
Coping With the Challenges of Collective Security

By

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It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to the World Affairs Council of Inland Southern California. Organizations such as yours play a vital role in advancing understanding of issues of international importance--understanding that must exist if the policies and positions of the United States are to enjoy broad public support.

I want to speak today about collective security--the alliance system which is the cornerstone of American national security and the challenges it now faces. I will focus briefly on the threat that the alliance system was established to address and then in more detail on how we and our alliance partners must work together to remain free, secure, and at peace.

Collective security was our nation's answer to the threat posed by the Soviet Union, which was manifested by Soviet actions in the first decade of the post-war era in Eastern Europe and Korea. For four decades, collective security has been a resounding success, creating the conditions for steady and sometimes spectacular economic growth within our alliances while deterring Soviet aggression.

There is a feeling today, however, at least in some quarters, that the original impetus for our alliances--the Soviet threat--is now diminishing. The changing nature of U.S.-Soviet relations--as well as changes now taking place within the USSR itself--have helped to generate this feeling.

We have, it is true, established an extremely useful dialogue with the Soviet Union on a range of subjects from human rights to regional issues, arms control and other security concerns--one we hope to continue to develop. Also, significant changes are being debated--openly--within the Soviet Union. The words *glasnost* and *perestroika* have become part of the vocabulary of American Soviet watchers, and the changes now taking place in Soviet political and cultural life could prove far-reaching. That process will bear watching by all of us, not least of all because it is only now beginning--and it is at this point still unclear where it will lead.

There are, in fact, many facets of the Soviet regime which have not yet been touched--much less transformed--by *perestroika*. These should make us hesitate before we act as if the Soviet threat has receded, even as we are hopeful about other developments. There has been, in particular, little change in the Soviet military sphere. Under the Gorbachev regime, the Soviet military has continued to receive steady and significant annual increases in its funding--which already commands between 15 and 17 percent of the USSR's economic resources, approximately triple the portion of the gross national product that the U.S. devotes to defense. The USSR continues to introduce a new generation of nuclear weapons and to expand and improve its land, sea, and air forces. To cite just a few examples:

- The Soviet air force adds two new combat aircraft each day--more than 700 a year.
- Its army adds eight new tanks and six artillery pieces every day.

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- The Soviet navy acquires a new nuclear submarine every 37 days.

Certainly, *perestroika* has not meant any slackening in the growth of Soviet military power.

There is no question that we should explore every opportunity open to us to advance the dialogue now under way as a means of easing tensions with the Soviet Union. But we must keep in mind that there is all the difference in the world between transition and transformation--and quite clearly, there is little evidence to suggest the Soviet Union has undergone such transformation that it no longer constitutes a threat to the U.S. and the alliance.

DOUBLE CHALLENGE

NATO's new secretary general, former West German Defense Minister Manfred Woerner, recently characterized the alliance's immediate future as presenting a double challenge. In his words, "On the one hand NATO must strike the right balance between defense and dialogue with a changing, but no less militarily formidable, East. On the other, we must strike a balance between roles and responsibilities within the alliance."

I want to turn now to that second challenge--what we might call the challenge of managing change within our alliances.

While the aim of our alliance structure has remained the same, conditions within our alliances have changed dramatically in the past four decades largely as a consequence of the stability alliance arrangements have made possible. This is, in other words, a case of having to cope with our successes. In the Far East, Japan has emerged as an economic superpower, and the Republic of Korea is rapidly climbing towards the world's first-tier economies. Across Europe, citizens of many NATO nations enjoy standards of living among the highest in the world--and as European economic integration moves forward, NATO nations will gain increasing stature in the world economy.

But as our allies exert increasing influence in the economic sphere, with only a few exceptions, the resources they devote to the common defense do not fully reflect their formidable economic capabilities. It is this fact more than any other that has sparked the revival of what is commonly called the "burdensharing" debate--concerning the question of what share each nation can and should assume of the costs of alliance.

As head of the Defense Department's burdensharing task force, I have been deeply involved in examining this issue with our allies, in the Far East as well as Europe--and in urging a more equitable distribution of the various roles, risks, and responsibilities within our alliances. I will resume the effort next week when I make my third visit of this year [1988] to Europe, to NATO headquarters in Brussels, and to the capitals of six NATO nations. In my view, we are making headway--in the Far East, where Japan and Korea have indicated that they will shoulder some additional costs related to American troops stationed there, and in Europe, where NATO is now working on an alliance-wide assessment of the burdensharing issue, with its report to be presented to NATO's ministers of defense in December.

But in order to know how significant new developments may be, we need to know what we mean when we say burdensharing must be more equitable--and that means moving beyond some of the one-dimensional approaches that too often pass for analysis in the burdensharing debate.

