West will have to rely heavily on economic and diplomatic policies for protecting these non-security interests. Nevertheless, it is premature to conclude that the West will never want to employ large military capabilities to protect non-security interests. Western outrage and pressures for intervention have grown as the West learned about the Serbian policy of “ethnic cleansing,” detention camps, and the possibility of genocide against Bosnian Muslims. And, even if the West does not intervene in this war, a possible lesson of the tragedy in the former Yugoslavia is that the West should be prepared to intervene early in future conflicts, before extensive fighting makes intervention both more difficult and more costly. Consequently, the West should be prepared to act effectively, in case it decides that humanitarian intervention is warranted.


PREVENTING MAJOR POWER WAR IN THE WEST

The third broad category of war that the West should consider is a war between Western Europe’s major powers, which could also include major powers from the East. This type of war is generally believed to be far less likely than the types discussed above. With NATO countries enjoying good political relations that matured during the forty-five years of the Cold War, and with the countries of the European Community committed to increasing the economic and political integration of Western Europe, the possibility of a major war in the West strikes many observers as too unlikely and distant even to consider. In contrast, more pessimistic analysts worry that this harmony fostered during the Cold War might not last far beyond its end. From this perspective, Europe is still in transition, propped up by institutions—like NATO—that will cease to function as Cold War arrangements are gradually brought into line with the transformed Europe.25 Then, once again, serious tensions could begin growing within the West.

One does not, however, need to be convinced that the pessimists are correct to conclude that some effort to insure against bad outcomes is desirable. Because war within the West would be so costly, efforts to preserve currently good relations are appropriate, unless one is entirely confident about the peaceful future of Western Europe.

However, such efforts will not command political support if they are too expensive, since large investments in a hedge against distant and seemingly unlikely events will be unappealing. Moreover, policies designed explicitly to deal with conflict in the West promise to be difficult to sell because acknowledging the possibility of security competition within the West would clash with on-going efforts to expand Western European integration. Consequently, security arrangements that are warranted by other dangers, and can be explained as such, but that also help to preserve good political relations in the West, are likely to be most feasible. The obvious analogy is the Cold War NATO—officially justified entirely by its value for balancing against the Soviet Union, but widely if unofficially recognized as playing a valuable role in eliminating security tensions within the West.26

26. On NATO’s role in facilitating European integration see Josef Joffe, “Europe’s American Pacifier,” Foreign Policy, No. 54 (Spring 1984), pp. 64–82; and Joffe, The Limited Partnership: Europe, the United States and Burdens of Alliance (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1987).
Security Structures

Having laid out the basic types of war that the United States and Western Europe must be concerned with, we are prepared to assess alternative security structures. This section assesses five significantly different security structures: NATO, the WEU, collective security, concerts, and defensive unilateral security. Implicitly, it also compares them to a sixth possibility—Europe without a security structure.27 Virtually no one has advocated a complete end to coordination of Europe’s national security policies, but some analysts worry that the lack of clear military threats could convince Europe’s major powers that their interests are best protected by ad hoc coordination arranged when specific problems arise.

All of these security structures should be judged in terms of: (1) their ability to provide the military capabilities the West requires to protect its interests, by deterring war and, if necessary, fighting; (2) their ability to preserve or improve political relations, most importantly by moderating the security dilemma;28 and (3) their political and military feasibility.

NATO

To evaluate the effectiveness of NATO, this section assesses NATO’s ability to deal with the three types of war described above.

RESURGENT RUSSIA. A Western alliance—either NATO or a purely Western-European alliance—is the obvious choice for dealing with the danger of future attack from the East. This was NATO’s mission in the past, and if the only direct threat to the West were a deliberate attack from the East, a Western alliance would still be the best form of protection. When the source of the threat is known, balancing is the appropriate solution. A balancing coalition would insure that the West has the military capabilities required for deterring a major power, while spreading the costs of hedging across Western coun-

27. Even in this case, Europe could rely on the United Nations, which is taking on more ambitious peacekeeping operations and is considering military intervention for peacemaking (distinguished from peacekeeping); however, these peacemaking operations would not be effective in wars involving major powers. See Boutros Boutros-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace (New York: United Nations, 1992). On the strengths but also the limitations of UN intervention see William J. Duro and Barry M. Blechman, Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the Emerging World Order (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1992).

tries. (The relative merits of NATO and the WEU are addressed in the next section.)

A common argument against preserving NATO is that excluding Russia from the Western security structure will decrease Russian security, which will strain the West's political relations with Russia and eventually fuel conflicts that increase the probability of war. However, being excluded from the Western alliance should increase Russian insecurity only if, as a result, the West poses a larger military threat. This need not be the case. The West can reduce whatever military threat it might pose and engage in extensive arms control while retaining necessary defensive capabilities, even if it does not include Russia and other Eastern states in a continent-wide security structure. For example, Western conventional forces could be designed to have little capability for launching an offensive into the former Soviet Union. 29 Germany would forgo nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future, since, as discussed in a following section, the insecurity they would initially generate in the East could fuel problems that more than offset the security they might provide to Germany. Finally, American strategic nuclear policy could be designed to ensure that Russia retains confidence in its nuclear retaliatory capabilities, since this increases confidence in its ability to deter Western conventional attack, which in turn reduces pressures for Russian expansion in Central Europe.

Another common objection to prescribing NATO as a hedge is that the Russian threat is now too small to hold the Western alliance together. Some observers believe that with the Soviet threat first greatly reduced and now dissolved, the threat from the East is not great enough to sustain a balancing coalition—NATO has lost its mission and, therefore, it is only a matter of time until the alliance dissolves. 30

However, whether states should join an alliance depends on both the magnitude of the threat and the magnitude of the costs—primarily eco-

29. Paul K. Davis and Robert D. Howe, Planning for Long-Term Security in Central Europe, R-3977-USDP (Santa Monica: Rand, 1990), argue that this should be relatively easy because of the "strategic buffer zone" that now lies between Western Europe and the Soviet Union (now Russia).

nomic—of continuing the alliance. If the danger posed by the Soviet Union or Russia has steeply declined but not permanently disappeared, then there is a sound case for maintaining a Western alliance as an insurance policy, if the cost is not too great. Thus, this case for buying insurance can be strengthened by greatly reducing the costs of maintaining the alliance, which is certainly possible given the greatly reduced military potential facing the West. NATO has already begun such a transformation.

PREVENTING WAR IN THE EAST. In assessing NATO's utility for preventing wars in the East, consider first the wars that pose a potential security threat to the West, specifically, wars launched by Russia into Central Europe or certain republics of the former Soviet Union. This case closely resembles the case of a resurgent Russia addressed above. As argued there, when the threat is a known major power, a balancing coalition is the obvious solution. Thus, if the West concludes that its security interests warrant extension of security guarantees against Russian expansion into Central Europe, NATO is well matched to this danger.

Consider next wars that do not threaten Western security, that is, wars between smaller states, but in which the West might intervene to protect non-security interests. In these cases, NATO is less important as a balancing coalition, since the United States and the major powers of Western Europe could each afford military capabilities sufficient to significantly influence smaller wars. Nevertheless, acting together—under NATO or the WEU—could achieve important efficiencies. Collective action spreads the risks of military intervention in the East across many countries, thereby increasing the willingness of Western countries to participate in peace-making missions. Countries that might see benefits in humanitarian intervention, but which were unwilling to incur the costs of maintaining capabilities for intervention or the risks of intervening on their own, would be more likely to intervene in a collective action. In addition to these benefits, foreign policy coordination could reduce the probability of political strains within the West; I discuss these potential benefits below in the section on concerts.

