

NORTHERN EUROPEAN AND TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY (NOTS)

The United States' Military Capability 2020

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The US is the world's sole superpower. It has the world's most capable military force. Its national interests are global in scope, and its ability to project power is peerless. The Trump Presidency has been accompanied by intense party polarisation and hyperbole. President Trump's behaviour has led many observers to conclude that the last few years constitute a radical departure from US traditional foreign policy. Yet, the various strategy documents produced by the administration, paired with its overall priorities and concrete actions, suggest there is more continuity than change concerning US security policy in general and also toward Europe. That said, the Trump administration has created uncertainty, by not consulting or even informing friends and allies of its decisions. With a new administration from January 2021 under the Democratic president Joe Biden, a change in this behavior is expected, but probably not in the overall direction of security and defence policy.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

The National Security Strategy (NSS) released by the White House in December 2017 was notable for putting great power politics at the centre again. This priority carried through in the Department of Defense's (DoD) National Defense Strategy (NDS) and Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), released in January 2018 and February 2018, respectively.

The National Defense Strategy states that "inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security".¹ China and Russia, categorised as revisionist powers in the NSS, are singled out as the central challenges to the US. Exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, China has increasingly stolen the attention of the White House, Congress, and the national security establishment, and it is clearly considered the more formidable challenge.²

The DoD's overall capability requirement for the armed forces, that is, to be able to handle two major regional

conflicts simultaneously, has been a constant since the end of the Cold War. This has changed with the renewed focus on great power competition and been replaced by a one major conflict 'plus' construct. The fully mobilised Joint Force should now be capable of "defeating aggression by a major power; deterring opportunistic aggression elsewhere; and disrupting imminent terrorist and WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] threats."³

Since 2017, the US has made several significant reforms pursuant to the reorientation of threats outlined in the various strategy documents.⁴ For instance, in May 2018, Cyber Command was elevated to the level of a unified combatant command.⁵ The DoD has committed the US to nuclear modernisation, including the development of low-yield warheads for submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and its updated Arctic Strategy, released in June 2019, highlights Chinese and Russian interests, and describes the region as "a potential corridor for strategic competition".⁶ Near the end of 2019, President Trump also established the

1 U.S. Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 national defense strategy of the United States of America*, 2018.

2 U.S. Department of Defense, *Indo-Pacific strategy report*, 2019.

3 How this affects future force planning in detail is not outlined in the unclassified summary of the NDS.

4 The most recent posture statements of the armed forces, including the 11 combatant commands, which are annual written testimonies to Congress covering the implementation of the NSS, clearly demonstrate this.

5 The Cyber Strategy, released by the DoD in 2018, states explicitly that China and Russia are conducting persistent cyber campaigns against the U.S. that pose a long term strategic risk, and that the U.S. will "defend forward". The DoD is also exploring the possibility of separating Cyber Command from the National Security Agency; see U.S. Department of Defense, *Summary: Department of Defense cyber strategy*, 2018.

6 The 2019 Missile Defense Review is fully aligned with the NSS, NDS, and NPR, and calls for a comprehensive and layered approach that integrates both offensive and defensive capabilities. In August 2019, the US withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), and the U.S. military is now seeking funding and authorization to begin developing systems that would have been banned by the treaty. See also: U.S. Coast Guard, *Arctic strategic outlook*, 2019.

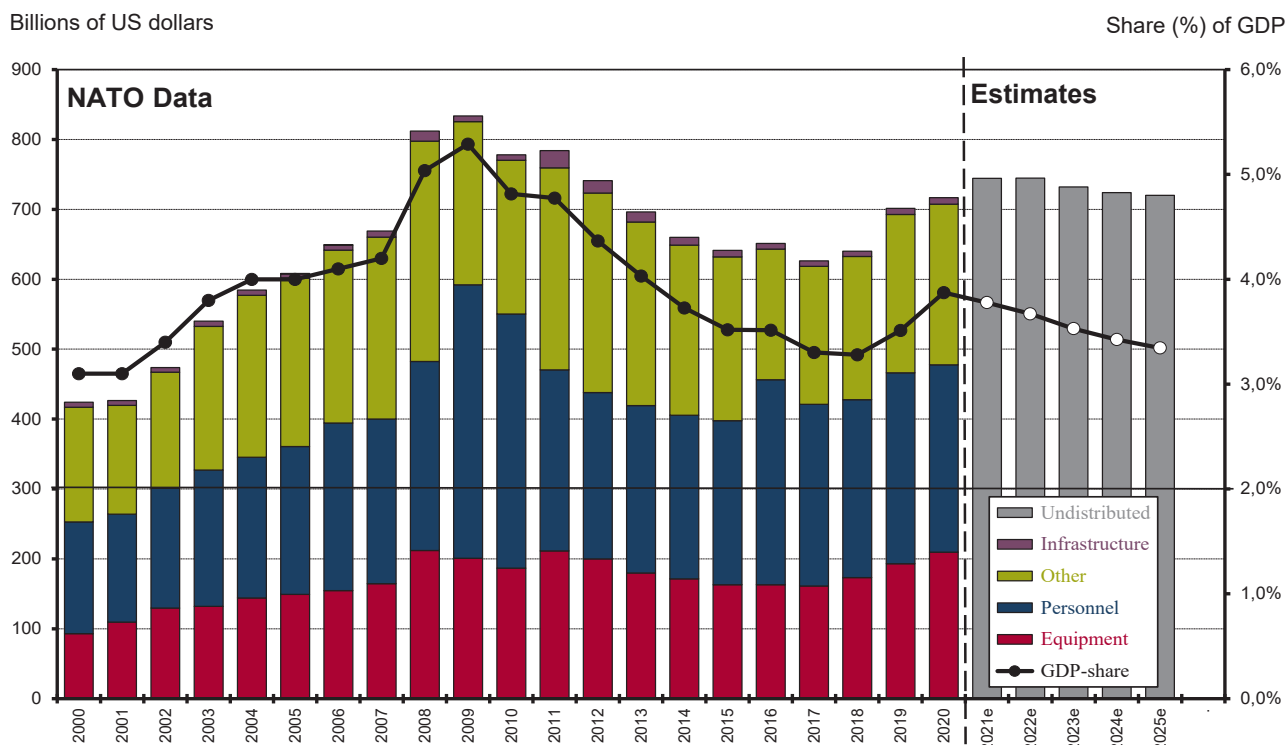


Figure: The military expenditures of the United States 2000–2025: Billions of US dollars/2015 prices (columns) and as share (%) of GDP (curved line)

Source: Bergstrand, Bengt-Göran, *NATO military expenditures*, Working Document (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency – FOI, October 2020).

NB: Estimates for 2021–2025 based on the US defence budget presented on 10 February 2020.

