

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

TRANSATLANTIC FORCE PROJECTION,  
WHAT IS THE BEST SOLUTION:  
U.S., NATO, EU OR A COALITION?

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This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

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U.S. Army War College  
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## Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved*  
*OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE <b>18 MAR 2005</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED -			
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Transatlantic Force Protection, What is the Best Solution U.S., NATO, EU or a Coalition?</b>		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S) <b>Ronald Harmsma</b>		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>See attached.</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>26</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			



## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: COL Ronald E. Harmsma  
TITLE: Transatlantic Force Projection, what is the best solution: U.S., NATO, EU or a Coalition?  
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project  
DATE: 15 February 2005 PAGES: 26 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

When the international community considers initiating a crisis response operation, there are numerous factors to consider in the decision making process. These factors vary from military, to the information, diplomatic, legal, intelligence, finance and economic elements of national power. Assuming that an intervention by military means is part of the solution, and assuming that a Western type projection force originating in the transatlantic region is the best alternative, there are several options for generating this force: a rapid deployable U.S. force, the NATO Response Force (or elements of it), one or more of the EU Battlegroups, or, a tailor made Coalition Force.

This research paper addresses the different Western force alternatives in relation to national elements of power. It discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the different alternatives for Western force projection, it compares the different alternatives with the relevant elements of national power involved in the decision making process, it focuses on the question of which of the elements of national power are decisive in the decision making process, and it concludes with a recommendation for the best solution for Western force projection.



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## TRANSATLANTIC FORCE PROJECTION, WHAT IS THE BEST SOLUTION: U.S., NATO, EU OR A COALITION?

We are guided by the conviction that no nation can build a safer, better world alone. Alliances and multilateral institutions can multiply the strength of freedom-loving nations.

— George Bush, The National Security Strategy

When the international community considers initiating a crisis response operation, there are numerous factors to consider in the decision making process. These factors vary from military, to the information, diplomatic, legal, intelligence, finance and economic elements of national power. Numerous players are involved in this. The “stricken nation”, as well as many other countries, will have an interest in solving the conflict. This includes neighbor countries and other countries with interests in that particular region. Also, organizations like the United Nations (UN) and regional organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) or the African Union (AU) can have an interest in solving the issues.

Assuming that an intervention by military means is part of the solution, and assuming that a Western type projection force originating in the transatlantic region is the best alternative, there are several options for generating this force:

- A rapid deployable U.S. force,
- The NATO Response Force (or elements of it),
- One or more of the EU Battlegroups, or,
- A tailor made Coalition Force.

The purpose of this research paper is to address the different Western force alternatives in relation to national elements of power. First it will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the different alternatives for Western force projection. Then it will compare the different alternatives with the relevant elements of national power involved in the decision making process, by using suitability, feasibility, and acceptability criteria. It will focus on the question of which of the elements of national power are decisive in the decision making process, and after analyzing the different force projection alternatives in relation to the elements of national power, it will conclude with a recommendation for the best solution for Western force projection.

## THE DIFFERENT FORCE PROJECTION ALTERNATIVES

### RAPID DEPLOYABLE U.S. FORCES

There are several concepts for U.S. rapid deployable forces. Looking at those U.S. forces most likely to be used in a scenario in the transatlantic region, the primary focus of this study will be on the rapid deployable forces, forward deployed, like Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCT), the Southern European Task Force (SETAF), and Marine Expeditionary Forces. Deployments of other regular army units and elements have a more ad hoc character and are therefore not discussed.

#### **SBCT: General**

Under Chief of Staff General Shinseki, the generic U.S. Army goal for force projection was to deploy a brigade anywhere in the world in 96 hours after liftoff, a division on the ground in 120 hours, and five divisions in theater in 30 days.<sup>1</sup> To meet these criteria, the concept of a rapid deployable brigade combat team was developed. Such a brigade combat team should be a full-spectrum, wheeled force, rapidly deployable to any operational environment (with C-5 and C-17 aircraft) against all future threats. With the introduction of the Stryker armored vehicle<sup>2</sup>, the SBCT concept was meant to bridge the gap between the Army's current light and heavy forces. In December 2003 the Department of Defense approved plans for the Army to field six SBCTs, with one in the (Pennsylvania) National Guard. The combat component of a SBCT would consist of three wheeled infantry battalions, augmented with combat support units and combat service support units.<sup>3</sup> Depending on the scenario, the total size could be as large as 4,200 soldiers.