PREVENTING WAR IN THE WEST. NATO can play a major role in hedging against the growth of security competition in Western Europe by preserving America's role as a “defensive balancer.” NATO enables the United States implicitly to promise to protect all countries of Western Europe against one another. Probably most important, this American role would make whatever offensive potential remains in Europe less threatening, since countries would expect the United States to come to their defense. By moderating the security
dilemma that Western European countries might eventually face, the United States can reduce or eliminate the insecurity that pessimists believe is bound to generate security competition in Europe. In addition, the United States can contribute to deterrence, if this ever becomes necessary. Combined with the forces of the attacked country, the conventional capabilities of the United States and its even greater military potential should be sufficient to thwart any European expansionist.

Maintaining America’s military commitment would have the additional advantage of reducing pressures for nuclear proliferation, which could strain relations within the West, as well as the East. More specifically, by increasing German security, America’s European commitment should reduce German incentives for eventually acquiring nuclear weapons. If it lacked an American nuclear guarantee, Germany might conclude that it required nuclear weapons, especially if Russian foreign policy became more aggressive. Although this proliferation might provide some benefits (as discussed below), it will be unnecessary so long as German security remains high.

To meet these responsibilities, the United States would require capabilities for intervening in Europe. However, the United States could meet its commitment while appearing far less threatening than any European country that possessed comparable military forces. America’s distance from the continent greatly reduces how threatening its conventional capabilities will appear. Distance increases the time it would take to bring these forces to bear, making it harder to launch offensive operations but possible to guarantee a difficult war of attrition. In addition, America’s historical commitment to fighting in Europe only to oppose European hegemons reduces the prospect that the United States will come to be viewed as a threat to European security. As a result, adding American capabilities is not simply adding another pole to European multipolarity. Instead, because Western Europeans are likely to continue to view American capabilities as essentially defensive, the United States can increase political stability among the major powers across the entire continent.

To reduce doubts about its commitment to intervene in a European war, the United States should continue to deploy forces in Europe. Otherwise, with the United States safely separated from Europe, Western European states would be inclined to worry that a risk-taking aggressor would be especially likely to question whether the United States would run the risks of this intervention. These forward American forces would be valued more as a concrete symbol of America’s commitment than as an essential compo-
ent of its fighting capability. Consequently, American military deployments in Western Europe could be relatively small. The credibility of the U.S. commitment would depend, however, on its ability to deploy much larger forces to Europe in a timely fashion.

Keeping American forces in Europe will be politically infeasible if the principal justification were that Western Europe requires a defensive balancer. However, as argued above, there is a solid case for preserving NATO as a low-cost insurance policy against a resurgent Russia and as a means for achieving other Western objectives in the East. Fortunately, these other purposes of NATO can provide unofficial cover for an American presence that helps preserve good political relations in the West. Wide, if unofficial, recognition of this role for NATO should help build support for maintaining the alliance.

A WESTERN EUROPEAN ALLIANCE

In the Maastricht Treaty of December 1991 the EC, as part of its plan for moving toward a common foreign and security policy, decided to make the WEU the instrument of its increased defense cooperation. Although WEU members supported WEU “as a means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance,” we need to consider how effective the WEU would be without NATO: as the Cold War becomes more distant, judgments about the effectiveness of Western European security cooperation could influence both American and Western European determination to preserve NATO.


32. For the most part, even strong proponents of a greatly enhanced European defense identity have also stressed the importance of preserving strong trans-Atlantic links. An exception is Hugh De Santis, “The Graying of NATO,” Washington Quarterly, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Autumn 1991), pp. 51–65. Britain and the United States, however, have worried that the WEU could weaken NATO. On the one hand, an effective WEU could make NATO appear less necessary, thereby supporting American calls for withdrawing from Europe; on the other hand, if the WEU deploys forces of its own, it risks making the simultaneous maintenance of commitments to NATO appear too expensive. Concern about the latter possibility increased when some observers worried that France was interested in keeping the recently established Franco-German corps—intended to serve as the foundation for a WEU force—separate from NATO. The French position on the relationship between NATO and the WEU has been murky, and some observers believe France would like to see the WEU replace NATO. For a range of views see David S. Yost, “France and the West European defense identity,” Survival, Vol. 33, No. 4 (July/August 1991), pp. 327–351; Michael Clarke and Jane M.O. Sharp, “Defence and Security in the New Europe,”
RESURGENT RUSSIA. Would not an alliance of Western European countries be as effective as NATO in hedging against a resurgent Russia? The first concern is that the prospects for developing an effective WEU in the post-Soviet world are probably worse than the prospects for maintaining a restructured NATO. The problem is not one of resources—Western Europe possesses resources that are more than sufficient to balance effectively against Russia, especially now that Russia is judged both less able and less likely to challenge the West.33 Rather, the question is whether the WEU can effectively draw on these resources. Judging in structural terms, the WEU faces the same challenge facing NATO: as Josef Joffe argued recently, “if NATO has lost its rationale along with its rival, why should the EC/WEU do better?”34 In fact, NATO probably has somewhat better prospects for survival, since American participation reduces the costs to Western European countries of buying insurance. Judging from an organizational perspective, even though NATO is in the midst of a major restructuring,35 its well-established institutions and success in alliance cooperation appear to favor it over developing an essentially new military organization. Judging in terms of leadership, there is no clear leader for a Western European alliance, but differences in the military and foreign policy inclinations of the major Western European powers are sufficiently large to suggest that leadership will be required.

33. Before its disintegration, the Soviet Union produced approximately 15 percent of gross world product, while NATO Europe produced approximately 20 percent; Van Evera, “Why Europe Matters, Why the Third World Doesn’t,” pp. 6-7. Western economic advantages are now clearly greater, since the Russian economy is smaller than the Soviet economy and is struggling with a difficult economic transformation.


35. Major developments include: 1) promulgation of a new strategic concept, including redefinition of the challenges facing the alliance and changes in its military doctrine; see “The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept,” NATO, Press Service, Press Communiqué S-1(91)85, Brussels, November 7, 1991; and 2) development of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which is designed to open new channels of interaction between members of the Alliance and countries of Eastern Europe, thereby reducing misunderstandings and building trust; see “Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation,” NATO, Press Service, Press Communiqué S-1(91)86, Brussels, November 8, 1991; Flanagan, “NATO and Central and Eastern Europe”; and Kugler, NATO Military Strategy for the Post-Cold War Era.
Although the U.S. role in NATO will and should decline, NATO can continue to benefit from American leadership.\textsuperscript{36} Overall, the case is not overwhelming, but if the choice were one or the other, NATO is the safer bet.

The second concern is that removing the United States from the alliance would increase the probability that Germany would decide it needs nuclear weapons, which could in turn strain relations within the West, which could undermine the cohesion of the WEU. As discussed above, proliferation becomes more likely if Germany loses the extended nuclear deterrence which the United States presently provides. Germany might decide that French and British nuclear guarantees, even if offered, were inadequate for a variety of military and historical reasons.

\textbf{WAR IN THE EAST.} For deterring Russian attacks into Central Europe, NATO has an advantage over the WEU, in addition to the advantages discussed above. The military potential that the United States contributes to NATO is likely to be more valuable for extending deterrence to Central Europe than for deterring direct attacks against Western Europe. Protecting a country in Central Europe is militarily more difficult than defending the West; Western Europe might be able to protect itself with high confidence, but not to protect countries in Central Europe. Russian doubts about Western European capabilities could be especially problematic, since extended deterrence threats are generally less credible than threats to protect one’s own homeland, given the defender’s greater interests in defending its homeland.