Critics of our alliance system contend that the U.S. bears far more than its fair share of the costs of alliance. The key evidence they cite in support of their claim is in most cases statistical: namely, the fact that, measured in terms of the percentage of gross national product, the U.S.

spends almost twice as much on defense as its average NATO ally and more than five times what Japan spends. For the critics, these facts clinch the argument, and all that remains is to decide whether we will insist on our allies spending more on defense or will simply do less ourselves.

Are these critics wrong or right? The answer is: they are both. They are wrong insofar as they fail to recognize the full scope of our allies' contributions to the common defense--all the various roles and risks and responsibilities our allies assume that cannot be measured in dollar terms. And yet in another respect they are right in that it is true that many of our alliance partners in Europe and the Far East can and should do more.

Let me explain what I mean by saying that a nation's contribution to common defense cannot always be measured in terms of dollars and cents. Because most of our European allies maintain conscript forces rather than the more costly-all volunteer force we have in the U.S., they are able to field armies at less expense. In fact, our European allies provide 90 percent of all NATO ground forces in peacetime, as well as 80 percent of NATO combat aircraft. In wartime, even after mobilization, our European partners would provide the bulk of NATO ground and air forces. Because these troops are conscripted, the allies' budgets need not be as large as if they had a volunteer force as we do.

In addition, our allies provide large amounts of real estate and cost-free facilities for U.S. forces stationed on their territory. Consider, for instance, the case of West Germany, where nearly 1 million soldiers from seven allied nations are stationed in an area approximately the size of the state of Oregon--with the crucial difference that West Germany, in contrast to Oregon, has 65 million inhabitants. The damage to civil property during NATO training, the inconveniences occasioned by constant low-level flights of NATO aircraft and night troop exercises are examples of real burdens that are not easily measured in terms of cost.

But as I suggested a moment ago, if critics in the burdensharing debate too often focus only on the numbers and therefore fail to see some of the more difficult-to-quantify alliance achievements, it is equally true that there is a tendency on the part of some of our allies to ignore the numbers altogether or diminish their significance. This, too, is a mistake--for while numbers alone do not tell the whole story, they do tell us something important about the general levels of a nation's defense effort. In the case of too many of our allies, what they tell us is that they could do more.

COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY REVIEW

Of course, our allies are not all the same. It's important to realize the distinct contributions that they each make before suggesting changes. Let us, therefore, briefly examine on a country-by-country basis what it is that each of our allies currently contributes to the common defense and where they may be falling short. Even an abridged review of this kind helps, I think, to show the variety of ways in which our allies add to our shared security--and the varying degrees to which they do so.

I will turn first to Japan, our key ally in the Far East and the most frequent target in the burdensharing debate. Japan, as its critics note, devotes only about 1 percent of its GNP to defense. What its critics often fail to note is that during this decade Japan has undertaken expanded defense responsibilities and in order to meet them, maintained annual defense increases averaging 5 percent for a full decade. In addition, Japan has geometrically increased its strategically important overseas development assistance, aid which is now greater in absolute dollar terms than our own. As I have indicated in my discussion with Japanese leaders, Japan can afford these increases and additional ones as well. But we need to take note of what Japan is doing even as we urge them to do more.

The Republic of Korea, home to 47,000 American troops, has likewise proved receptive to our burdensharing concerns. Despite the fact that Korea--in contrast to Japan and our NATO allies--is still very much a developing nation, it has indicated its intent to continue to increase its contributions toward the cost of maintaining the American forces stationed there.

In Europe, a more complicated picture emerges. NATO, as an institution, continues to enjoy a high degree of success. Most recently, the alliance moved to resolve the status of the 401st Air Wing, agreeing to fund its relocation to Italy. On the burdensharing issue directly, alliance-wide recognition of its importance is evident in the major NATO review now underway.

A country-by-country review underscores the fact that not all allies are alike--whether viewed in terms of defense spending or less easily quantified contributions to the common defense. Great Britain, for instance, maintains defense spending at approximately 4.5 percent of GNP--a decline from earlier in this decade, but still significantly higher than the 3 percent average of our NATO allies. In addition, Britain is a leader among the five NATO nations active in the Persian Gulf and one of five that made the politically difficult decision to station INF missiles on its soil. Moreover, Great Britain continues to maintain and modernize an important contribution to NATO's overall strategic nuclear deterrent.

France, despite the fact its forces remain outside of NATO's formal military structure, devotes a steady 4 percent of GNP to defense. It maintains a substantial independent nuclear-deterrent force. France is also now in the process of strengthening communications links with NATO forces, is actively involved in armaments cooperation efforts, and carries a variety of responsibilities that fall outside the NATO area. Greece and Turkey are two others well above the average for European allies for defense spending, but most important to the strength of the alliance would be success in the effort these two allies are making to reconcile their troublesome differences. While these fester, the alliance is diminished.