Space Force, as a new armed force within the Department of the Air Force.⁷ Its mission is manifold: to protect US interests and assets in space; deter aggression in, from, and to space; and conduct space operations. Furthermore, the National Defense Strategy sets out to “fortify the Trans-Atlantic NATO Alliance,” while the funding for the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) has increased substantially since 2017.⁸

MILITARY EXPENDITURES

No other state spends as much on defence as the US: around 35 per cent of the global expenditures at market exchange rates. Between the years 2000 and 2009, US military expenditures nearly doubled as a result of the global war on terrorism and subsequent interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Military expenditures increased from USD 424 billion and a GDP share of 3.1 per

cent in 2000, to USD 837 billion and a GDP share of 5.3 per cent in 2009. After reaching its peak in 2009, military expenditures declined under President Barack Obama’s first term and evened out during his second term. In 2019, military expenditures amounted to USD 654 billion and total national defence expenditures to USD 686 billion, at current prices. NATO reported USD 730 billion.⁹

The Trump administration’s first defence budget did not amount to any significant increase in military spending. The defence budget for fiscal year (FY) 2019 – the first to implement the precepts of the NDS – did, however, lead to a considerable increase. The budget presented for FY 2021 proposed that National Defense should increase, in real terms, by 3.8 per cent in FY 2021; remain stable in FY 2022; and decrease slightly over the following three fiscal years. These figures have been used for the estimates

7 This decision is arguably the most significant reorganisation within the armed forces since the establishment of the Air Force by the National Security Act of 1947.

8 U.S. Dept. of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 national defense strategy*.

9 There are several definitions of defence expenditures in the United States. The first covers the expenditures of the DoD, the second is called ‘National Defense’ which in addition to DoD spending also includes the expenses of other agencies that protect the nation, in particular the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Nuclear Security Administrations in the Department of Energy. Many US defence programs and expenses are not accounted for in the regular defence budget but in supplementary budgets, though NATO may also include such outlays in its data.

shown in the graph, in Figure 12.1. Hence, US military expenditures are projected to increase to USD 745 billion in 2021–22, and then decrease to USD 720 billion in 2025, the same amount as in 2020. With these rises, and a lower GDP, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the expenditures as a share of GDP will rise to higher levels, probably to around 3.9 per cent in 2020, and then decline towards 3.3 per cent in 2025, or the same level as in 2017–2018.

US military spending is significantly higher than in other NATO countries, and well above NATO's guidelines. The reorientation towards inter-state strategic competition is observable in the composition of US defence budgets.¹⁰ The budgets for the EDI have also increased rapidly, from about USD 1 billion in 2015 to USD 6.1 billion in 2019. Since the peak, in 2019, the budget decreased in 2020 and 2021, to about USD 4 billion in 2021 (2015 prices).¹¹

ARMED FORCES

The armed forces of the United States are comprised of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps (USMC), Space Force, and Coast Guard.¹² In this study, the focus is on the former four.¹³ The Army, Navy, and Air Force are separate military departments, while the USMC is subordinated to the Department of the Navy. However, each service has a unique mission within the overarching mission of US security.¹⁴

The Department of Defense is pursuing a build-up that prioritises modernisation over expanding the force structure, and the ongoing effort is focused on developing next-generation systems. As a result, the force structure of the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps will remain more or less steady in the coming years. The Navy is the only service that is truly expanding its force structure.

The US military presence in Europe is substantial, fielding two primary types of forces: permanent and rotational. The former refers to those approximately 74,000 US personnel who live in Europe and are assigned

to US European Command (EUCOM), headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany.¹⁵ These include 34,000 Army personnel; 27,000 Air Force personnel; 10,000 Navy personnel; 3000 Marine Corps personnel, and a small number of Special Operations Forces (SOF). An additional 20,000 permanent DoD civilians are also authorised for EUCOM, including its supporting commands.

Army

The Army is composed of two distinct components: the active and the reserve; the latter includes the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. The Army is seeking a modest growth in the size of the force. The goal of the budget request for the fiscal year 2021 is to generate 485,900 soldiers in the active component; 336,500 in the Army National Guard; and 189,800 in the Army Reserve.¹⁶ The active component maintains 31 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and 11 Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs). The Army National Guard maintains 27 BCTs and 8 CABs. The Army Reserve consists mostly of support units, but retains two Theater Aviation Brigades.¹⁷

US Army Europe (USAREUR), headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany, has numerous bases and subordinate headquarters throughout Europe. Notably, in February 2020, the DoD announced the reactivation of the V Corps HQ, in Fort Knox, Kentucky. It will provide command and control for US and allied land formations in Eastern Europe. Approximately 200 personnel will also rotate through a V Corps forward headquarters in Poznan, Poland, where activation took place in December 2020.

The most important permanent units of USAREUR are the 7th Army Training Command (7th ATC), 10th Army Air & Missile Defense Command (10th AAMDC), and the 21st Theater Sustainment Command (21st TSC).

The 7th ATC, headquartered in Grafenwöhr, Germany, is responsible for the training and readiness of four active brigades: the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which is the US

10 For instance, outlays for research, development, test, and evaluation will rise from USD 64 billion in 2015 to USD 94 billion in 2021, meaning the highest level of such spending in 70 years, Department of Energy nuclear research excluded.

11 U.S. Department of Defense, *European Deterrence Initiative: Department of Defense budget fiscal year (FY) 2021*, 2020.

12 The Air National Guard and the Army National Guard are reserve components of their services and operate in part under state authority.

13 The Space Force was recently established and is under construction. The Coast Guard serves under the Department of Homeland Security, and its role in a conflict in Northern Europe would be limited.

14 The US Army's mission is to "deploy, fight and win our nation's [the US] wars by providing ready, prompt and sustained land dominance by Army forces across the full spectrum of conflict as part of the joint force". The US Navy's mission "is to maintain, train and equip combat-ready Naval forces capable of winning wars, deterring aggression and maintaining freedom of the seas". The US Air Force's mission "is to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace". The US Marines (USMC) is an "expeditionary force in readiness", tasked with using combined armed forces to seize and defend forward positional naval bases and to provide forces and detachment to naval ships and land operations. See Congressional Research Service, *Defense primer: The military departments*, 2018.

15 Congressional Research Service, *United States European Command: Overview and key issues*, 2020.

16 U.S. Army, *Army fiscal year 2021 budget overview*, 2020.

17 Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, *Defense budget overview (FY21)*, 2020.

Army's Contingency Response Force in Europe, and based in Vicenza Italy; the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, based in Vilseck, Germany; the recently established 41st Field Artillery Brigade, based in Grafenwöhr; and the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, based in Ansbach, Germany.

The 10th AAMDC, headquartered in Kaiserslautern, Germany, serves as USAREURs command for all theater air and missile defence operations. Its subordinate units are: the 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery; and the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery.

The 21st TSC commands sustainment operations across the European theater in support of EUCOM and NATO operations. USAREUR also consists of several supporting organisations, such as the 66th Military Intelligence Brigade, the 598th Transportation Brigade, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

There are also special operations forces permanently assigned to EUCOM. The 10th Special Forces Group 1st battalion is permanently based in Stuttgart, Germany. The US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has the responsibility to organise, train, and equip units assigned to Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), but EUCOM has operational control over SOCEUR and all special operations in the European Theatre.

Since Russia's annexation of Crimea, the DoD has increased its rotations of temporary forces in and out of EUCOM's area of responsibility (AOR). These 'heel-to-toe' nine month rotations are part of DoD's Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), and EDI is the key mechanism through which these activities are organised and funded.