With regard to smaller wars in Central Europe, the case for NATO over the WEU is not as strong. Western intervention for non-security reasons appears to be the clearest mission for an expanded WEU that is prepared to act separately from the United States. Non-security intervention appears to be the category in which Western European and American interests might diverge most,\textsuperscript{37} since Western Europe will have larger economic investments and trade links with the East and possibly stronger ethnic ties to populations that would be vulnerable.\textsuperscript{38} European proponents believe that a European

\textsuperscript{36} On leadership, see Joffe, “Collective security and the future of Europe,” pp. 45–46.
\textsuperscript{37} We should note, however, that this does not appear to have been the case in recent major events—the Gulf War and the war in the former Yugoslavia. See Trevor C. Salmon, “Testing times for European political cooperation: the Gulf and Yugoslavia, 1990–1992,” International Affairs (London), Vol. 68, No. 2 (April 1992), pp. 233–253; and Goodby, “Peacekeeping in the New Europe.” But see also Francois Heisbourg, “The Future of the Atlantic Alliance: Whither NATO, Whether NATO,” Washington Quarterly, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1992), p. 133, who argues that these differences are less important than the fact that there was a single EC policy.
\textsuperscript{38} However, see Larrabee, “Down and Out in Warsaw and Budapest,” who explains that immigration will significantly reduce the number of ethnic Germans in the East.
defense identity is necessary because divergences between Western European and American interests could create situations in which Western Europe needs to act on its own. Moreover, this is the case in which the military capabilities offered by the United States would be least valuable, since Western Europe can certainly afford the capabilities required for this type of intervention.

WAR IN THE WEST. The WEU, without NATO, lacks America as a defensive balancer, and therefore cannot make NATO’s contribution to the preservation of good political relations within the West. Western Europe would have to develop other means for hedging against strained relations and moderating the effects of the security dilemma. However, as following sections demonstrate, the alternatives are not promising.

In sum, the WEU has important shortcomings compared to NATO. NATO’s relative advantages include the prospect of better survival in the post-Soviet world, of enhanced extended deterrence commitments to oppose Russia in the East (if the West decides they are warranted), and of maintaining the United States as a hedge against strained relations in the West. The WEU could, however, complement NATO, supporting a common EC defense policy and providing political flexibility for Western Europe to launch non-security interventions on its own.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY

The term “collective security” is often a source of confusion, and compared to standard alliances its logic is more complicated and its effectiveness more contentious. I will use “collective security” narrowly to refer to arrangements in which each member state commits itself to oppose any aggressor from within the system. This description of collective security, as a system of all-against-one, allows for a spectrum of organizational possibilities, of varying institutional arrangements and geographical scope. However, much of what

39. However, some analysts argue that American leadership is required if the West is going to become involved in the East. See, for example, Goodby, “Peacekeeping in the New Europe,” pp. 163, 168; and Jane Sharp, “If Not NATO, Who?,” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol. 48, No. 8 (October 1992), pp. 29-32.
is frequently clustered under the label of collective security does not properly qualify, including standard alliances—like NATO—and certain forms of collective action, such as cases in which a number of countries join together on an *ad hoc* basis to oppose a specific aggression.41 Some analysts want to include all arms control and confidence-building measures under the label of collective security, but this broad definition only fuels confusion since not all collective security arrangements require arms control, and extensive arms control agreements are possible without collective security arrangements.

Proponents of collective security identify three reasons why collective security is preferable to leaving Europe without formal security arrangements between states.42 First, collective security enhances deterrence by promising more effective balancing against aggressors. Specifically, it enhances the probability that an aggressor will face a coalition of opposing states that possesses preponderant power. By comparison, without collective security, aggressors are likely to expect at most roughly equal opposition.43

Second, proponents argue that collective security will establish institutions that themselves encourage conditions favorable to continuing peace: by providing information useful for reducing concern about other states’ expansionist intentions, and by providing international fora for sharing ideas and strengthening shared values.


43. This claim is more contentious than it initially sounds. Some analysts have argued that under multipolarity (but not assuming collective security) aggressors are likely to face an overwhelming balancing coalition, compared to bipolarity which offers only a roughly equal balancing coalition. See Stephen Van Evera, “Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War,” in Lynn-Jones, ed., *The Cold War and After*, p. 222. This overwhelming opposition may be hard to explain in terms of balance-of-power logic, but does flow directly from “balance of threat” logic. Developing the latter set of arguments in a different context is Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987). Proponents of collective security go beyond balance of threat arguments, holding that under collective security states whose vital interests are not directly threatened will nevertheless join the opposing coalition. Their case draws on regime theory, especially states’ concern for reputation, and on sanctions for non-participation; see Kupchan and Kupchan, “Concerts, Collective Security and the Future of Europe,” pp. 126, 132. The problem with these arguments is that when cooperation or participation means joining a major power war that is otherwise avoidable, the costs of participation will overwhelmingly dominate the costs of damaged reputation and sanctions. As I discuss below, the prospects for coordinated policies in a major-power concert are greater because the issues at stake are less immediately vital.
Third, collective security is said to moderate the security dilemma. States require less offensive capability, since all states will contribute offense to defeat an aggressor. The transparency provided by collective security institutions helps here, reducing uncertainty about states' capabilities, thereby reducing misperceptions of intentions and pressures to build potentially more threatening forces.

The most commonly noted shortcoming of collective security is that states will fail to meet their commitments—states not directly threatened will stand aside, thereby permitting an aggressor to face less than the promised full opposition of the system. However, although this danger exists, the criticism does not deal a lethal blow to collective security. If the point of comparison is a system without all-against-one commitments, then although the magnitude of increased participation in balancing is hard to assess, its sign is unlikely to be negative.

Nevertheless, whether collective security would enhance deterrence is harder to determine. If states expect to be protected by an all-against-one response, they will under-prepare for their own defense, possibly leaving themselves vulnerable if other states then stand out the war. On the other hand, if states do not under-prepare, then a combined effort becomes less necessary and therefore somewhat less likely, and collective security does less to moderate the security dilemma.

The other key criticism is that collective security is feasible only when it is also unnecessary. A standard requirement for establishing and maintaining a collective security system is that all members are willing to accept the political status quo, and each is equally likely to pose a threat to the status quo at some time in the future. Critics hold that under these conditions collective security is unnecessary since peace is already ensured by good political relations between all states in the system. Proponents, pointing to the value of institutions and moderation of the security dilemma, counter

44. A good recent statement of this view is Joffe, "Collective Security and the Future of Europe."
45. Whether this is in fact the case would depend on whether the aggressor also had less capable military forces as a result of its participation in the collective security system.
46. On this point see Kupchan and Kupchan, "Concerts, Collective Security and the Future of Europe," p. 124. In fact, it may be sufficient that all the powers prefer the status quo to a costly war required to change it and to changes in the status quo that favor one or more of the other major powers. This qualification is important because it relaxes the criteria that determine when collective security is feasible, and thus weakens the argument that it is feasible only when unnecessary.
that this criticism ignores the potential of collective security to promote conditions that are conducive to peace.

This summary suggests significant doubts about the effectiveness of collective security. The following subsections identify further shortcomings: I argue that collective security’s basic logic is poorly matched to the West’s interests and capabilities for dealing with a resurgent Russia and wars in the East; its logic is better matched to the danger of war between the West’s major powers, but collective security nevertheless suffers a variety of shortcomings in that case.

**Resurgent Russia.** Collective security would not offer the West any clear advantages in dealing with a resurgent Russia: if the threat to the West were known to originate from a major power in the East, then the West should balance specifically against it; under these conditions, there is no reason to establish an organization designed to deal with a more diffuse set of threats and dangers. A Western alliance is ideal for performing this balancing mission.

Proponents counter that collective security is desirable because including Russia in a continent-wide system will increase Russian security, while excluding Russia will decrease its security. As discussed above, although the West should try to reduce the threat it poses to Russia, this does not require establishment of a collective security system. Extensive arms control and unilateral Western restraint is possible without collective security. Moreover, even though proponents claim that collective security will reduce Russian insecurity, as discussed in more detail below a collective security system could require the West to deploy military capabilities that would appear more threatening than the capabilities that NATO would require.