#### SBCT

Command Element: Brigade Headquarters (commanded by an O-6)  
Major units: 3 Infantry Battalions  
RSTA Squadron<sup>4</sup>  
Artillery Battalion  
Anti-Tank Company  
Signal Company  
Engineer Company  
Military Intelligence Company  
Brigade service battalion

#### **SBCT: Strengths and Weaknesses**

Although current army plans focus on enhancing aviation (UAV capabilities), fire support, network, and sensor capability of the SBCTs, the SBCTs are primarily designed for employment in small-scale operations in complex and urban terrain. The SBCTs are not foreseen to be an

early-entry force, but rather to fill the gap between early-entry forces and heavier follow-on forces. Furthermore, the SBCT does not include all necessary enablers, to include the lack of air elements in the SBCT organic structure. This makes SBCTs dependent on the other services for essential support, such as strategic lift and air support. Also, logistic support at theater level will have to come from other units, as well as reception, staging and onward movement capabilities.

#### **SETAF: General**

Like SBCTs, SETAF can be a subordinate command of U.S. Army Europe, consisting of approximately 2,500 soldiers, and deployed in Vicenza Italy. SETAF provides airborne rapid reaction and crisis response capability, deployable within 72 hours, and can form a Joint Task Force, deployable within 24 hours. Possible missions range from joint and combined war fighting to stability and support operations.

##### SETAF

Command Element: Two-star SETAF headquarters  
Major units: 173rd Airborne Brigade<sup>5</sup>  
14th Transportation Battalion  
22nd Area Support Group  
509th Signal Battalion  
663rd Transportation Detachment

#### **SETAF: Strengths and Weaknesses**

Since the main body of the unit is an airborne brigade, SETAF is not a joint organization. Like the SBCT, SETAF needs to be reinforced with air support when necessary. Furthermore, although the SETAF mission statement identifies forced entry as a key capability, it is doubtful that a 2,500 sized force will be robust enough to perform a forced entry mission. Of course there will be missions (like non-combatant evacuation operations) where such a force will be sufficient, but generally speaking a 2,500 sized force will not be able to perform first entry missions in a hostile environment, like a peace enforcement operation. USEUCOM may have more units at its disposal from different service components, but the lack of assigned joint assets is a severe limitation. On the other hand, SETAF is a subordinate command of the commander U.S. Army Europe, which will assure a swift decision making process, and the unit is a trained, certified, and well equipped formation. SETAF does not have all necessary enablers, but compared to the SBCT SETAF is a more capable unit when it comes to support. Due to the habitual relationship that SETAF has with the 14<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Area Support Group and the 663<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Detachment, SETAF is less dependent on external support.

### **Marine Expeditionary Forces: General**

The Marine Air Ground Task Force Concept describes the deployment of Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF), Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) and Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU). A MEF is a corps sized war fighting organization with sixty days organic sustainability and approximately 20 - 60,000 marines and sailors. A MEF can form several MEBs. A MEB is a (army) division sized unit with thirty days organic sustainability and approximately 14 - 17,000 marines and sailors, deployable within 5 - 14 days. MEUs are smaller units of approximately 2,000 - 3,000 marines and sailors, and are not capable of performing a forced entry. Like with SETAF, there will be missions where a MEU will be a sufficient sized force, but in many scenarios a MEU will not be able to perform forced entry missions. As mentioned earlier, non-combatant evacuation operations will not be the problem, but operations higher in the spectrum for a large geographic area (like guarding an exclusion zone, or peace enforcement operations) will be more challenging.

#### MEB

Command Element: One-star Headquarters, drawn from a MEF

Major units: Marine Aircraft Group, consisting of

- 4 fighter squadrons

- air-to-air refueling squadron

- 4 helicopter squadrons

Regimental Landing Team, including

- tanks, howitzers, javelins, tow's etc

Brigade Service Support Group

### **Marine Expeditionary Forces: Strengths and Weaknesses**

For expeditionary warfare a MEB is a well designed unit with an existing combined arms organization, trained and equipped to perform missions across the full spectrum of military operations at short notice. A minor weakness is the follow-up: a MEB is a typically first-entry force, and is only capable of sustaining for a month (without follow-on sustainment). Follow-on forces are therefore essential in an early stage of the operation. Furthermore, due to the nature of the MEF/MEB concept, the command and control (C2) structure of a MEB will always come from the MEF. A large number of staff personnel in the MEF Headquarters will have a dual-hatted role in the MEB Headquarters. The MEB C2 structure will therefore always be ad hoc. Although it is tailor made and by nature very flexible, it is on the other hand not an every day perfectly trained staff. Lastly, although having strategic transport at its disposal (amphibious ships), the MEBs have to be supported by other forces as well. However, compared to a SBCT and SETAF, a MEB will already have all the necessary enablers, provided by the MEF, at its disposal.