The land efforts of OAR are led by USAREUR and overseen by a forward command element, currently from 1st Cavalry Division headquartered in Poznan. There are three types of rotations – armoured, aviation, and logistical. The armoured rotation consists of one Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), normally including around 4700 personnel, 85 Abrams tanks, 150 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, 18 Paladin self-propelled howitzers and a large range of other tracked as well as wheeled vehicles. The

aviation rotation consists of one Combat Aviation Brigade, including around 2000 personnel, 50 Black Hawk assault helicopters, 24 Apache attack and 12 Chinook heavy lift helicopters, and more than 1800 wheeled vehicles. The logistical rotation consists of a Sustainment Task Force, comprised of 11 active duty, US Army Reserve and National Guard units, including more than 900 personnel.

The US Army Strategy, released in late 2018, emphasises that the Army "must be ready to conduct major operations and campaigns involving large-scale combat with Division and Corps-level maneuvers against near-peer competitors".¹⁸ Accordingly, the Army has accelerated its reorientation from counterinsurgency operations towards preparing for high-intensity combat against near-peer competitors, including organisational structures, concepts, doctrines, training, and equipment programs. Readiness is prioritised; since 2017, the readiness of for example the BCTs has increased significantly.¹⁹ The Army is also continuing to convert two infantry BCTs into armoured BCTs. This infantry to armour shift arises from the focus on peer competitors.

The Army has also taken several steps to close capability gaps. In July 2019, the newly established US Army Futures Command reached full operational capability; it unifies the army's modernisation efforts.²⁰ This reform is already showing results, and the development of new capabilities has accelerated, but the mission is long-term and implementation in the forces is, in most cases, a number of years ahead.²¹ An important framework is Multi-Domain Operations, the Army's evolving concept for preparing the service for the challenges posed by a near-peer competitor.²²

The Army's 'big six' modernisation priorities are long-range precision fires; next-generation combat vehicles; future vertical lift; networks and communications/intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; air and missile defence; and soldier lethality. The Army faces many challenges, including replacing increasingly dated equipment. For its principal combat capabilities, the Army still relies on upgraded versions of the 'Big Five'

18 U.S. Army, *The Army strategy*, 2018.

19 U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, *Audit of brigade combat team readiness*, 2019.

20 This is arguably the most significant reorganisation of the Army since the 1970s and the creation of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

21 The Army has the ambition, for instance, to field a hypersonic missile unit by FY 2023. See Congressional Research Service, *Hypersonic weapons: Background and issues for Congress*, 2020.

22 U.S. Army, *Multi-domain battle: Evolution of combined arms for the 21st Century: 2025–2040*, 2017.

systems procured in the 1980s: the Abrams, the Bradley, the Apache, the Black Hawk, and the Patriot. Recruiting the personnel the forces need also remains a problem.²³

Navy

The Navy is expanding its force structure and by FY 2021 is projected to pass the 300 ships mark for the first time since 2002.²⁴ The Navy has 337,517 officers, enlisted ranks, and midshipmen on active duty. The Navy Reserve consists of 103,395 sailors.²⁵

The DoD's 11 combatant commands, which have a functional or geographic mission that provides command and control over US military forces, issue Navy-related orders to the Navy's component commands.²⁶ There are nine Navy component commands that carry out operations within the designated area of responsibility.²⁷ The component commanders have operational control over one or more of the Navy's seven numbered fleets. To carry out specific operations, fleets are divided according to an organisational scheme that is scalable to meet most operational needs. Examples of major deployable units are Carrier Strike Groups (CSG), Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG), Marine Expeditionary Units, Surface Strike Groups, and Naval Fleet Auxiliary Forces.

The Navy has 10,000 personnel permanently assigned to EUCOM. US Naval Forces Europe (USNAVEUR), headquartered in Naples, Italy, directs all its naval operations through the US 6th Fleet commander headquartered in Gaeta, Italy, which is also the home port to the 6th Fleet command ship, Mount Whitney. Naval Station Rota, Spain, is the home port for four Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers.²⁸ These ships and a maritime

patrol squadron with 4 P-8A Poseidon, based in Sigonella, Italy, constitute the bulk of US permanent naval forces in Europe.

The Navy's surface capabilities are concentrated in a small number of Carrier Strike Groups (CSG), which are formed and disestablished on an as-needed basis. The typical CSG consists of one aircraft carrier; a counter air-capable cruiser; five to seven surface combatants for anti-ship missile and anti-air warfare defence; at least three surface combatants for cruise missile land attack; at least three cruise missile-capable surface combatants for surface warfare; an attack submarine and one fast combat support ship, or equivalent pair of combat logistics ships.²⁹

A typical carrier air wing consists of four strike fighter squadrons with 12 F/A-18E/F Super Hornet each, or ten F/A-18C Hornets; one electronic attack squadron made up of five EA-18G Growler; one carrier early warning squadron made up of four E-2C Hawkeyes, or five E-2D Advanced Hawkeyes; one helicopter sea combat squadron of eight MH-60R Seahawks; one helicopter maritime strike squadron of eleven MH-60R Seahawks; and a fleet logistic support squadron detachment of two C-2A Greyhounds.³⁰

The challenge of a more contested maritime environment has led the Navy to adjust both its priorities and posture. The Navy aims to grow the fleet substantially, increase readiness, develop and field new capabilities, and start implementing a long-term shift in how it wages war. The Navy's focus is moving away from power projection toward sea control, and its evolving operational concept of Distributed Maritime Operations is centered around dispersing offensive capabilities and linking them all through a network. This departure from the Navy's operational

23 U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Army readiness: Progress and challenges in rebuilding personnel, equipping, and training*, 2019.

24 According to the Defense Budget Overview, the number of deployable battle force ships will increase from 299 in FY 2020 to 306 by FY 2021. See Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, *Defense budget overview (FY21)*.

25 U.S. Department of the Navy, *Status of the Navy as of June 3, 2020*.

26 The 11 commands are Africa Command, Central Command, Cyber Command, European Command, Indo-Pacific Command, Northern Command, Southern Command, Space Command, Special Operations Command, Strategic Command, and Transportation Command.

27 The nine commands are Fleet Forces Command, Military Sealift Command, Naval Forces Central Command, Pacific Fleet, Naval Special Warfare Command, Fleet Cyber Command/10th Fleet, Naval Forces Europe/Naval Forces Africa, Naval Forces Southern Command/4th Fleet.

28 The four DDGs are USS *Carney* (DDG 64); USS *Ross* (DDG 71); USS *Porter* (DDG 78); and USS *Donald Cook* (DDG 75).

29 U.S. Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, *Force composition of afloat Navy and Naval groups*, 2017; U.S. Department of the Navy, *The carrier strike group*, 2020.

30 U.S. Navy, *Carrier air wing*, 2019.

concept that concentrates capabilities in a small number of CSGs will be gradual and take decades to realise. The Navy has also taken the Dynamic Force Employment Initiative to heart and deployments are now more operationally unpredictable.³¹ Recent deployment, coupled with the newly re-established 2nd Fleet, signals the Navy's prioritisation of North Atlantic and Arctic operations.

