

Vital U.S. interests in Europe are limited and secure

1. Preventing the rise of a hostile hegemonic rival, primarily through the existing balance of power in the region
2. Maintaining access to a prosperous market

Security and economic environment in Europe radically improved in post-Cold War world

- **Post-WWII (1945):** War-torn western Europe threatened by a Soviet Union that could credibly conquer and organize its industrial base, accrue power—that posed a direct threat to the United States
- **Cold War:** NATO military alliance (1949)—designed to “keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down”—was important for America’s security; balance of power between U.S./NATO and Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact allows for “long peace”
- **Cold War ends (1989–1991):** USSR overextends, overspends—its economy and collapses, bringing about its dissolution
- **“Unipolar moment” begins:** U.S. remains forward deployed even though the Cold War ends; Europe prospers but demobilizes due to (1) U.S. security guarantees and (2) vanishing Soviet threat
- **Today:** Europe safe, prosperous, and free; no other nation-state threatens, Russia a shadow of former USSR; this U.S.-enabled success means current U.S. force posture is misaligned from the strategic situation

Massive U.S. military presence in Europe is a Cold War relic, not based on today’s strategic reality

- EU dominates Russia in key metrics: **3½:1 population, 11:1 GDP, and 4:1 military spending**
- Germany-France alone are capable of balancing today’s Russia, let alone NATO-Europe; U.S., U.K., and France deter Russia with nuclear weapons
- U.S. troop presence persists, encouraging Europe to “cheap ride” on U.S. defense welfare; only **6 of 28** non-U.S. NATO members meet 2% of GDP military spending obligation
- NATO military imbalance burdens the U.S.—Europe over-reliant on U.S. for Europe’s security; U.S. forces in Europe have declined from **341K** in 1989 to **65K** today—they should decline further

Status quo creates weak allies, overextends the U.S.—Europe can and should share burden of its defense

- In a necessary military alliance, America would benefit from strong, capable partners—currently, it is disadvantaged by weak European states
- U.S. protection discourages European autonomy, enables free-riding, and weakens European allies; 22 NATO allies fail to spend 2% of GDP on military, and more important, a small fraction of European assets is readily deployable
- U.S. protection encourages “reckless driving,” where—expecting U.S. military backing—leaders take risks they otherwise would not; this could entangle the U.S. in local conflicts against our interests
- Extending U.S. security commitments to disputed regions in weak states makes it more likely the U.S. is dragged into a war with no direct interest at stake
- NATO expansion—viewed by Moscow as a security threat—harms U.S.-Russia relations and blocks progress on areas of mutual concern, such as arms control and counterterrorism efforts

Wealthy European allies should assume more of the defense burden for Europe

- **Halt NATO expansion:** Adding weak, vulnerable members increases U.S. security commitments and dilutes NATO’s credibility; adding Ukraine and Georgia would immediately put the U.S. at risk of war with nuclear superpower Russia; expansion should end
- **End European Deterrence (Reassurance) Initiative (EDI):** EDI is a subsidy started by President Obama in 2014 to reassure rich European allies; it grew to **\$6.5B in FY 2019**—but NATO is Europe’s already deterrent initiative; the U.S. provides too much reassurance already; NATO should retrench and reform to clarify that Europe defends with U.S. help, not we defend with their help
- **Force NATO-Europe to meet “Four 30s” benchmarks:** U.S. Cold War-era military deployments discourage European military investments and integration—reducing U.S. troops will signal to Europe it must get its act together so all members take seriously Article 3 calls to “maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack”
- **Strengthen productive U.S.-Europe engagement:** Deepen trade ties, diplomatic cooperation, and intelligence-sharing with Europe