## NATO RESPONSE FORCE (NRF)

### **NRF: General**

The essential purpose of NATO with its 26 member states is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means<sup>6</sup>. To meet current challenges and threats NATO decided at the Prague Summit in November 2002 to adapt its operational capabilities.<sup>7</sup> One of these adaptations was the creation of an effective and technologically advanced response force, designed to be flexible, rapidly deployable, interoperable and sustainable. The NRF will draw from a rotational pool of land, maritime and air forces, supported by NATO's collective assets (like AWACS and NATO's Command Structure), employed under a Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters, and able to operate within the full spectrum of missions. The NRF will be deployable on seven days notice (critical elements faster) and will be sustainable for thirty days. The NRF will have a forced entry capability and can operate as a stand alone force. The NRF is still "under construction" with full operational capability expected by the end of 2006. The NRF is a modular concept, which makes it possible to initiate an operation with only selected elements of the NRF. If fully deployed, the size of the NRF can go beyond 20,000 personnel. The current pool of units (Initial Operational Capability) consists of:

#### NRF

Command Element: Three-star HQ, forward deployed by one of NATO's Joint Forces Command HQ's<sup>8</sup>

Major units: Land Component, consisting of

- 3 Infantry Battalions (airborne, and / or airmobile and / or mechanized)
- Artillery Battalion
- Engineer Company
- Air defense Company
- Electronic Warfare Company
- CBRN Battalion
- Logistic Battalion
- 2 helicopter squadrons

Air Component, consisting of

- 7 Fighter squadrons
- Air-to-air refueling squadron
- SAM and Stinger Company
- Electronic Warfare Squadron and UAV Platoon
- Air Base Support Unit, including an engineer Company

Maritime Component, consisting of

- Aircraft carrier
- 10 Frigates
- 2 Submarines
- 4 Maritime Patrol Aircraft

- 9 Mine Countermine Ships
  - Amphibious Battalion
  - 2 Landing Platform Docks
  - Squadron attack helicopters
  - Supply ship.
- Special Operations Forces Component, consisting of
- CJSOTF HQ
  - 4 SO Taskgroups

### **NRF: Strengths and Weaknesses**

The weak point of the NRF is the decision making process. The NRF will only be deployed after the North Atlantic Council has decided to react to a crisis with the use of military force. Decisions are only taken when there is consensus amongst the 26 member nations. Achieving consensus with such a myriad of national interests will be difficult and time consuming, potentially undermining the core benefit of having a "rapid" deployment force. Furthermore it is important to realize that the NRF is a multinational unit. When fully deployed, between ten and twenty nations will participate in the NRF. And, although multi-nationality will assure a broad international basis, the effectiveness of the unit could be negatively influenced from a lack of interoperability: when too many nations are participating, there is the risk that the coordination effort will not be in balance with the required output. Moreover, not all NATO allies (especially the ten newest members, most of them in Eastern Europe) have completely restructured their armed forces to be NATO interoperable forces. Also, it is always possible for a nation to withdraw its troops because of national commitments. Reliability of the total force may therefore be doubtful. The joint structure of the NRF however provides a good basis for a "complete" and combined arms force, having all enablers at its disposal. The so-called Combined Joint Statement of Requirements foresees all necessary units, ranging from logistic support, to strategic lift, port operations and C4ISR<sup>9</sup>.

### THE EU BATTLEGROUPS CONCEPT

#### **EU Battlegroups: General**

The EU is committed to work for global peace and prosperity and has developed relevant policies to deal with issues such as collective security, political and regional stability, effective multilateralism, nonproliferation (WMD), the campaign against terrorism, military capabilities and crisis management operations. The 1991 Maastricht Treaty deals with the development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) for the EU, including an eventual framing of a common defense policy which might in time lead to a common defense. Unfortunately this

process takes a lot of time, and a common defense policy is still “under construction”. There are many highlights in the development of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and the EU Headline Goal is one of the most important milestones. The 2003 Helsinki Headline Goal<sup>10</sup> aimed at having an EU rapid reaction force of 50,000 - 60,000 troops by 2003, deployable within 60 days and sustainable for at least a year. Again, time has proven that this goal was not achieved. A new Headline Goal was developed in 2004, aiming at developing multiple, smaller, rapidly deployable battlegroups by 2007. The United Kingdom, France and Germany took the lead in developing such a battlegroup concept.