Re-established in 2018, the 2nd Fleet is the manoeuvre arm for Northern Command's naval forces in the Atlantic and Arctic, and for European Command's in the Eastern and Northern Atlantic. The fleet, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, reached full operational capability in December 2019. The Navy has also re-established Submarine Group 2 in Norfolk.

The Navy force structure is under strain, including both submarines and aircraft carriers.³² Shipyard capacity is stressed and delays seem persistent and substantial.³³ Budget overruns are common, and there is a need for modernisation and expansion, especially as the fleet grows. The service also suffers from a readiness problem, including Navy aviation. In April 2018, the former Chief of Naval Operations testified before Congress that an "acceptable" level of fleet readiness would not be restored until 2021 or 2022.³⁴

Air Force

The USAF active component end strength, according to FY 2021, is projected to consist of 327,300 airmen. The Air Force Reserve is projected to reach 70,300, and the Air National Guard, 108,100. As of FY 2020, the Air Force active component has 40 combat-coded squadrons. Combat-coded aircraft and related squadrons are aircraft and

units with an assigned wartime mission.³⁵ The Air Force Reserve has 3 combat-coded squadrons. The Air National Guard has 21 combat-coded squadrons.³⁶

The US Air Force is organised around eleven Major Commands (MAJCOM) that report directly to the Air Force HQ in the Pentagon. Major Commands can be organised in two ways: by mission or by region outside the continental US (CONUS). Subordinate to the MAJCOMs are the numbered Air Forces, which are usually assigned for geographical purposes. Wings, groups, and squadrons can all be assigned to a numbered air force.³⁷

The USAF has 27,000 personnel permanently assigned to EUCOM. US Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), which is a Major Command, is headquartered at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The Third Air Force is assigned to USAFE. Its primary operating bases are Royal Air Force Lakenheath, UK; Royal Air Force Mildenhall, UK; Ramstein Air Base, Germany; Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany; Aviano Air Base, Italy; Lajes Air Base, the Azores; and Incirlik Air Base, Turkey.

Notable units of the Third Air Force are the 52nd Fighter Wing, based in Spangdahlem, consisting of one squadron of F-16C/D; the 31st Fighter Wing, based in Aviano, which consists of two squadrons of F-16C/D; the 48th Fighter Wing, based in Lakenheath, which consists of three squadrons of F15C/F15E; the 86th Airlift Wing, based in Ramstein, which consists of 14 C-130J-30 Hercules, one Gulfstream V, and five Learjet 35A; the 100th Air Refueling Wing, based in Mildenhall, which consists of 15 KC-135 Stratotankers; and the 488th Intelligence Squadron, based in Mildenhall, which consists of one OC-135/RC-135. Mildenhall is also the base for the 352nd

31 Through the Dynamic Force Employment concept, former Secretary of Defense James Mattis sought to increase readiness and make the Joint Force more agile and less predictable to US strategic adversaries. In 2018, USS Harry S. Truman was expected to deploy in the Middle East; instead, it remained in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic and returned to Norfolk, Virginia, after only three months at sea. In May 2019, the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* became the first US aircraft carrier to deploy to Alaska in a decade.

32 Maintaining the U.S. Strategic Command's requirement for a minimum of 10 operational ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) and increasing the number of aircraft carriers from 11 to 12, as requested by the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), will consume a significant portion of the Navy's shipbuilding budget. The prospect of reaching the goal enshrined in the NDAA of 355 ships by 2034 is thus low.

33 U.S. Government and Accountability Office, 'Navy maintenance', Testimony before the Subcommittees on Seapower and Readiness and Management Support, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, December 4, 2019.

34 U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral John M. Richardson, 'Navy posture statement', Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Fiscal Year 2020 Navy budget, April 9, 2019.

35 Units and aircraft assigned to training, operational test and evaluation, and other missions are thus excluded.

36 Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, *Defense budget overview (FY21)*.

37 In Air Force policy, Air Force Expeditionary Wings are generally the echelon with all of the capabilities needed to employ, sustain, and protect fighter forces at expeditionary bases. Collectively, these capabilities are called expeditionary combat support (ECS) and are a subset of Agile Combat Support capabilities needed to operate from expeditionary sites.

Special Operations Wing, which is an operational unit of US Air Force Special Operations Command and consists of one squadron of eight CV-22B Osprey and one squadron of eight MC-130J Commando II.

As part of EDI, the Air Force has increased its rotational presence in Europe through Theatre Security Packages (TSP). These rotations typically consist of a fighter squadron, or less, and generally last a few months. Since 2015, aircraft from different fighter wings, including F-35As and F-22s, have continually deployed in Europe.

The Air Force is shifting in accordance with the priorities set out in the National Defense Strategy. The USAF intends to expand the service.³⁸ Notably, the aircraft inventory is now growing for the first time in decades.³⁹ The USAF is also striving to improve readiness to an average of 80 per cent in its 204 pacing squadrons, which are squadrons that should be qualified and ready to execute primary wartime missions. Readiness has increased since 2017, but this was from the “lowest state of full-spectrum readiness in our history”, where “only 50 per cent of our squadrons are ready to conduct all of the missions assigned to them”, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff testified before the Senate in 2017.⁴⁰ Training has also become more sharply focused on a near-peer fight, but the readiness goal of 80 per cent seems some way off.⁴¹

The Air Force’s number one acquisition priority is the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter, scheduled to replace all legacy multirole and close air support aircraft. Its second priority is the KC-46A Aerial Refuelling Aircraft.⁴² Its third top acquisition priority is the B-21 Raider Strategic Bomber.⁴³

Concepts are also changing, and the USAF has been developing what has become known as Multi-Domain Command and Control (MDC2), which provides the concept of operations and the technical foundation for improved situational awareness, rapid decision-making, and employment of the force in all domains.

The Air Force faces several challenges. It retains too many aging aircraft, while sustained combat operations are placing stress on the service.⁴⁴ The slow pace at which the shortage in air-refueling and strategic lift assets is being addressed is also an area of concern. The service is also struggling with a shortfall of air- and ground crews to operate and maintain the aircraft.

Marine Corps

Organisationally, the USMC is divided into four groups: the operating forces, the headquarters, the supporting establishment, and the Reserve. The USMC’s active component strength, according to FY 2021, is projected to consist of 184,100 marines, and the Reserve is projected to remain at 38,500. The active component maintains 24 infantry battalions and the Reserve maintains eight.⁴⁵ The number of USMC personnel permanently assigned to EUCOM is limited to about 3000 Marines.⁴⁶

The USMC’s principal warfighting organisation during major contingencies is the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), i.e. the largest type of Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF). It is a combined arms force, which typically includes a Marine division, an aircraft wing, and a logistics group. It possesses the capability to project power ashore, while sustaining itself for 60 days without external

38 The USAF is moving towards a new force-sizing metric – operational squadrons – which includes airlift, bombers, command and control, fighters, intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance, special operations, space, cyber, missile, and recovery squadrons. Using this metric, the USAF has 312 squadrons in total. The goal is to expand the force to 386 operational squadrons by 2030. It is widely recognized that reaching this goal will be difficult. Cancian, Mark F., *The U.S. military forces in FY2020: The struggle to align forces with Strategy*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2019.