**War in the East.** Collective security suffers two shortcomings with regard to eastern wars. First, a continent-wide collective security system would commit the West to intervene in conflicts that it should stay out of, or at least that it will want to consider on a case-by-case basis. As we have seen, unlimited commitments to the East go far beyond the West’s interests. Discussions of collective security tend to overlook this issue by simply assuming that the West has security interests in keeping peace throughout Europe. Proponents of collective security respond that a looser system—a concert—provides leeway to intervene selectively, while providing a forum for consultations between Europe’s major powers.47 However, as I argue below,

47. See Kupchan and Kupchan, “Concerts, Collective Security and the Future of Europe.”
concert-like arrangements would be useful, but they are not best thought of as a loose form of collective security.

Second, even where the West’s interests warrant security commitments, collective security will not provide large benefits. Regarding eastern wars in which Russia is fighting to reassert control over some or all of Central Europe, a Western alliance is the best solution. Regarding eastern wars that do not threaten Western security, while preceding sections have identified reasons for pursuing collective action—for example, to spread the costs and risks of intervention—we should not confuse these rationales with those for developing a collective security system. The opposition of all-against-one, which collective security calls for to generate preponderant deterrent capabilities, is unnecessary when major powers are intervening in a war between smaller powers. If NATO decides intervention is justified, its capabilities would certainly be more than adequate. Contributions from other European countries might help spread further the costs and risks of deterrence and peace-making, but are unlikely to be decisive either in determining whether the West will intervene or determining whether intervention would be successful. Moreover, although the lack of a collective security commitment might somewhat reduce the probability that other countries would contribute to intervention, it would not preclude their involvement and, when appropriate, NATO could encourage them to participate.

WAR IN THE WEST. By elimination, a strong case for collective security depends on its ability to deal with the danger of war in the West, possibly joined by other powers. In addition to the potential shortcomings summarized in my basic description of collective security, here I argue that collective security suffers two additional shortcomings: first, proponents have exaggerated its potential to preserve good political relations; second, implementing anything more than a symbolic system in today’s Europe will be politically infeasible.

Ironically, collective security could play a role in undermining political relations between Europe’s major powers. Contrary to the claim that collective security arrangements moderate the security dilemma, the result could be just the opposite. To meet their collective security obligations, states might

48. Some NATO planners, however, have questioned NATO’s ability to field 65,000-70,000 soldiers to help the UN enforce a settlement in Bosnia, and have raised the possibility of seeking help from former Soviet-bloc countries. “U.S. Official Affirms a 40% Cut in Troops Based in Europe by ’96,” New York Times, March 30, 1993, p. 6.
have to deploy military forces with greater offensive capability than under other arrangements. For example, a state that planned to rely entirely on its own resources—without the help of allies—might deploy less offensive capability than it would be required to deploy to meet its collective security obligations.\footnote{In general, this will depend on geography and the offense-defense balance.} If the offense-defense balance favors defense, states should often find that a defensive strategy provides the greatest security.\footnote{Kupchan and Kupchan, “Concerts, Collective Security and the Future of Europe,” p. 136, argue that anarchy tends to produce robust offensive capabilities and that collective security reduces states’ need for offense, but neither of these claims should be true in general.} In these cases, pursuing collective security over other options could increase offensive capability in the system.

To better understand the nature of the problem, consider the offensive capabilities that effective European collective security would demand. Russia would be expected to come to the aid of France if France were attacked by Germany. This is likely to require Russia to have the ability to attack Germany effectively, requiring the ability to project massive conventional capabilities across much of the continent.\footnote{The possible exception would be if countries could come to the aid of the attacked country with defensive capabilities. This possibility appears to be less likely for collective security than for alliances. The political relations that characterize collective security—specifically, wide uncertainty about which state which will next challenge the system—are less conducive to stationing foreign troops on members’ territory. The geography of Europe also cuts against relying on transportable defensive capabilities, since the collective security system would include major powers that could only reach the attacked country by crossing the territory of the aggressor state. On when extended deterrence requires offense, see Stephen Van Evera, “Offense, Defense and Strategy: When is Offense Best?,” paper presented at the APSA annual meeting, September 1987.} Providing Germany with confidence that these capabilities would be employed only in reaction to its aggression could be difficult, if not impossible. Similarly, if Germany is to offer protection to Russia, from attack by say Japan or China, Germany would require massive power projection capabilities of its own. Similar capabilities would be required if Germany were going to offer protection to Ukraine. These capabilities could generate security concerns for Russia and quite possibly Germany’s Western European neighbors. German capabilities could be planned on the assumption that France and Britain, and possibly the United States, would also contribute to the offensive against Russia, thereby reducing the offensive requirements of each country and possibly resulting in no more offensive capability than if NATO planned to defend Ukraine. Nevertheless, Russia might view these forces as an overall Western capability, not individual countries’ capabilities.
Offensive capabilities will not have these undesirable political effects as long as Europe’s major powers remain confident about each others’ benign intentions.52 However, if political relations begin to deteriorate—which is when the military features and the deterrent potential of a collective security system would matter—the threatening appearance created by offensive military capabilities would then be likely to contribute to further worsening of European relations.

At a minimum, the political problems that collective security arrangements could generate create a tradeoff with any supposed contribution to enhancing deterrence. Even if collective security is the best way to maximize deterrence, it might not be the best way to preserve peace. The probability of major power war will depend on two sets of considerations: first, the quality of political relations—if relations stay as good as they are today, then preponderant deterrent capabilities will be unnecessary; second, on the quality of deterrent capabilities—assuming that countries’ motivations for war do not change, the probability of war decreases as the quality of deterrent arrangements improves. Strained political relations, fueled by the offensive capabilities required by collective security, could create incentives for war that exceed the greater credibility and military effectiveness that collective security might provide. This possibility is especially worrisome, since as today’s political relations are good enough to ensure peace among Europe’s major powers, a primary objective of a European security system should be preserving these good relations.

Compounding this shortcoming are serious doubts about feasibility. There appears to be little chance of implementing a collective security system in which Western European states take their obligations seriously. The threat from within Western Europe is now believed to be too small for the countries of Western Europe to restructure their forces to bring them into line with the requirements for opposing aggression from within the West. However, simply declaring a collective security system, without adjusting military strategy and forces accordingly, will do very little to moderate the security dilemma. Thus, agreeing to join a continent-wide collective security system is likely to have little effect on political relations or security in the West. The good news is that the declaration would not damage these currently good relations; the

52. We should recall (see note 46) that these are not necessary conditions for establishing collective security arrangements. When collective security is established under less promising conditions, effective offensive capabilities could create problems from the very beginning.
bad news is that it would leave the West without an effective hedge. If political relations do take a turn for the worse, the countries of Western Europe would find themselves poorly cushioned from the security dilemma. In short, collective security as a means of reducing the probability of war between Europe’s major powers can play little more than a symbolic role. A collective security system could be declared, but would not significantly influence countries’ force deployments. The key exception would be if the West decided to plan to protect Ukraine against Russia, in which case it might require larger offensive capabilities. However, if this is what collective security would amount to in practice, then the West should focus more directly on whether and how to make this commitment and not get confused by the additional complexities that necessarily accompany collective security arrangements.