The battlegroups are specifically designed to be used in response to a request from the UN, or a problem that features a UN mandate authorizing a force deployment. They are also capable of participating in autonomous operations, but the main focus of the battlegroups will be on the so-called Petersberg Tasks.<sup>11</sup> Battlegroups should be able to deploy within 15 days with roughly 1,500 personnel, including combat support and combat service support units.<sup>12</sup>

#### EU Battlegroup

Command Element: One-star (brigade) headquarters  
Major units: Infantry Battalion  
Engineer Squadron  
Light Artillery Battery  
Detachment from Air Defense Battery  
Brigade Support Squadron

#### **EU Battlegroups: Strengths and Weaknesses**

The most profound weakness of the EU Battlegroups Concepts is the EU military C2 structure: it simply does not exist. If the EU conducts a crisis response operation, two basic C2 options exist. Either through the so-called “Berlin Plus Arrangements”<sup>13</sup>, that make it possible for the EU to utilize NATO assets (including headquarters), or through a framework nation that may offer the EU immediate access to operational capabilities so that it can respond to a crisis. Although both are valid C2 options, due to extensive negotiations and deliberations these options may not be on time, and, when conducting an operation, this remains therefore a severe limitation.

Since actual combat operations are the most difficult to command and control, it is more appropriate for the EU to concentrate on the lower end of the operational military spectrum, on activities such as training foreign police forces and assisting with security sector reforms. Furthermore, also related to the Berlin Plus Arrangements, there is the issue of the non-EU European NATO allies and the non-NATO EU member states: when troops have to deploy, it will cost precious time for NATO and the EU to negotiate issues like cross participation.<sup>14</sup>

Like SETAF, the EU Battlegroups are relatively small and not joint. This should allow EU Battlegroups to conduct rapid, lower end of the military spectrum operations, but will make the ability to conduct robust, forced entry missions, very problematic. Also, essential enablers need to come from one of the contributing nations. The full spectrum of operations will be a difficult issue.

#### TAILOR MADE COALITION FORCES

Besides the above mentioned alternatives for force projection, it is always possible to select an ad-hoc coalition force. It is difficult to determine the force composition in advance, since it will be sculpted for each specific operation. The size and quality of a force will therefore have, in principle, the perfect composition. Unfortunately this is not always true. Conditions set by nations on the use of their respective troops will need to be respected, even if such conditions are of no value for the required force structure. Although it is important that a coalition force has a strong international basis (which will be the case since nations voluntarily choose to participate in a contingency operation), a too large number of different countries can be counter-effective due to problems of coordination and assuring interoperability. Operation Iraqi Freedom is a good example of an operation where every contribution was welcome, just to create an as large as possible coalition force. For example, this led to the integration of a non-English speaking Mongolian infantry/engineer company in the U.S. led coalition force in Iraq. Interoperability can be a limiting factor, since many countries are not accustomed to operating with each other. A good example<sup>15</sup> is a Greek offer to contribute a light airborne towed artillery squadron to a German/Dutch led artillery battalion consisting of mechanized howitzers. It is not only the different reach of the systems, but also the different doctrinal way of operating such equipment. The downside is that the process of ad hoc coalition building can take longer than with predetermined alliances or coalitions that have established doctrine and command relationships.

#### ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

For many years the elements of national power in the U.S. were known under the "DIME" acronym. DIME stands for Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic elements of national power. The latest developments show a broader explanation of nation's elements of power. This model, also in use in the Pentagon, is known under the "MIDLIFE" acronym<sup>16</sup>: Military, Information, Diplomatic, Legal, Intelligence, Finance and Economic elements of national power. To be able to compare the different force projection alternatives with the different MIDLIFE elements of national power, it is useful to first describe and analyze the different elements. After

describing the different “active” elements of power, a short analysis of a more “passive” variety, the so-called soft power, will follow.

#### MILITARY

Projecting military power can range from real war (nuclear warfare, conventional warfare, forcible entry, strikes, raids and unconventional warfare), to coercion and deterrence (show of force, freedom of navigation, deploy carrier battle group, blockade, upgrade alert status, overseas presence), Military Operations other than War and Peace Support Operations (arms control, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian assistance, security assistance, military to military contacts and nation building), and Homeland Security (military assistance to civil authorities).

The most important conclusion that can be drawn from the use of military power is that military power is more than war fighting alone. It also embraces military power tools like the intensity of military to military contacts and the execution of nation building activities.

#### INFORMATION

Information tools can range from public diplomacy (public policy statements, public affairs, press releases, diplomatic demarches, print, electronic and film) to Information Operations (psychological operations, military deception, computer network operations, electronic warfare, public affairs and operations security).

The significance to the employment of military force is obvious: sometimes a covert operation can be of great importance, but a well-planned information campaign may have an overall greater impact. For example, when fighting counter-insurgency operations, gaining the trust and support of the local population will help achieve the desired military goals.