39 This is a result of a reduction in the retirement rate of fourth-generation fighters, coupled with the arrival of new F-35As.

40 The 2013 sequester was a major setback to Air Force readiness. U.S. Department of the Air Force, ‘Air Force budget posture’, Testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 6 June 2017.

41 It will require a significant amount of robust training to overcome the almost two-decades-long drought in training for combat with a near-peer competitor. For an experienced pilot, it will take at least a year to master the skills required to dominate the air against a near-peer competitor. For a squadron, which usually has a mix of experienced and less experienced pilots, it will take years before it is fully ready to take on near-peer competitors.

42 The Air Force plans to acquire 15 KC-46 yearly through 2028, at which time it will have 179. This will replace less than half of the current tanker fleet of aging KC-135s.

43 The B-21 Raider is scheduled to begin replacing the B-1B and portions of the B-52 fleets by the mid-2020s.

44 The average age of Air Force aircraft is almost 30 years. Sustained combat operations coupled with budget restraints have also stressed the inventory for precision-guided munitions.

45 Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, *Defense budget overview (FY21)*.

46 Congressional Research Service, *United States European Command*.

Table: Personnel and materiel in the US Armed Forces in Europe

Personnel	Numbers in 2020	Planned reforms towards 2025
Personnel		
Regular force	74,000	
Army	34,000 (6000 rotational in support of OAR)	
Navy	10,000	
Air Force	27,000	
Marines	3000 (plus 700 marines in Norway in support of Marine Rotational Force – Europe)	
Materiel		
Tanks	85 M1A2 Main Battle Tank (AOR Armored Rotation)	Multiple upgrades
Armoured combat vehicles	340+ Stryker Combat Vehicle, 150 Bradley Fighting Vehicles (AOR Armored Rotation)	The Army will continue to upgrade the Stryker vehicles ^a
Heavy artillery	16 M270-A1 Multiple Launch Rocket System 18 M109A6 Paladin (OAR Armored Rotation)	The 41st Field Artillery Brigade is under construction and more M270-A1s will be added.
Attack helicopters	24 AH-64D Apache 24 AH-64D Apache (OAR Aviation Rotation)	Upgrades
Surface combatants	4 DDG, Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers	Possibly 2 additional destroyers (DDGs)
Combat aircraft	130+ Fighter Aircraft (F15C/F15E and F16C/D)	Two squadrons of F15s stationed at Lakenheath is scheduled to be replaced by F35As
Transport aircraft	15 KC-135 Stratotanker 14 C-130J-30 Hercules 1 Gulfstream V (C-37A) 5 Learjet 35A (C-21A)	The KC-135s may be replaced by new KC-46As

NB: a. Upgrades include: Stryker Medium Caliber Weapon System (MCWS), Common Remote Operated Weapons Station-Javelin (CROWS-J) on the Double V-Hull platforms, and the MAPS Gen-1 GPS system.

assistance. The USMC has three MEFs, two located in the continental USA, on the west and east coasts, and one in the Pacific. Additionally, rotational forces are in Norway and Australia.⁴⁷

Currently, the USMC has four active Marine aircraft wings (MAW). The Marine Corps aviation force consists of 22 fixed-wing squadrons, including F-35B and various models of F-18, 36 rotary-wing squadrons, including MV-22B Osprey, and 4 unmanned aircraft squadrons.⁴⁸

The US Navy has 32 amphibious warfare ships, including 9 landing helicopter dock amphibious assault ships,

of which 8 are Wasp-class (LHD), and one is the newer and larger America-class (LHA), in active commission.⁴⁹ LHAs and LHDs resemble small aircraft carriers and are capable of vertical/short take-off and landing and tilt-rotor and rotary-wing aircraft operations. Norfolk, Virginia, is the home port of four LHDs, whereas the home ports of the remainder are either San Diego, California, or Sasebo, Japan.⁵⁰

The USMC is shifting, in alignment with the focus on great-power competition. In July 2019, the commandant of the USMC released new planning guidance, with the

⁴⁷ The 1st MEF is based primarily at Camp Pendleton, California, and provides forces for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Central Command. The 2nd MEF is based primarily at Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina, and is focused on operations in the North Atlantic, Including Europe and Africa. The 3rd MEF is based at Camp Courtney, in Okinawa, Japan, and is focused on operations in the Pacific.

⁴⁸ Fixed-wing squadrons include F-35B, F/A-18 A++/C, F/A-18D, F/A-18A++, AB-8B, KC-130J, and KC-130T. Rotary wing includes MV-22B Osprey, AH-1Z, AH-1W, UH-1Y, and CH-53E. Unmanned uircraft are squadrons of RQ-21A. U.S. Marine Corps, 2019 *Marine Corps aviation plan*, 2019.

⁴⁹ U.S. Navy, Naval Vessel Register, *Fleet size*, 2020.

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of the Navy, *Amphibious assault ships – LHD/LHA(R)*, 2020.

controversial ambition of further integrating the USMC with the Navy, making it a more maritime-focused force to support naval-sea control operations, rather than a land force supported by the Navy.⁵¹

The USMC's modernisation effort has been focused on programs that underpin the service's core competencies, and its top two acquisition priorities are the F-35 and the Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV).⁵²

The USMC is also working together with the Army to develop Multi-Domain Operations from the land domain perspective. In light of the challenges posed by near-peer competitors, the new planning guidance emphasises innovative stand-off capabilities and puts into question the long-standing goal of having 38 large amphibious ships.⁵³

The USMC's top priority is quick response in crisis. Therefore, immediate and near-term readiness has been prioritised at the expense of capacity and modernisation. Despite this, the service's most pressing challenge is readiness, particularly in the Marine aviation component.⁵⁴ The USMC also suffers from a chronic shortfall of amphibious ships, which limits what the USMC can do operationally.

Reinforcement Capacity

The US Global Response Force, the pool of military assets based in the US that could be used to rapidly reinforce the Combatant Commands in response to emergent threats, has recently been re-designated as the Immediate Response Force (IRF).

The IRF is maintained by the Air Force and the Army and is capable of deploying worldwide within 18 hours. It is built around a BCT of the 82nd Airborne Division, which is part of the XVIII Airborne Corps, also known as America's Contingency Corps, headquartered at Fort

Bragg, North Carolina. Assets of the Air Force Mobility Command and a rotating battalion of the ready brigade are kept on alert to deploy within 18 hours. This initial entry force is designed to be followed by additional battalions within days.⁵⁵

The Army's active component consists of 31 BCTs, divided into 11 IBCT, 9 ABCT, and 7 MBCT, and 11 CABs. Of the 31 BCT, 25 are assigned to US Army Forces Command, 4 are assigned to Indo-Pacific Command, and 2 are assigned to EUCOM. About 5–6 BCTs are rotationally deployed outside the US at any given time, including ABCTs. The Army has prioritised readiness in recent years and has reached the goal of having 66 per cent of the active component BCTs at the highest level of readiness.⁵⁶ That leaves about 8 to 9 BCTs at the highest level of readiness in the US, discounting the BCTs deployed outside the US. A number of these could be sent to reinforce Europe.