In the middle tier in terms of defense spending come five countries at or around the NATO average of about 3 percent: Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and West Germany. Here we find both positive and negative developments. There is no doubt, for instance, that Spain's decision to end its basing arrangement for the 401st Air Wing was a potentially severe setback, which has been averted only by decisive alliance action. We have base negotiations in progress with Portugal and are hopeful of forging stronger defense ties there. The Netherlands has demonstrated its recognition that NATO nations have interests beyond alliance boundaries by sending a Dutch patrol to the Persian Gulf. Dutch defense leaders also have worked diligently within NATO councils to underscore the importance of the burdensharing issue. Norway, for its part, is currently the scene of Teamwork '88, a major exercise involving 45,000 troops from nine NATO nations covering 1,600 square miles of Norwegian territory. In West Germany, defense spending remains slightly above 3 percent of GNP and next year will reverse the trend of the past three years in which spending failed to keep pace with inflation. In addition, West Germany provides significant economic and military assistance to less economically advantaged allies such as Portugal, Greece, and Turkey--a habit we wish other allies would develop. And while other NATO navies have undertaken patrols in the Persian Gulf, the West German fleet has assumed expanded duties in the Mediterranean Sea.

Next in terms of spending come three NATO members working to raise the level of their contributions to the alliance defense effort. Italy has in recent years increased its defense budget, but even these increases leave Italian defense spending at 2.2 percent of GNP. In other respects, Italy's contributions have been considerable--ranging from the participation of the Italian navy in the Persian Gulf to Italy's acceptance of INF missiles, and most recently its offer to provide a base for the 401st Air Wing. We look for more robust defense budgets in Italy over the next several years as its economy continues to expand and places it in the first rank of European economic powers. Luxembourg, too, is sustaining increases, but from a base even lower than Italy's.

While land-locked, Luxembourg has indicated its understanding of the importance of free passage in the Persian Gulf, contributing financially to patrol operations there. In Canada, some recent significant increases in defense programs have brought defense spending to 2.3 percent of GNP. Canada also makes important contributions to North American security, and these will continue.

Finally come two NATO nations at the bottom of the list in terms of defense spending. Belgium is struggling with declining defense budgets that will prevent or delay modernization of its air defenses, to the overall disadvantage of NATO. On the other hand, Belgium stood firmly in its basing of INF missiles, and contributes naval forces to operations in the Persian Gulf. Finally, Denmark's spending is in a steady decline, dropping from an already low 2.5 percent at the beginning of the 1980s to about 2 percent today. Denmark makes no pretense of attempting to increase its spending, maintaining an official goal of zero growth--and generally failing to achieve even that.

Where would the U.S. stand in such a comparison? In terms of defense spending, the U.S. devotes 5.7 percent of GNP to defense--although 1989 will be the fourth straight year defense spending will decline in real terms. In spite of these reductions, we continue to station more than 400,000 American troops, one-fifth of our force, in Europe and the Far East. And finally, we have resisted, at least for this year, the temptation to reduce our alliance contributions or take punitive actions against alliance partners perceived to be doing less than their fair share. In view of the ongoing effort in NATO and on the part of our Asian allies to address the burdensharing issue, this is the prudent course.

CONCLUSIONS

There are several conclusions we should draw from this review. We must recognize the significant and varied contributions our allies are now making--just as we must urge countries doing little to do more and those doing less each year, including ourselves, to halt their slide and reverse course. Even allies now at or moving toward the non-U.S. NATO average of defense spending must keep in mind that 3 percent is not enough to maintain the forces needed to deter the threat we face--nor it is an equitable effort given the substantial defense burdens even some less prosperous alliance members bear. There is no good reason why some of our European partners devote as much as 5 percent of their national wealth to defense, while a full five of our 15 NATO allies, each of them prosperous nations in their own right, spend only about half as much--and some as little as 2 percent.

Each nation, of course, encounters public pressures to fund an array of social programs--demands that make it difficult to sustain adequate defense spending. Never in a democracy is it easy to maintain support for defenses built in the hope that, should all go well, they will never be used. For those nations willing to make the politically difficult choice to fund adequate defenses, however, it is hard to avoid thinking that alliance partners who do less have made the choice to let others carry their burden for them. And it is the corrosive effect of this kind of comparison that, over time, saps the confidence in common effort that is the foundation on which every alliance rests.

America and its allies have a shared interest in seeing that this does not happen. We must work together to strengthen the foundations of the alliance system that has kept us free and at peace for over four decades.

What this requires is a deeper understanding among alliance partners. The United States--as a government and as a people--must convince its allies that it understands and appreciates the full scope of their contributions. Our allies, on their part, must convince the United States that they take burdensharing seriously and accept the various roles, risks, and responsibilities required of alliance partners--at a level reflecting the true economic capabilities of each.