#### DIPLOMATIC

The diplomatic elements of power contain tools like diplomatic recognition, representation, negotiation, advocacy, signaling, intimidation, coalition building, consensus building, restrict diplomatic activities, recall ambassador, break diplomatic relations, draw down of embassy, total evacuation and coordination with international organizations and NGO's.

Diplomatic tools maximize the effect of the use of military power. Conveying the right strategic diplomatic message to the relevant players, make diplomatic tools very significant for the employment of military force. By using one or more of the above mentioned diplomatic tools, the military measures can be placed in the right context. A good example is the nation building process in the Balkans in the last few years. The lure of an EU membership has helped stabilize

the Balkans, according to Cooper, a senior EU diplomat and former adviser to Prime-Minister Blair.<sup>17</sup> It was not only the UNPROFOR, IFOR and SFOR operations<sup>18</sup> that contributed to the peace process, but also the EU diplomatic efforts that played a major role.

#### LEGAL

Legal tools vary from the review of decisions of national and multinational legal organizations, to treaty compliance, UN Security Council resolutions, customary international law, extradition, stationing and over-flight rights, and international law enforcement.

For many nations the legitimacy of an operation is a significant factor for the employment of military force. This legitimacy comes from public support, as well from international consensus in an organization like NATO or the UN. For example, for the Netherlands the existence of a UN Security Council resolution is almost a prerequisite for initiating or participating in a crisis response operation. Furthermore, when deploying peace keeping troops in a stabilizing environment, it is important to take the status of forces into account. This also relates to the neighboring countries that can be used for staging activities. A good example is the 2003 Iraq War. After weeks and months of discussion, the Turkish Government did not allow the U.S. to use Turkish soil as a staging area before going into Iraq, forcing the U.S. to recognize Turkish sovereign rights and comply with the tenets of international law.

#### INTELLIGENCE

Dealing with intelligence tools means collecting and analyzing information, exchange of intelligence information with other states and multinational organizations, external training and covert / paramilitary activities.

The quality of intelligence (analyzed and synthesized data) is of extreme importance before an operation can be initiated. To understand the center of gravity, and to know the disposition of troops and their leadership can make the difference between a short and easy war, or a long and very difficult conflict. This makes intelligence tools very significant for the employment of military force.

#### FINANCE

Financial tools are different from economic tools. The financial toolbox consists of debt forgiveness, the use of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, taxes in support of elements of power, borrowing for expenditures, subsidy in support of national policy, freezing and seizing monetary assets, and exchange rates as part of monetary policy.

It is not only the fact that military operations are expensive that make financial tools significant for the employment of military force. These costs encompass the military of a country in a conflict area, as well as the crisis response reaction, initiated by a country, a group of countries or by an international organization. Forcing a country to comply with international rules by freezing their monetary assets will certainly contribute to the employment of military force.

#### ECONOMIC

Economic tools vary from trade policy (trade promotion, trade sanctions, trade alliances, economic development) to embargoes, foreign aid, technology controls, regulation and environmental tools.

Economic tools are very significant for the employment of military force: to further a quick success of a military operation, it is important that the fighting factions are crippled and restrained from external support activities. Foreign aid should be stopped, and national war fighting industries should be embargoed. The effect will be that the adversary can not sustain its actions. Also, both military and economic tools should be seen in context, when looking at missions like the protection of lines-of-communications and freedom-of-movement.

#### SOFT POWER

Besides these '*active*' elements of power, there is also a '*passive*' variety, called soft power. Soft Power is best described as "co-opting people rather than coercing them", a definition by Joseph Nye.<sup>19</sup> For Nye the essence of soft power lies in values, "in our culture and in the way we handle ourselves internationally". It's about creating a sense of legitimacy for a nation's international aims. To summarize, soft power exists (it is always there) and taking the United States as an example, it is being applied through U.S. movies and television, through thousands of McDonalds restaurants worldwide, through U.S. tourists, through U.S. representatives in nations and most important of all through the perception of U.S. foreign policies around the world. Soft power is more prominent for the U.S. and Western type nations, because of their economic and cultural influence in the world. Soft power is generally considered to be at least as important as the other (traditional) elements of power.

#### **THE DIFFERENT FORCE PROJECTION ALTERNATIVES IN RELATION TO THE ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER**

The different force projection alternatives have different characteristics. That makes one alternative better suitable, feasible, and acceptable than the other, depending on the issues at hand and the result to be achieved. For example, suitability will answer the question of whether

a force projection alternative will accomplish the mission. Will it achieve the desired end state? Feasibility will address if a force projection alternative will have the necessary forces and resources to accomplish the mission. Will the anticipated way lead to the desired end state? Acceptability will analyze if a force projection alternative will be acceptable in the light of international public and media support. These questions will be answered in the light of the different elements of national power, leading to preferred options for different situations.