CONCERTS—FOREIGN POLICY COORDINATION AMONG EUROPE’S MAJOR POWERS
The end of the Cold War has led many authors to declare that Europe is now prepared for a new Concert of Europe. Although a concert is often understood as a limited form of collective security, concerts do not include the basic commitment of all-against-one that defines a collective security system and produces its benefits, and therefore are best not included in this category. A concert strives to tap and to increase the willingness of the major powers to constrain and coordinate their foreign policies, thereby avoiding strained relations, misperceptions, and otherwise unforeseeable political and military clashes. Compared to collective security, the operation of a concert is not as easily defined by a single feature. Among the most basic features of a concert are the “rules of the road” designed to moderate competition

54. For related observations, see Betts, “Systems for Peace or Causes of War?,” p. 25, who notes in this regard that a concert system is hard to distinguish from traditional balance of power politics; and Zelikow, “The new Concert of Europe,” footnote 2.
between the systems’ major powers. Whereas collective security focuses on providing overwhelming deterrent capabilities, a concert focuses on preserving good political relations through diplomatic means.

An example of rules that could establish a concert, and which are especially relevant to post-Soviet Europe, are understandings to coordinate any intervention that is designed to protect smaller powers and to terminate conflicts between them. Major powers could agree to intervene only under specific conditions, for example, only if all major powers were willing to participate in the intervention; or only if all powers agreed that it was acceptable for one or more powers to intervene; or, if the major powers agreed that certain of them had greater interests in intervention (or non-intervention) in specific cases, the decision on whether to intervene could be transferred to a subgroup. Arrangements for coordination would be designed to constrain the major powers while at the same time providing flexibility commensurate with the diversity of their interests.

This coordination by the major powers could provide two types of benefits. First, essentially barring independent unilateral intervention eliminates an important potential source of tension between the major powers. If it intervened unilaterally, a country could generate fears that it was trying to advance its own foreign policy interests and gain advantages relative to other major powers, even if it were actually pursuing more acceptable goals, such as preventing a regional conflict from spreading, or protecting humanitarian interests. Such fears might then fuel concerns about the intervening country’s broader intentions, thereby giving impetus to more competitive policies. Multilateral intervention, or unilateral intervention approved by the relevant major powers, could reduce, if not eliminate, these concerns. Second, consultation and coordination prior to intervention could reduce the probability of unanticipated escalation—clashes between major powers resulting from their intervention on opposing sides of a regional conflict. Prior consultation increases the prospects for understanding why other states might object to intervention and how they might react, and for modifying policies accordingly.

A concert increases the prospects for coordination that already exist as a result of countries’ shared interests. By increasing consultation between the

56. Lauren, “Crisis Prevention in Nineteenth-Century Diplomacy,” provides a useful description of other elements that might be included in a concert: agreements to create buffer zones and demilitarized zones—designed to reduce the threat that major powers pose to each other—and approaches for preventing crises in third areas, thereby making intervention unnecessary.
major powers, the concert provides information that reduces the probability that a country would act unilaterally without recognizing that other major powers will object. In addition, by establishing the expectation that intervention will be coordinated, the concert increases the political costs that would follow uncoordinated intervention.

The prospects for a successful concert depend on the stakes involved. If the stakes are relatively low, compared to the value the major powers place on preserving good relations, then countries should be more willing to make compromises on intervention. For example, a major power is more likely to agree to forgo a humanitarian intervention than to forgo intervention motivated by national security concerns, since the latter would generally provide larger (often much larger) national benefits. Countries’ willingness to coordinate is also likely to increase with the quality of their political relationship. Good relations reduce the risks of attempting to coordinate. The expectation, for example, that other countries will honor their commitment to exercise restraint makes one’s own restraint more acceptable. In addition, the costs of failed cooperation would be smaller, since damage to one’s credibility and reputation are less costly when the opposing country is less dangerous.57

Two potential costs of entering into a concert should be raised. First, as already noted, breaking a commitment to coordinate could be more damaging to relations than pursuing the same action without having made such a commitment. In the former case, the intervening country is likely to be seen as acting in bad faith, in addition to pursuing an action that is potentially threatening on its own terms. Thus, whether a concert is desirable depends on estimates of how likely its members are to meet their commitments. Second, agreeing to coordinate intervention could reduce the effectiveness of extended deterrent threats, since major powers are less likely to meet their deterrent commitments if all major powers, or even a subset of them, must agree before intervening.

The following discussion examines the potential of concerts for dealing with wars in Central Europe. A concert in post-Soviet Europe could not play much of a direct role in the other types of war I have identified, since it would focus on coordinating the major powers’ policies toward third areas, not on changing their policies toward each other.

WAR IN THE EAST. Post-Soviet Europe might benefit from two sets of concert-like arrangements—coordination within the West and coordination between the West and Russia. However, cast in these more specific terms, this coordination may seem less grand than the term "concert" suggests. The considerations addressed above suggest optimism about the prospects for concert-like cooperation in Europe: the major powers enjoy good political relations and their stakes in most Central European conflicts will be limited.

A coordinated Western policy for intervention in the East could reduce the probability of political strains within the West."58 For historical and geographical reasons the country of greatest potential concern is Germany. Although German economic strength is now creating fear about German economic dominance of the continent,59 Germany’s relatively smaller military capability and its reluctance to employ these capabilities outside its borders have so far dampened the growth of security fears among its neighbors. However, unilateral independent German military intervention in the East, for example for purely humanitarian reasons, could undermine confidence in German goals and intentions, even if such undermining were unwarranted. These strains could be the early seeds of security fears within the West, fueling concern about German military capabilities and potential. To insure that intervention in the East does not generate these strains, Western countries could agree to intervene only in coordination with each other and to integrate their military capabilities for intervention.60 In fact, EC plans for establishing a common foreign and security policy have set this degree of coordination as an eventual goal.

The prospects for Western countries accepting restraints on non-security intervention should be greater than for security intervention, since the benefits are smaller. Thus, we expect that the West will have better prospects for coordinating restraint in intervention in wars between Central Europe’s

58. In addition to the benefits in the West, from Russia’s perspective, multilateral Western intervention would likely appear less threatening, since it would reduce the ability of countries to use non-security intervention as a cover for pursuing self-interested foreign policy objectives. The opposite is also possible, however—Russia could be more threatened because the intervention was backed up by greater overall capabilities. Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars, p. 107, notes, in addition, that a coalition may be as likely as an individual state to have mixed motives.


60. Of course, as noted above, the downside of requiring consensus to intervene is that the West might altogether fail to act. Zelikow, “The new Concert of Europe,” argues that EC decisions made at Maastricht, which require unanimous agreement for action, will undermine Western Europe’s ability to act effectively.
smaller countries than in wars that pose some security threat to Western Europe, most obviously a war involving Russia and also possibly Ukraine.

NATO or the EC/WEU are the obvious organizations for establishing Western coordination. A Western concert therefore does not require a new organization, but rather adds (or maybe simply clarifies61) another role for these organizations. The key to a coordinated Western policy is probably coordination within Western Europe. If only because of geography, the divergence of American and Western European policies is likely to create smaller problems. For example, the United States would be glad to see Western Europe effectively take the lead on humanitarian intervention, as U.S. policy toward the war of Yugoslavian disintegration has made clear.

The West might also want to develop concert-like arrangements with Russia, coordinating its decisions on non-security intervention with Russia, both to avoid generating Russian insecurity and to reduce the probability that Western intervention would escalate unpredictably to a clash with Russia. For example, the West might agree to consult with Russia before intervening in the East. Alternatively, the West could pursue more restrictive coordination, agreeing not to intervene without Russian consent, or to intervene only in coordination with Russia. In return, Russia would be expected to accept similar restrictions.62 Although the more stringent restrictions would grant Russia a veto on Western actions, this might be warranted when Western intervention would be especially threatening or likely to lead to escalation. Western efforts to coordinate with Russia deserve careful attention, since the most probable path to major power war in Europe may well be through major power intervention in wars started by smaller powers.

