
Defense Report

AUSA



Troops in Europe Vital to U. S. Interests?

Washington insiders expect another drive by certain members of Congress to attempt again this year to effect a considerable reduction in U. S. Forces stationed in Europe as part of NATO. Three basic questions are being asked: (1) Does the U. S. need to participate in the defense of Free Europe, (2) if so, do we need our current strength on the ground, or (3) do our forces really matter; won't they be "swept away" anyway by an all-out Warsaw Pact attack?

There are many reasons for U. S. participation in the defense of Free Europe, but one applies directly to most Americans, if they wish the U. S. to maintain its current prosperity and affluence. U. S. economic strength influences and is influenced by the countries with which it trades, and the free nations of Europe are among America's most important customers. This is an era of economic interdependence and U. S. prosperity is firmly bound to that of Europe which means that European security is essential to the U. S.

With respect to the need for current forces, the U. S. Seventh Army mans a large and vital segment of the NATO line and the troops presently there are barely adequate to do the job. There is no one to take their place. Moreover, U. S. forces provide the great majority of the nuclear back-up so essential to deterrence.

As far as current NATO forces, including the U. S. contingent, being "swept away" by all-out attack, military strategists and tacticians throughout recorded history have learned that, to succeed, the attacking force should outnumber that defense by a minimum of three to one. Today, NATO is outnumbered, but only in tanks is the ratio as high as even two to one. The Pact has 99 divisions, NATO 66. The Pact has 26,000 tanks, NATO 10,500. The Pact has 8,000 artillery pieces to NATO's 6,000; 5,000 tactical aircraft to NATO's 3,000. Manpower is almost equal. The odds clearly do not invite attack. Instead, they make victory most difficult for the aggressor.

NATO has kept the peace in Europe for over 25 years. U. S. forces are the keystone of this successful peacekeeping effort.