### **U.S. rapid deployable forces**

The history of U.S. interventions by rapid deployment forces demonstrates that American forces almost always achieve military dominance. U.S. intervention in a crisis or conflict will therefore typically result in military success. If a mission was less successful (like Somalia or Vietnam), the cause was usually because the end state was not well defined by the politicians. It was not the military power that failed. Bacevich uses the first Gulf War as an example for the supremacy of the U.S. armed forces in his article "A Less than Splendid Little War".<sup>20</sup> The U.S. rapid deployable forces are militarily strong (quality and quantity) and possess the feasibility to accomplish the mission. However, military success does not always mean total success. From a political or diplomatic point of view it can be desirable to achieve more than just military success, which makes it therefore important to always look at the broader context of a military intervention.

Looking at the acceptability of a U.S. intervention, it becomes even more difficult. As described earlier, America's soft power is declining, leading to a decrease of public support. This decrease of public support is not only visible in the international community, but also in the U.S. itself. The U.S. is also an economic power: the U.S. has the world's largest GDP, is the largest consumer nation and has primacy in global financial markets. The combination of military and economic power reinforces U.S. diplomatic power.

To summarize, from a military point of view, a U.S. intervention from the transatlantic region with rapid deployable forces will almost always lead to military success. The employment of MEBs will be the most appropriate because of the size and level of jointness of the force. SETAF is also a well-trained and joint unit, but the size is a limiting factor. When deploying SETAF, a quick deployment of follow-on forces will be necessary to make the intervention successful. SBCTs are small and land focused. The deployment of SBCTs should therefore always be seen in a larger context. Such a context could be a larger U.S. or multinational deployment.

Analyzing the other elements of power, a U.S. force deployment can be reinforced by economic and diplomatic measures. The impact of the information, legal, intelligence and finance value of U.S. rapid deployable forces is limited compared to the military, economic and diplomatic influence that can be rendered.

### **The NRF**

When the NRF is being deployed, the political signal to the rest of the world is enormous. The world's largest political-military organization has decided to react, and deploy a force, that may exceed 20,000 troops. The general expectation is that a NATO intervention in a crisis or conflict will be suitable and result in success. The NRF is still young (full operational capability in 2006), and thus far NATO has not deployed units in a NRF context. Previous deployments were always ad hoc forces, with command and control assets from NATO's Command Structure leading the operation. The NRF will be militarily strong and will be feasible to accomplish a mission. Although the U.S. has a dominant position within NATO, a NATO deployment is not perceived as a U.S. unilateral action. When a NATO intervention will take place within NATO's area of responsibility, then it is likely that the acceptance in the world will be more than sufficient. However, although the NATO Treaty does not require a UN Security Council Resolution, in practice this is almost the case.<sup>21</sup> European NATO allies will almost always require a UN mandate, unless a direct attack of one of the allies is ongoing.

The only difficulty is the fact that there is a need for consensus among the 26 sovereign allies before troops can be deployed in a combat situation. Such a process will take time, but it is also possible that consensus would not be achieved at all. Reaching consensus through a multinational mechanism requires nations to "give away or compromise" a certain amount of their sovereignty.

But there are more limitations. Bonnén mentions that some EU and NATO members still have conscription<sup>22</sup>, although most of them already have professional armies. The effect is that legal restraints will hold back nations from deploying their troops, even if their governments or populations would approve.

From a diplomatic and a military point of view, the deployment of the NRF, or elements of it, will lead to a successful operation. From a legal point of view the deployment of the NRF is a difficult issue. The impact of the information, intelligence, finance and economic value of the NRF is limited compared to the military and diplomatic value. These power elements could have the ultimate impact of restricting or completely preventing a deployment.

## **EU Battlegroups**

As mentioned earlier, armed forces can only be effective when the decision making at the highest level is functioning effectively. Like NATO, the EU also needs consensus among the 25 sovereign member nations before troops can be deployed in a combat situation. Within the EU the process of “giving away or compromising sovereignty” is already happening in economic and monetary policy issues, but the defense of every nation’s homeland is a more difficult subject (sovereignty is the core of a nation’s identity). As Bonnén states <sup>23</sup>, there are several non-aligned and neutral EU members like Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Austria that play an important role. These nations do not want to be part of a collective defense policy within EU context, which does not improve the military effectiveness of the EU.