There is presently not an organization tailored for this coordination between the West and Russia. However, by turning to the United Nations Security Council, the West has enabled the Security Council to serve many of these functions—providing among other things a forum in which Russia could veto Western proposals for intervention. Of course, the West could always choose to act without a UN mandate. However, use of the Security Council—in the Gulf War and more recently in the war in the former Yu-

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gosslavia—may be establishing expectations that will discourage independent Western action.63

DEFENSIVE UNILATERAL SECURITY
In the fifth and final security structure I assess—defensive unilateral security—countries agree to defend themselves by defensive means. The motivation and design of a defensive unilateral security structure is guided by the advantages of moderating the security dilemma—avoiding the negative political consequences that can flow from threatening military postures—while recognizing countries’ continuing need to defend themselves.

Defensive unilateral security applies best when countries are highly uncertain about the source of future threats.54 Under this condition, arranging standard balancing alliances is difficult, since countries are unsure who to oppose. Thus, defensive unilateral security and collective security apply in similar situations, but are guided by different priorities: collective security gives priority to maximizing deterrence by guaranteeing that aggressors will face overwhelming opposition, whereas defensive unilateral security gives priority to preserving or improving good political relations by moderating the security dilemma.

Defensive unilateral security calls for the major powers to reduce their offensive capabilities to a minimum.65 States would try to reduce their requirements for offense through unilateral means and multilateral arms control. Arms control agreements would limit offense, thereby shifting the balance of deployed forces toward defense, and provide for extensive monitoring of military capabilities.66

Is defensive unilateral security effective if deterrence becomes necessary? Defensive unilateral security leaves states to fend for themselves; states’ security will therefore depend partly on the offense-defense balance. If the aggressor attacks without first breaking out of the arms control agreement,

63. On U.S. modification of its position on UN policy for ending the war in Bosnia in reaction to Russian requests see Paul Lewis, “UN Postpones Enforcing Ban on Serb Flights,” New York Times, March 25, 1993, p. 3.
64. My analysis of other security structures recognizes the benefits of moderating the security dilemma under other conditions—for example, when discussing cases in which balancing is appropriate, I stress the importance of NATO avoiding force postures that threaten Russia.
65. However, even when feasible, this shift to defensive postures would usually not protect small states against large ones.
66. Transparency provided by monitoring might be even more valuable under defensive unilateral security than under collective security, since a buildup of offensive forces would more clearly violate the arms control agreement.
and if the balance of deployed forces favors defense, the attacker will have poor prospects for prevailing in a short war.\textsuperscript{67}

If, however, the aggressor first launches a military buildup before attacking, then arms-race stability matters, making the offense-defense balance of available technology (distinguished from deployed technology) more important. When defense has an advantage, good monitoring and response capabilities should enable states of comparable size to continue to protect themselves effectively by launching a defensive buildup. On the other hand, when defense lacks a clear advantage over offense, potential victims will need help.

One solution is a security arrangement in which states commit themselves to break out of the defensive regime if another state violates it, and to join against the violator if it launches an attack. In a certain sense this is really only a disguised form of collective security, since when offense has the advantage each state is depending partly on the combined effort of others to deter aggressors.\textsuperscript{68}

This important similarity, however, should not be allowed to obscure the significant difference between these approaches. By pushing offensive capabilities far into the background, defensive unilateral security makes military capabilities less likely to generate negative political consequences. Year in and year out, major powers would lack effective offensive capabilities. By continuing to meet the arms agreement’s ban on building offensive capabilities, countries would signal goals consistent with the agreement’s status quo objectives.\textsuperscript{69} Thus, keeping offensive capabilities in the background should be quite different politically, as well as militarily, from actually deploying them.

\textsuperscript{67}. Countries’ size and wealth also matter: even if defense has the advantage, small states may be unable to protect themselves against much larger or richer states.

\textsuperscript{68}. One objection is that a defensive unilateral security regime reinforced by the system’s potential for offensive rearmament will fail because member states will not rearm in response to violators of the arms control agreement. Although this failure to meet commitments is certainly possible, the problem of non-participation seems no more severe than in a standard collective security arrangement in which states not directly threatened by an aggressor decide to stand out the war.

\textsuperscript{69}. A possible analogy may be found in nuclear non-proliferation. Although many powers have the ability to build nuclear weapons, which they have not exercised, countries do not view these non-proliferators as though they have built nuclear weapons and are nuclear weapons states. A Germany that has the potential to build nuclear weapons is not viewed in the same way as a Germany that has deployed an extensive nuclear arsenal. By raising this analogy I do not mean to suggest that proliferation is necessarily bad or that nuclear forces are necessarily offensive. As discussed below, their implications are partially dependent on context.
A basic criticism claims that defensive unilateral security cannot meet its primary objective of preserving good political relations. According to this argument, good political relations are at least as likely to be damaged by the emergence of a greedy country—one motivated to expand for reasons other than increasing its security—as by a highly insecure state. Defensive unilateral security is not well matched to this case because it gives priority to preventing war by reducing insecurity. If peace is most likely to be challenged by the rise of a state primarily motivated by greed, then a security system should emphasize the overriding determination and capability of its members to crush aggressors.

In this case, collective security, based on offensive capabilities dedicated to countering aggression, is more likely to succeed, not only because it holds out the possibility of overwhelming opposition, but also because it threatens to make losing a war very costly. Ideally, this combination of high risks and the clear futility of aggression might also stop greedy states from developing in the first place, for example by increasing the domestic opposition against proponents of opportunistic expansion. Thus, proponents of defensive unilateral security should be confident either that insecurity is the primary threat to peace, or that defense has a large advantage over offense.

In theory at least, defensive unilateral security could be implemented in two complementary ways—shifting to non-offensive conventional postures, and proliferating nuclear weapons.

**NON-OFFENSIVE CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE.** States relying on conventional forces would deploy forces that could effectively defend their borders, but provide little capability to project power far beyond them. This approach could build on plans for non-offensive defense that were developed in the context of the NATO–Warsaw Pact confrontation. According to proponents, although no effective conventional posture could be made purely defensive, limiting those weapons which are especially valuable for offensive operations could significantly shift the balance of deployed capabilities toward defense. Although a consensus did not exist, tanks, mobile air defenses, and bridge laying equipment were commonly cited as prime targets for severe limitation. By comparison, anti-tank weapons, close-support aircraft, and rapidly-de-

ployable barriers were generally believed to favor defensive operations. Skeptics, however, argued that the conventional forces required for defense and for offense were quite similar, making non-offensive defense militarily infeasible, even if countries could reach highly restrictive agreements.

Plans for non-offensive conventional postures in a multi-polar Europe confront complications that did not exist in the simpler bipolar division. If all major European powers are assumed to be equally likely to fight each other, there exist a large number of dyads that must be balanced. Making matters worse, countries might want confidence that their forces would work against a coalition of other powers. If so, they will be dissatisfied even with plans that manage to balance all of the dyads.

These concerns are evident in the current debate. A recent proposal for transforming the conventional military postures of all European countries combines a variety of quantitative and qualitative limits to create defensive advantages. Using an estimate of the average density of forces required to protect a given distance of border, the total size of each country’s forces would be based on the length of its border. Offensive potential would be further constrained by limits on types of forces, logistical support, and the movement and concentration of forces.

But critics have already argued that this plan (and probably any plan that does not rest on specific assumptions about the composition of future coalitions) suffers serious problems. For example, countries with long borders end up with forces that have extensive offensive potential; this problem is exacerbated by thin force-to-space ratios, which increase the prospects for successful offensives; and countering this problem by allowing high force-to-space ratios results in larger conventional forces than were deployed dur-


ing the Cold War, which is politically infeasible. Whether these problems can be overcome by different plans is a question that awaits further study.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS. A second possibility is to rely on nuclear weapons to provide the major powers with highly defensive military postures. Whereas designing an effective defensive conventional posture faces a variety of military-technical difficulties, nuclear weapons are commonly believed to have brought a revolution in favor of defense for countries that possess the wealth and expertise to deploy survivable arsenals. Nuclear proliferation in Europe, however, could increase some states' insecurity. Thus, despite the merits of the nuclear revolution argument, proliferation is not a straightforward solution.