The US's ability to reinforce Europe is challenged by its overall sealift capacity, which has declined since the end of the Cold War. This problem is particularly severe for the Army, since approximately 90 per cent of Army and USMC combat equipment is transported by sea during surge deployments.⁵⁷

Military Sealift Command (MSC), a component of US Transportation Command, and the Maritime Administration (MARAD) have the responsibility of meeting the required sealift capacity through some combination of three categories: afloat prepositioning, commercial sustainment, and surge sealift.⁵⁸ Surge sealift is called into action during extreme emergencies and consists of ships from the MSC Surge Sealift and the MARAD Ready Reserve Force. The US's ability to surge is hampered by problems due to underfunding, ageing ships, poor maintenance, low readiness, and an insufficient number of available ships. Needless to

51 This integration is well underway, and the Navy's upcoming FSA will include the USMC and is labelled the Integrated Naval Force Structure Assessment (INFSA).

52 The USMC's transition to MV22 Osprey has been successful overall and the program is nearing completion.

53 This could affect the Navy's INFSA and shipbuilding planning significantly. General David H. Berger, *Commandant's planning guidance: 38th commandant of the Marine Corps*, 2019.

54 The F/A-18 squadrons are challenged with low readiness and there are insufficient helicopters to meet the heavy-lift goals of the 2018 Marine Aviation Plan. U.S. Marine Corps, *2018 Marine Corps aviation plan*, 2018.

55 The IRF's first deployment occurred in January 2020.

56 The DoD measures readiness using a system called Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS). Under DRRS, all military units are required to periodically report in four categories: personnel, equipment on hand, supply/maintenance, and training. These categories produce an overall unit grade ranging from one to four, with one being the highest and four being unready. There is also a fifth category for 'out of service'. U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, *Audit of brigade combat team readiness*.

57 U.S. Navy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics, *Sealift that the nation needs*, 2018.

58 U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, *Audit of surge sealift readiness reporting*, 2020; Smith, Colin and Townsend, Jim, *Not enough maritime capability: The challenge of reinforcing Europe*, Center for a New American Security, 2019.

say, this limited ability, including the capacity limitations, would be particularly detrimental in a large-scale operation where time is of the essence.⁵⁹ Furthermore, in Europe there are also reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSOI) limitations to take into consideration.

These problems are ameliorated by extensive and expanding prepositioning programs. The Army has prepositioned equipment for an ABCT and an artillery brigade in Europe, and more will continue to arrive through 2021.⁶⁰ This increases the pace of deployment, since units can be transported by air and retrieve the equipment.

The US Navy maintains an enduring forward presence and approximately a third of the fleet is globally deployed. Unlike the other services that require fixed bases and host nation consent to operate, the Navy can operate freely across the seas. As a result, the Navy is often the first to respond to a crisis.

The force forward presence needed, as determined by the combatant commanders and the Secretary of Defence, is specified in the Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP). The Navy's FY 2019 budget request declared that, to meet the objectives of the NSS, NDS and the GFMAP, the Navy and Marine Corps aim to have "two Carrier Strike Groups (CSG) and two Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG) forward at all times, and keeping three additional CSGs and ARGs in a ready use or surge status (2+3) to deploy within 30 days."⁶¹

A crisis in Northern Europe would likely lead to a surge in the naval capabilities deployed to the region. This has been signaled through an increase in aircraft carrier deployments to the European theatre and the Arctic, more frequent deployments of

submarines, and the reconstitution of the 2nd Fleet.

Considerable assets are assigned to USAFE and the Third Air Force. In a conflict in EUCOM's AOR, there would probably be a massive influx of US airpower assets, including bombers and fighter aircraft, as well as transports, tankers, and further enablers, which would be assigned to these existing service components.

The Air Force's expeditionary force has little relationship to its units in CONUS.⁶² Regular wings, groups, squadrons and groups do not generally deploy together to make up expeditionary units. Rather, the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) process creates tailored force packages by combining personnel and equipment from multiple units.⁶³

The USAF has analysed which pacing squadrons would be required on the first days of a peer campaign. In each pacing squadron, lead packages have been developed, which will constitute the initial wave to halt enemy activity while follow-on joint and allied partner forces deploy. According to USAF's FY 2020 posture statement, 80 per cent of the pacing squadrons will reach readiness before the end of FY 2020, and more than 90 per cent of these squadrons' lead packages are ready to "fight tonight".⁶⁴ The number of mission-capable pacing squadrons available for conflict in Northern Europe, discounting other demands and priorities, is undisclosed. However, it seems likely that only portions of the Air Force's combat-coded squadrons are currently qualified to execute the unit's primary wartime mission.⁶⁵

When making this estimation, refueling capacity and basing need to be considered. The fact that wing-sized units at main operating bases represent a significant

59 U.S. Transportation Command, *Comprehensive report for Turbo activation 19-Plus*, 2019; Martin, Bradley and Yardley, Roland J., *Approaches to strategic sealift readiness*, RAND, 2019.

60 U.S. Army Europe, *Fact sheet: Army prepositioned stock*, 2020; U.S. Department of Defense, *European Deterrence Initiative*; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Prepositioned stocks: DOD needs joint oversight of the military services' programs*, 2019.

61 U.S. Department of the Navy, *Highlights of the Department of the Navy FY 2019 budget*, 2019.

62 The AEF concept, formulated in the 1990s, was originally intended to be both the process for managing force rotations and a standard unit of measure for presenting forces. Prioritising flexibility, the USAF later abandoned the idea of standard-sized AEFs and decided to present tailored force packages based on combat commanders' needs. Priebe, Miranda, Vick, Alan J., Heim, Jacob L., Smith Meagan L. *Distributed operations in a contested environment: Implications for USAF force presentation*. RAND, 2019.

63 It is possible the Air Force would try to keep its permanent wings intact, at least to the extent feasible, in a major conflict against a peer competitor, as was the plan for defending NATO during the Cold War. If this is the case, the intact fighter wings would have additional aircraft, such as KC-135s, attached. Miranda Priebe (et al.), *Distributed operations*.

64 U.S. Department of the Air Force, *FY20 Personnel Posture Statement*, Testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 27 February 2019.

65 Wood, Dakota L., *The 2021 index of U.S. military strength* (Washington D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 2020), p. 421.

vulnerability in a conflict with a near-peer competitor will most certainly affect both the size of reinforcements and the pace of the influx.⁶⁶

As the US expeditionary force in readiness, the USMC is capable of responding rapidly to a crisis in Europe. The 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force would be the primary provider of fighting formations and units to EUCOM. When directed, the 2nd MEF's over 47,000 marines and sailors deploy as a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF).⁶⁷ In a conflict in Northern Europe, parts of the 2nd MEF would deploy to Norway with support of the equipment placed there through the Marine Corps Pre-positioning Program Norway, MCPP-N. This includes munitions to support an MEB for up to 30 days and ground equipment to support a MAGTF built around an infantry battalion task force, combat logistics battalion, and composite aviation squadron.⁶⁸

US reinforcements to Europe would also include special operations forces.⁶⁹ In a conflict in Europe, SOF would be assigned to Special Operations Command Europe, which is under the operational control of EUCOM's combatant commander. Possible reinforcements from the US Army Special Operations Command are the 75th Ranger Regiment, special operations aviation, and Delta Force units.⁷⁰ The Air Force Special Operations Command could send special-purpose aircraft and control teams. Naval Special Warfare Command can send Navy SEALs Teams, and Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command could send units from the Marine Raider Regiment.

ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY CAPABILITY IN EUROPE

Readiness is highly prioritised by all US military services. Significant progress has been made in the last few years, but readiness remains a major concern across the services. Despite lingering problems, the US contribution to resolving a conflict in Northern Europe would be substantial, both within one week and a longer time frame of three months.⁷¹

The US forces available within one week will mostly consist of the permanent and rotational forces assigned to EUCOM. However, certain reinforcements from the US and naval vessels deployed in proximity to the theatre could potentially also be available within that time frame.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade is the Army's Contingency Response Force in Europe. Within one week it is estimated that at least two-thirds of the brigade will be available. Within the same time frame, it is estimated that at least half of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, the 41st Field Artillery Brigade, the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, and the two Air Defense Artillery Battalions of the 10th AAMDC will be ready. The better part of the SOF battalion will be available.

Compared to the permanent forces, the readiness of the rotational forces is higher. Rotational forces are deployed on NATO's eastern flank to deter and provide reassurance and are continuously engaged in exercises. It is estimated that at least two-thirds of the Armoured BCT and the Combat Aviation Brigade will be available. Furthermore, within a week, two battalions of the 82nd Airborne Division attached to the IRF should have arrived.

⁶⁶ The prepositioning of numerous Deployable Air Base System, (DABS) kits will facilitate a less vulnerable distribution of air assets.

⁶⁷ The basic structure of a MAGTF consists of a Command Element, a Ground Combat Element, an Aviation Element, and a Logistics Combat Element. To enhance expeditionary readiness, the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade was re-established in 2012. It provides a scalable, standing joint-capable, deployment-ready headquarters element that can enable follow-on forces. It is organised to meet the requirements of a specific situation and can function alone or as the lead echelon of the MEF. The 2nd MEB draws its aviation, ground, and logistics elements from the 2nd MEF and can range in size from 14,000–18,000 marines.

⁶⁸ See official site of the US Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Pre-Positioning Program – Norway (MCPP-N)*.

⁶⁹ United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) oversees the special operations component commands of the four services: the Army Special Operations Command; the Naval Special Warfare Command; the Air Force Special Operations Command; and the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command; and eight sub-unified commands, which consist of the U.S. Joint Special Operation Command and seven Theater Special Operations Commands.

⁷⁰ The 75th Ranger Regiment, headquartered at Fort Benning, Georgia, is composed of four geographically dispersed battalions. It is the Army's premier light-infantry unit; the Regiment can deploy one Ranger battalion and a Regimental C2 element within 18 hours of notification. It can follow on with two additional battalions within 72 hours.

⁷¹ The availability and readiness of US forces are increasingly sensitive information, and the DoD has recently moved to further keep force readiness out of the public domain.

The availability of the four Arleigh Burke-class Guided Missile Destroyers (DDG) permanently assigned to EUCOM depends on where they are deployed at the outbreak of the crisis.⁷² This also applies to all other forward-deployed naval vessels, including submarines. The average transit speed of US naval warships is 15 knots. It takes eight days to sail to the GIUK Gap from Norfolk and nine to Gibraltar. A Carrier Strike Group deployed in the Atlantic Ocean or the Mediterranean Sea could be ready to assist within a one-week time frame.⁷³

It is estimated that two-thirds of the F-16C/D squadron of the 52nd Fighter Wing, the two F-16C/D squadrons of the 31st Fighter Wing, and the three F15C/F15E squadrons of the 48th Fighter Wing will be available at a week's notice. Within that time frame, substantial US-based airpower assets would also have been assigned to USAFE. This might include the equivalent of 1–2 wings, each including 3–4 squadrons of fighter aircraft, with F-15 Cs, F-22s and F-35s, and a tanker wing. It might also include 2–3 strategic bomber squadrons, primarily B-52s and B-1Bs.

The USMC's permanent presence in Europe is small, but reinforcements from the US would arrive quickly. Within one week's time, the first units from 2nd MEF may have landed and begun retrieving pre-positioned equipment. Special operations forces are also available at short notice, and an estimation suggests that three battalions of the 75th Ranger Regiment and several smaller SOF units will be ready.⁷⁴

Within three months, the US can reinforce Europe considerably. All permanent and rotational units in Europe, as well as units with prepositioned equipment on the continent and in Norway, will be on their feet. The US Army has stocks for one armoured brigade and an artillery brigade on the continent. Within three months, these units would be up and running. At least one ABCT, one infantry BCT, and possibly one CAB would also have been sealifted to Europe. The Army would then have three armoured brigades, one mechanised brigade, three infantry brigades, three attack helicopter brigades, and two artillery brigades in Europe.

Substantial naval forces can also be deployed. Within three months, two CSGs would be available, bringing eight fighter squadrons to the theatre. An Amphibious Ready Group with a Marine Expeditionary Unit could also be available unless engaged elsewhere. Within this timeframe, considerable additional airpower could be sent to Europe, including several fighter squadrons.

When estimating the potential for US reinforcements to the European theatre, strategic and political considerations are as important as the number of available military units in CONUS. The future development of US military capability also presents a mixed bag for Europe.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy warns that the US competitive military advantage has been eroding. The re-orientation towards inter-state strategic competition has been accompanied by an intensified US effort to remain the world's most capable military power. This is observable on all levels of the US military.

Training scenarios focus almost exclusively on high-end decisive action. Utility in near-peer situations guides upgrades, acquisition priorities, and new equipment programs. Organisational structures, concepts, and doctrine are also shifting to this end. The character of recent budgets suggests the DoD is pursuing a build-up that prioritises modernisation over expanding the force structure. The only service that is truly expanding its force structure is the Navy. The other services' force structure will remain more or less steady. A downturn in the US economy will slow the modernisation effort, but it will not stop the reorientation.

US military capability to handle near-peer situations will increase during the coming five years. However, the US advantage has shrunk, and there are limits to US military power. The shift in the DoD's force-sizing construct to one major conflict 'plus', is a recognition of this fact. A sharpened US focus on China can thus be detrimental to US military capability in Europe.

At the end of July 2020, the Trump Administration announced plans to withdraw troops from Germany, citing China as one of the reasons. The plans include moving EUCOM Headquarters, including SOCEUR, to Mons,

72 Note also that Africa is part of the Sixth Fleet's area of operations.

73 In the summer 2018, USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN75) participated in the annual exercise, Baltops, operating from the Adriatic Sea. In the autumn of the very same year, the carrier took part in the NATO exercise, Trident Juncture, in Norway, operating from the Northern Atlantic.

74 The 75th Ranger Regiment is tasked to be able to deploy one Ranger battalion and a Regimental C2 element within 18 hours of notification and follow on with two additional battalions within 72 hours.

