



NATO OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

#StrongerWithAllies



Photo Credit: NATO

A WRONG-HEADED VIEW is rapidly spreading that NATO and its members are a burden to the United States, and that the Europeans are unable or unwilling to share the burden of common defense with the United States. While President Trump is right to push America's European allies to increase defense spending, a long-standing US priority, we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater by inserting doubt about America's commitment to European security, or suggest that the United States intends to withdraw its forces from Europe. NATO is, indeed, central to US defense and security, and allies contribute to US national security objectives in a number of ways.

"NATO IS THE...MOST EFFECTIVE MILITARY ALLIANCE IN HISTORY. NO ONE IS AS SMART AS ALL OF US THINKING TOGETHER. THAT'S WHAT ALLIANCES ARE. NO ONE PERSON, NO ONE NATION IS AS SMART AS ALL OF US THINKING TOGETHER."

—Admiral James Stavridis, Ret.



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KEY POINTS

- NATO is America's alliance. We founded it, and we lead it. The alliance is in need of reform and better burden-sharing, but to depart from American commitments to European security would be a case of cutting off the nose to spite the face.
- NATO is an insurance policy against great wars in Europe, something that has always ended up affecting the United States. World War II cost the United States over \$4 trillion and hundreds of thousands of dead.
- European NATO members (plus Canada) spent \$300 billion on defense in 2017. That is an increase by \$28 billion over 2014. We should encourage Europe to do more, but the negative trend has been broken in European defense spending. And while America spends more, that European defense spending constitutes the second highest concentration of defense spending anywhere in the world.
- NATO's members are America's go-to partners for military operations. Europe's thirty-eight thousand-troop contribution to NATO operations in 2011 alone saved the United States billions of dollars. The number of Europeans killed serving in the US-led Afghanistan operation totaled more than one thousand.
- European nations have shared the burden with the United States in more ways than just defense spending. As a proportion of deployed forces four NATO nations have sustained higher casualties in Afghanistan than the United States (Canada, Estonia, the UK, and Denmark).
- NATO members and partners have flown more than a third of the strike missions in Iraq and Syria in the US-led anti-ISIS campaign.
- US bases in Europe are not only about defending Europe. They are also about supporting US operations in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Nearly all US wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan were first transferred to a US military hospital in Germany for stabilization, and then were flown home. European host nations offset some costs of these bases. For example, in 2009 Germany contributed \$830.6 million to offset costs and improve US bases in Germany.

**“NATIONS WITH
STRONG ALLIES THRIVE,
AND THOSE WITHOUT
THEM WITHER.”**

—James Mattis,
Secretary of Defense



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