A country with a survivable nuclear arsenal possesses a powerful deterrent to attacks against its homeland, since the aggressor is vulnerable to devastating nuclear retaliation in response to full-scale conventional aggression. Even when the aggressor also possesses a survivable nuclear arsenal, nuclear weapons are likely to favor the defender. Although the risks of nuclear war would be shared, the defender is likely to have greater resolve, since, unlike the aggressor, its political survival is immediately at stake.

Because the forces required for retaliation need not threaten other countries' nuclear retaliatory forces, all the major powers could simultaneously maintain nuclear postures dedicated to primarily defensive missions. An arms control agreement could insure easy maintenance of retaliatory capabilities: agreements would limit counterforce capabilities, while allowing arsenals sufficiently large to insure that no combination of countries could acquire a significant damage-limitation capability.

Nuclear weapons eliminate two of the potential shortcomings of defensive unilateral security relative to collective security. First, because defense overwhelmingly dominates, nuclear weapons eliminate the need for states to rely on each other if the arms control agreement breaks down. Second, unlike


conventional denial capabilities, nuclear retaliatory capabilities threaten extremely high costs; by making aggression extremely risky they increase the prospects of deterring greedy states.

Since four of Europe’s five current major powers (including the United States) currently have nuclear arsenals, in effect this approach calls for Germany to deploy a survivable arsenal of its own. Other countries, such as Ukraine, might emerge as major powers or face security problems that cannot be solved with conventional forces, and conclude that they also deserve or require nuclear weapons.

The case for proliferation as the means for providing defensive postures is not, however, as clear as this discussion so far suggests. Even retaliatory/countervalue nuclear weapons are not purely defensive under all conditions. Whether the proliferation of survivable nuclear capabilities increases security throughout the system depends on the military status quo. If all countries are going from non-nuclear to nuclear status, then the defensive advantage of nuclear weapons could increase all countries’ security. On the other hand, if some countries already have nuclear arsenals, then the addition of new nuclear powers could decrease the security of old nuclear powers.

Both military and political considerations could fuel this insecurity. The military logic is straightforward: the original nuclear powers could see the

76. Requiring each country to maintain survivable retaliatory capabilities of its own, under the full range of attack scenarios, could also require improvements in current Western European arsenals. Although politically unrealistic today, this would be especially demanding if British and French arsenals had to be survivable against all of America’s counterforce.

77. On Ukraine’s growing reluctance to accept non-nuclear status, see Erlanger, “Ukraine and Arms Accords: Kiev Reluctant to Say ‘I Do’.”

78. In addition to the issues discussed below, proliferation raises a variety of other concerns not dealt with here. For example, acquisition of nuclear forces by major European powers could undermine efforts to slow proliferation by smaller European powers that are not well equipped to maintain secure and survivable capabilities. Nuclear weapons would provide far less security under these conditions. Vulnerable forces and vulnerable command and control can create incentives for preemptive and preventive war and can fuel competition between states already competing for security. Second, the dissolution of the Soviet Union is providing a disquieting reminder that the security provided by nuclear weapons depends on stable and clear-headed political regimes. Current political turmoil in the former Soviet Union raises the possibility of nuclear weapons that are not under strict political control and that might be inadequately protected from theft and diversion. See Kurt M. Campbell, Ashton B. Carter, Steven E. Miller, and Charles A. Zraket, Soviet Nuclear Fission: Control of the Nuclear Arsenal in a Disintegrating Soviet Union, CSIA Studies in International Security No. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, 1991). The security provided by nuclear weapons also depends on responsible leaders who do not suffer extreme misperceptions about either threats to their country’s security or their ability to conquer other countries. To the extent that over the very long term other powers are going to experience severe political upheavals or severely confused leaders, there is additional risk in relying increasingly on nuclear weapons.
emergence of new nuclear powers as reducing their ability to deter conventional attacks. It would remain true, as argued above, that a defender’s nuclear arsenal would continue to contribute to deterrence of conventional war following the proliferator’s acquisition of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, proliferation is likely to reduce the defender’s confidence that its deterrent threats are sufficiently credible. The political logic follows along a similar track: the new nuclear arsenal, because it reduces the effectiveness of the defender’s deterrent, appears to the defender as offense and could therefore suggest malign intentions. In short, increasing the number of nuclear states is not necessarily an across-the-board shift toward enhanced deterrence and, therefore, toward defense.

Consider, for example, German acquisition of nuclear weapons. This could appear threatening to the republics of the former Soviet Union and possibly to Germany’s Western European neighbors. Facing a non-nuclear Germany, Russia can count on its nuclear weapons to deter conventional attacks against its homeland and possibly against other former Soviet republics and, to a lesser extent, against other countries in Central Europe. Russian leaders might therefore see German acquisition of nuclear capabilities as reducing Russia’s ability to deter German conventional attacks, especially attacks that did not immediately reach into Russian territory.

Of course, over time these new nuclear powers could become part of the accepted political and military status quo. Especially if proliferation of nuclear weapons were combined with a shift toward non-offensive conventional postures—which would make any reduction in the effectiveness of nuclear deterrents less worrisome—tensions and fears should fade as the new equilibrium is fully established.

RESURGENT RUSSIA. A shift to defensive unilateral security has no clear advantages for dealing with the danger of a resurgent Russia. Although reducing the military threats that face Russia might reduce the probability that Russia would resort to expansionist policies, implementing conventional defensive postures in all Western countries is unnecessary. Instead, as dis-

79. This example highlights the importance of the status quo. Although starting from superiority and moving to mutual vulnerability can damage relations, it is also true that when starting from mutual vulnerability, efforts to gain superiority require offensive policies, which are likely to damage political relations. See Glaser, Analyzing Strategic Nuclear Policy, chapter five.
80. While the Soviet Union still existed, Jack Snyder offered a domestic political argument supporting this point; see Snyder, “The Transformation of the Soviet Empire: Consequences for International Peace,” in Oye, Lieber and Rothchild, Eagle in a New World, pp. 262–263.
cussed above, the West can achieve this objective by making sure that the *overall* Western capability poses little threat to Russian security. It is true that German acquisition of nuclear weapons could enhance its ability to deter Russia, but this would be unnecessary if U.S. nuclear guarantees are preserved in NATO.

**WAR IN THE EAST.** The benefits offered by unilateral defensive security depend on the type of eastern war. Consider first Russian attacks into Central Europe. The key potential threat to Russian security will be from the West, since Russia’s size and nuclear force should enable it to maintain confidence in its ability to defend against its Central European neighbors, especially if they do not acquire nuclear arsenals. Of course, Russia might exaggerate and misperceive the conventional threat posed by its larger neighbors, for example Ukraine, but even these fears should be greatly moderated by Russia’s military advantages. Thus, adding defensive postures in Central Europe to an already defensive NATO would do little to reduce Russia’s insecurity. In addition, defensive restructuring of Russia’s military is unlikely to reduce the insecurity of its Central European neighbors significantly. Russia’s overall power is simply too great to be converted into a force that is unthreatening. Eliminating its neighbors’ insecurity would be valuable, since the insecurity might provoke reactions—like building nuclear weapons— which would threaten Russian security. Unfortunately, a shift toward defensive conventional force postures almost certainly cannot meet this challenge.

Consider next the case of war between smaller powers in Central Europe. Some proponents have argued that defensive postures could play a valuable role here, especially if the country most likely to have revisionist objectives (consider Hungary versus Rumania) is the smaller country. Although the military possibilities for establishing effective defensive capabilities have to be studied on a case-by-case basis, the situation does appear to be politically ripe for pursuing defensive postures; relations are good enough to allow cooperation but the potential for intensified tensions and future conflict is generally recognized.