The EU already asserts diplomatic power in order to achieve its goals. A good example is Turkey’s aspiration for EU membership. Turkey has been trying to become an EU member for many years, and the main reason that they are still kept outside the EU has to do with Turkey’s failure to respect the principles of human rights. In fact, the prospect of a possible membership (with economic benefit for Turkey) is being used to push Turkey in the direction desired by the EU. Just recently the decision has been made to start accession talks with Turkey<sup>24</sup>, but that implies that Turkey will have to fulfill numerous obligations in the next years until the EU members will agree to Turkey’s membership by or after 2015.

Looking at the military power of the EU, there is a potential for duplication with already existing military capabilities. As Wilkie mentions<sup>25</sup>, Europe has to change in order to create a new and more robust transatlantic relationship. But there is not one EU member that can afford to have separate forces for different organizations or for different tasks. For example, an infantry battalion will be part of a nation’s expeditionary warfare capabilities, but will also be used for stability operations. When homeland security requires the deployment of this infantry battalion in the national context, the government will likely not hesitate to do so. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier the EU lacks a military C2 structure.

The EU Battlegroups are not joint and are relatively small. This is a severe limitation for deployment. They will only be able to deploy in a wider context with other organizations and forces. Like NATO, the political signal of an EU deployment to the rest of the world is enormous. Suitability is probably sufficient, but will an EU deployment be feasible? Acceptability of an intervention by a non-military organization will not be a problem.

Thus, from an economic and diplomatic perspective the EU is a giant, but from a military point of view the EU is a minor player. The deployment of the land-focused small EU Battlegroups will not lead to success in all scenarios. From a legal point of view the deployment

of EU Battlegroups is a difficult issue. The impact of the information, intelligence and finance value of the EU Battlegroups is limited compared to the economic and diplomatic value.

#### **A Tailor Made Coalition Force**

In a coalition force, the forces of the involved countries will represent the best selection of troops. The size can be perfectly designed for the mission. On the other hand, quite often different force offers have to be respected, even if certain forces are not necessary. Although there might be troop contributions that do not really increase the effectiveness of the coalition force, those contributions will likely not hamper the suitability or feasibility for the deployment. As long as the core capabilities come from only a selected number of nations, the effectiveness of the coalition force should be sufficient.

From a military point of view a coalition force will therefore be suitable and feasible. Acceptability can be an issue, because of discussions resulting from controversial nations participating. This can lead to legal discussions regarding the public support of the deployment. The impact of the information, intelligence, finance and economic value of a coalition force is limited compared to the military and diplomatic value. From a legal point of view the deployment of a coalition force can be a difficult issue.

#### **RECOMMENDATION: THE BEST SOLUTION FOR TRANSATLANTIC FORCE PROJECTION**

The main conclusion from the previous paragraphs is that force projection as part of the military element of power is just one of the elements of power available to the international community to achieve its goals. A combination of several elements of power is always better than just applying military power. The EU has a legacy of economic power, diplomacy and multilateralism, however the EU cannot rely solely on this legacy. It needs to cultivate military power to ensure it has a full range of options to promote its interests and to support its obligations. And then there is the issue of the soft power. Kagan speaks of Europe bringing a unique kind of power, not coercive military power but the power of attraction.<sup>26</sup> He cites Cooper, a top diplomat in the field of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, who made a plea for "employing America's military muscle to clear the way for a political solution involving a kind of imperial penumbra around the European Union."

When diplomatic initiatives fail and military power has to be projected as well, what is the best transatlantic force projection alternative? It will not be possible to provide one single solution for intervening in a conflict. Every situation is different, and every situation will demand other solutions. But there are certain conclusions that can be drawn from the previous analysis.

U.S. force projection will be the best solution when there is a need for a strong and swift military intervention, especially when time is a constraint. When economic and political pressure can be of great additional help, then U.S. force projection will even be more helpful. Feasibility and acceptability will be perfect; suitability however can be an issue (perception of U.S. unilateralism). In most scenarios, MEBs will be more appropriate than SETAF and SBCTs.

Deployment of NATO's NRF (or elements of it) will be the best solution when there is a need for a strong military intervention, and also for a broad base in the international community. The NRF (or elements of it) will provide a suitable and acceptable solution; feasibility however can be a question (will the NRF have the right forces?).

Deployment of EU Battlegroups will be the best solution when there is a need for a strong political signal, a show of force, and also for a broad base in the international community. When economic pressure can be of great additional help, then a deployment of EU Battlegroups will even be more helpful. Deployment of EU Battlegroups will provide a suitable and acceptable solution; feasibility however can be an issue (will EU Battlegroups have the right forces?).