Belgium; relocating the 52nd Fighter Wing to Aviano Air Base, Italy; relocating three brigade-sized headquarters, the 5th Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery, and an engineering battalion to Belgium; and repositioning the 2nd Cavalry Regiment from Germany back to the US.⁷⁵ If implemented, this would reduce US permanent land forces in Europe by a third. As of yet, no timetables have been set, and the

plans could face challenges from Congress, where lawmakers from both parties have expressed concerns. Shortly after assuming office, President Biden formally halted the planned withdrawal of troops from Germany. Furthermore, a review of the US force posture abroad is expected from the Biden administration. ■

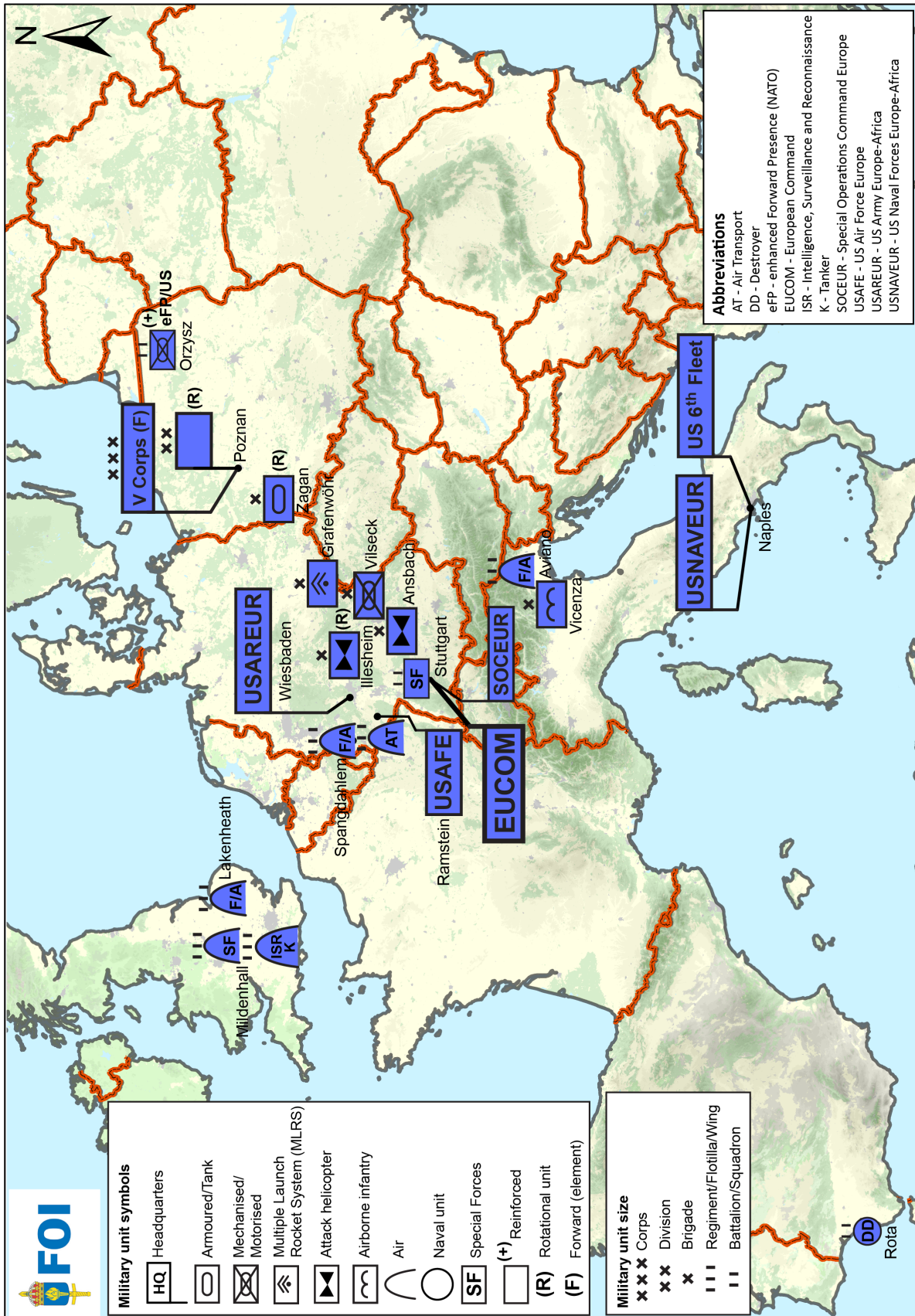
This memo is an extract from FOI's report *Western Military Capability in Northern Europe 2020 – Part II: National Capabilities*, FOI-R--5013--SE

⁷⁵ The plans also include moving Africa Command and Special Operations Command Africa from Stuttgart.

Table: Force structure of the US Armed Forces in Europe

Organisation 2020		Planned reforms towards 2025	Assessment of forces available at short notice ^a
Joint	Joint Operations Command (EUCOM) Special Operations Command (SOCEUR) Theater Sustainment Command (TSR) 1 signals brigade 1 military intelligence brigade 1 transportation brigade 1 military police battalion		
Army	1 Corps HQ Air and Missile Defense Command 1 mechanised infantry brigade 1 artillery brigade ^b 1 airborne infantry brigade 1 combat aviation helicopter brigade 1 special operations forces battalion OAR Rotation: 1 armoured brigade 1 combat aviation helicopter brigade 1 Sustainment Task Force	2 artillery battalions are scheduled to arrive in 2021. The airborne brigade is scheduled to receive a new platform, the Ground Mobility Vehicle.	Up to 2 mechanised battalions including support 2–3 airborne battalions including support Up to 1 attack helicopter battalion At least half a special forces battalion At least two-thirds of the units in rotation
Navy	1 amphibious command ship (LCC) 4 destroyers 1 maritime patrol squadron (P-8A)	Upgraded weapons systems for maritime patrol aircraft (P-8A). ^c	Available At least 2 ships Available
Air Force	6 fighter/attack squadron 1 fighter squadron (rotational) 1 intelligence squadron 1 tanker wing 1 transport wing 1 combat search and rescue squadron 1 special operations group	Prepositioning of numerous Deployable Air Base Systems – Facilities, Equipment and Vehicle Kits (DABS).	At least two-thirds Available (if deployed in Europe) Available
Marines	Marine Rotational Force (Norway)	The US will end the rotational deployment of 700 marines to Norway in 2021.	Up to a battalion including ground and air support

NB: a. Primarily manoeuvre forces have been assessed with respect to availability. Higher commands/staffs are generally expected to function at short notice, if they are at Full Operational Capability (FOC). Support units included in manoeuvre forces are assumed to have the same readiness as their parent organisations, if available information does not indicate otherwise. Independent support and specialist units have generally not been assessed. **b.** The 1st Battalion of the 77th Field Artillery Regiment is under construction. **c.** Upgrades include: AGM-158C Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM). Other upgrades considered are JDAM variants, Mk 62/63/65 Quickstrike mines, the Small Diameter Bomb (SDB II), and Miniature Air-Launched Decoy (MALD). **c.** Deployable Air Base Systems – Facilities, Equipment and Vehicle Kits.



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