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81. Although three former Soviet republics, in addition to Russia, have nuclear forces deployed on their territory, they agreed in a protocol to the START Treaty to become non-nuclear states. Barbara Crossette, “4 Ex-Soviet States and U.S. in Accord on 1991 Arms Pact,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1992, p. 1; however, Ukraine has not yet ratified the accord (see note 77).
82. On the potential for misperceptions and possible solutions see Hopf, “Managing Soviet Disintegration: A Demand for Behavioral Regimes.”
A potential shortcoming of continent-wide conventional defensive security is that, if it were highly effective, it might leave the major powers without the ability to intervene in Central Europe. A solution might be to permit multi-national power projection forces designed specifically for intervention in wars between smaller powers, while leaving the major powers with little capability to intervene on their own or to attack each other.

**WAR IN THE WEST.** Although plans for defensive unilateral security are in many ways well matched to the situation in the West—characterized by uncertainty about which country might eventually adopt expansionist policies, and the importance of preserving good political relations—they nevertheless suffer numerous shortcomings. Regarding conventional force postures, beyond the questions about military feasibility addressed above, there must be added grave doubts about the current political feasibility of non-offensive defense. A full-scale restructuring of the conventional forces of individual Western European states would probably require large investments at a time when NATO countries are significantly decreasing defense spending. Furthermore, the whole idea of investing in forces to protect against other Western European states would appear entirely out of step with the on-going plans for deepening the political integration of Western Europe, even taking into account doubts generated by recent troubles with the Maastricht agreement. Finally, although less basic, implementing defensive conventional postures would probably conflict with current NATO plans for establishing multi-national corps, and could therefore strain the alliance. In short, although the case for conventional defensive unilateral security is logically sound—calling for a highly conservative hedge—the effort required is out of proportion to its distant and uncertain benefits.

These military-technical and political problems suggest that, at most, plans for transforming all of Europe to non-offensive conventional postures should be put on the back burner. They are worth studying, but have little prospect of being implemented until relations in the West begin to sour. At that point, if militarily feasible, there might be time to implement conventional military policies that would slow the growth of insecurity and tensions between Western Europe’s major powers.

The case against using nuclear proliferation to achieve defensive postures is quite different. Germany would have good prospects for developing a survivable nuclear deterrent. However, as discussed above, German acquisition of a nuclear arsenal might generate more insecurity in Russia, and possibly the rest of Europe, than it would provide security to Germany. At
least during the transition period, relations between Europe’s major powers would probably deteriorate, not improve. Thus, although limited nuclear proliferation might be a good long-term strategy for insuring European stability, security arrangements that avoid this disruption are preferable, at least until the on-going transformation brought by Soviet disintegration is complete and good political relations between the West and Russia, as well as relations within the West, are firmly cemented. Also counting against nuclear proliferation is the virtual lack of political support in Germany (and the rest of Europe) for such a move, although this might change if the United States were to withdraw from Europe.84

Implications for Today’s Europe

Systematic assessment of the dangers and responsibilities for which the West should prepare, and measurement of the ability of different security structures to meet these objectives, reveal a multi-faceted case for preserving NATO. NATO can play a valuable role in hedging against a resurgent Russia; if warranted by Western interests, NATO can effectively extend security guarantees to countries in Central Europe and intervene for humanitarian purposes; and, by preserving the American presence in Europe, NATO can insure against the possibility that security concerns will begin to divide Western Europe’s major powers. Because a resurgent Russia might be motivated by insecurity, the West should avoid policies that could appear provocative and fuel misperceptions of its intentions; NATO can achieve this objective without expanding its membership to include Russia in a continent-wide security organization.

A Western European alliance could meet the first two of these responsibilities, but not as effectively: without the United States, Western European security guarantees to protect Central European states from Russia would probably be less credible; and American participation can increase the prospects that a Western alliance will survive in the post-Soviet world. Probably more important, the WEU could not substitute for NATO in hedging against deteriorating relations within the West: it eliminates America’s role as a defensive balancer in Western Europe; and American withdrawal from Europe increases the probability of German nuclear proliferation, which could gen-

erate security concerns in both East and West. Thus, although the WEU can complement NATO—providing flexibility for Western Europe to act militarily on its own—a Western European alliance would be an ineffective substitute for NATO.

In addition to these purposes, NATO or the EC/WEU can serve valuable concert-like functions, providing the institutional arrangements for coordinating Western policy in Central Europe. The West should also coordinate these policies with Russia, which will require developing shared understandings and expectations for intervention in Central Europe.

The other basic alternatives—continent-wide collective security and defensive unilateral security structures—turn out to be of interest primarily for dealing with conflict in the West. However, in anything more than symbolic form, both are now infeasible for political reasons; and conventional defensive security may be infeasible for military-technical reasons as well. Moreover, there are strong reasons for doubting whether a continent-wide collective security structure would be the best way to preserve good political relations in Europe.

This conclusion raises the question of how best to preserve NATO. Since this question has received extensive attention, I offer only a few observations. Although all members of the alliance currently favor its continuation, NATO’s future is not assured. One set of challenges stems from doubts about the necessity of maintaining the alliance now that Western Europe no longer faces a major military threat. The strongest case for a post-Soviet NATO is that it is both an effective means for protecting Western interests in Central Europe and a prudent insurance policy against unlikely but large dangers, including a major power threat from the East and security competition within the West.

Selling the wisdom of a long-term Western policy that invests relatively small amounts now to prevent large future dangers will require strong political leadership. This insurance policy will only sell if it costs relatively


86. This formulation is consistent with the alliance’s new strategic concept, which describes the new strategic environment as characterized primarily by uncertainty about future dangers and argues that although the political approach to security will become increasingly important, the “military dimension remains essential.” “The Alliance’s New Strategic Concept,” NATO, Press Service, Press Communiqué S-1(91)85, Brussels, November 7, 1991.
little. American forces in Europe should probably be reduced below the level required to retain a powerful fighting capability (generally believed to be a single army corps). Trading some military capability to reduce costs is appropriate, because American forces will serve primarily political purposes—symbolizing America's military commitment to Western Europe and helping to preserve a command structure and plans for reconstitution that could be called upon if larger forces are ever required.

A second set of challenges stems from the potential for increased tensions across the Atlantic. With the West facing a dramatically reduced external threat, all parties have smaller incentives to compromise in disputes that could arise, for example, over reduced American influence in the alliance, over the proper relationship between NATO and other European security organizations, and over trade issues. While accepting reduced influence, the United States can reasonably insist that development of WEU forces not draw resources away from NATO, which is especially important as Western countries cut their defense budgets.


89. Many proponents have made this basic point. See, for example, Treverton, "Elements of a New European Security Order." However, for a thorough analysis that concludes in favor of larger forward-deployed forces, see Richard L. Kugler, The Future of U.S. Military Presence in Europe: Force Requirements for the Post–Cold War Era, R-4194-EUCOM/NA (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1992).


With war raging in the former Yugoslavia and in former republics of the Soviet Union, and with optimists proclaiming that Western Europe will enjoy peace indefinitely, buying insurance against future threats to Western security may appear a misguided luxury. However, unless we are entirely confident that war between Europe’s major powers is impossible, developing a long-term policy for insuring this peace should be an important component of Western policy. Critics of this view suggest that preserving NATO somehow interferes with the West’s ability to address more pressing problems in Central Europe.92 But insuring against threats to the West will neither impair the West’s ability to employ increasingly important economic and diplomatic instruments to promote peace, nor reduce its ability to launch humanitarian intervention. NATO is best matched to the full spectrum of challenges the West faces in the post-Soviet era.