Deployment of a coalition force will be the best solution when there is a need for military intervention, preferably with a broad base in the international community. Especially when reaching consensus will be difficult, establishing a coalition force will be appropriate. Coalition forces will provide a feasible and acceptable solution, although suitability can be an issue (right coalition to achieve the desired goals?).

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Army, Concepts for the Objective Force, White Paper (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 9 November 2001), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Named after two Medal of Honor recipients, Stuart S. Stryker (died in World War II), and Robert F. Stryker (died in the Vietnam War).

<sup>3</sup> Fort Lewis, "Fact sheet on the Stryker Brigade Combat Team.": available from <<http://www.lewis.army.mil/transformation>>; Internet; accessed 22 December 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Reconnaissance intelligence, Surveillance and Target Acquisition.

<sup>5</sup> SETAF is a headquarters that can get combat forces assigned. It has a habitual relationship with the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, but can be assigned any army unit or contribution from other services or coalition forces.

<sup>6</sup> NATO Office of Information and Press. *NATO Handbook*, (Brussels: NATO, 2001), 30.

<sup>7</sup> NATO Office of Information and Press. *NATO's Prague Summit Declaration*, (Prague: NATO, 21 November 2002), paragraph 4.a.

<sup>8</sup> NATO's Command Structure has three headquarters at the joint combined level: Joint Forces Command North in Brunssum Netherlands, Joint Forces Command South in Naples Italy, and Joint Headquarters West in Lisbon Portugal. The first two are capable of providing one deployable joint task force headquarters; the latter is capable of providing a sea-based joint task force headquarters.

<sup>9</sup> C4ISR: Command, Control, Computers, Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

<sup>10</sup> European Council. *Headline Goal 2003*, (Helsinki, 10-11 December 1999).

<sup>11</sup> At a meeting of the Western European Union in Petersberg, Germany, in June 1992, members declared their readiness to make available military units for the following military tasks: humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

<sup>12</sup> European Council. *EU Battlegroups Concept*. (Brussels, 6 May 2004), 5.

<sup>13</sup> European Council, *Declaration of the European Council on the Berlin Plus Arrangements*, (Copenhagen, December 2002). The Berlin Plus Arrangements encompass four main areas:

- assured EU access to NATO planning capabilities able to contribute to military planning for EU-led operations;
- the presumption of availability to the EU of pre-identified NATO capabilities and common assets for use in EU-led operations;
- identification of a range of European command options for EU-led operations, further developing the role of DSACEUR in order for him to assume fully and effectively his European responsibilities;

- the further adaptation of NATO's defense planning system to incorporate more comprehensively the availability of forces for EU-led operations.

<sup>14</sup> At the December 2002 European Council meeting in Copenhagen it was decided that non-EU European NATO members would be involved as much as possible within the ESDP, and that NATO would give the EU assured access to NATO's planning capabilities. However, this still doesn't mean that the actual negotiations in a force generation conference will be easier.

<sup>15</sup> Force Generation Conference in November 2003 for the fourth rotation of the NATO Response Force.

<sup>16</sup> The MIDLIFE elements of power are taught at the U.S. Army War College as a model to think about tools of national security policy.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-first Century* (London, U.K.: Atlantic Books, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> UNPROFOR, IFOR and SFOR are the three successive operations in Former Yugoslavia. UNPROFOR stands for United Nations Protection Force, IFOR stands for NATO Implementation Force and SFOR stands for NATO Stabilization Force.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Decline of America's Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83 No. 3 (May/June 2004): 16-20. Joseph Nye is former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Dean of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He is also author of "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics".

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Bacevich, "A Less than Splendid Little War," *Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. XXV No. 1 (Winter 2001): 83-94. Andrew Bacevich is professor for International Relations at Boston University.

<sup>21</sup> The NATO Treaty makes references to the UN charter and principles in the preface and articles 1 and 5.

<sup>22</sup> Preben Bonnén, *Towards a common European security and defense policy: the ways and means of making it a reality* (Hamburg, LIT Verlag, 2003), 112-114.

<sup>23</sup> Id. 83-88.

<sup>24</sup> At the December 2004 European Council Meeting in Den Haag it was decided to start accession talks with Turkey.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Wilkie, "Fortress Europa: European Defense and the Future of the North Atlantic Alliance." *Parameters* No XXXII-4 (Winter 2002-03): 34-47.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Kagan, "Embraceable EU," *Washington Post*, 5 December 2004, sec. Outlook, p. B7. Robert Kagan is a senior associate at the "Carnegie Endowment for International Peace".

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