MEMORANDUM FOR SCUSA 74

SUBJECT: Europe: Domestic Challenges and External Aggression

1. Issue:
   Turmoil on the European continent has reaffirmed the need for strong innovative cooperation between the United States and its European allies. While the aggressor may be a familiar actor, the circumstances of the conflict differ from previous iterations. The US must find a way to employ innovation to address mutual security interests in Europe while rebalancing our strategic relationships with transatlantic allies.

2. Strategic Analysis:
   A rise in global competition between emerging and re-emerging powers presents a multitude of security challenges to American interests abroad. China’s ascent has pressed the United States to shift its strategic priorities away from the European continent and towards the Indo-Pacific to counteract these forces.

   Concurrently, Russia’s immediate threat to allies in Europe demands the return of substantial U.S. attention to Europe. The combination of the Eurozone crisis, the migration crisis of 2015, and Brexit—the polycrises of the 2010s—weakened the social, political, and economic fabric of Europe, marked by the rise in right-wing populism and democratic backsliding. Further, Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine decisively ended relative peace on the European continent since the end of the Cold War. Thus, a culmination of an increasingly aggressive Russia with a fragile Europe has revealed the continent’s deep vulnerabilities, particularly its declining economic strength, rising social unrest, and military capacity deficiencies.

   American commitment to its European allies remains a vital component to its powerful position in the current rules-based international system. Rising powers threaten shared values of democracy, human rights, and multilateral cooperation. Thus, destabilizing forces in Europe highlight the need for renewed attention and careful reevaluation of this transatlantic partnership and its efforts to lead the current world order. The evolution of this relationship will dictate the future security and stability of Europe.

3. Relevant National Interests:
   Confronting these issues requires assessing American interests in Europe. The United States interest necessitates a strong NATO to act as a guiding force towards peace in Europe. Europe itself is not a monolithic entity with uniform ideals or behaviors, but a more cohesive European attitude and strategy on foreign affairs is desirable. This can be facilitated through NATO’s further standardization of military procedures and production. Subsequently, this cooperation and agreement between European states will lead to a more peaceful pan-European society with less conflict between bordering nations.

   Similarly, the United States values rebuilding its credibility in deterrence as another proponent of wider peace. Building credibility itself is vastly important in making the United States’ decisions and threats more legitimate, and their implementation more successful. Deterrence has failed in recent
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years considering the conflict in Russia and Ukraine and must be revived. Deterrence is most effective when claims or threats are followed with decisive action. Increased credibility of deterrence strategies contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability and the prevention of further conflict.

It is in the interest of both the United States and its European allies to minimize the influence of foreign powers on domestic American and European populations. Russia and China both utilize artificially generated content on social media to advance their own interests in destabilizing Western political tradition. While these threats cannot be eliminated entirely, mitigation of malicious influence on social media by adversaries is a worthwhile endeavor to protect the American and European political spheres from foreign interference and radicalization.

The final national interest of the United States pertaining to its European policy concerns a wider shift of American foreign policy focus. The United States has pivoted time and resources towards the Asian-Pacific region in recognition of threats posed by a rising authoritarian China. To maintain a substantive influence in Europe, it is imperative that the United States’ European allies increase their responsibility in achieving commonly held security goals. The shifting of some diplomatic and defensive responsibilities while maintaining a strong commitment to historic alliances positions the United States to maximize its use of resources in meeting global objectives.

4. **Strategic Options:**

To maximize the operational strength and flexibility of United States and its European allies required to both respond to and preempt the above-mentioned concerns, the following policies are appropriate:

1) NATO approach
   a) Development of a United Nations Peacekeeping task force to counter the effects of cyber warfare
   b) Building new NATO installations
      i) Potential base in Finland
   c) Expand of intra-NATO cadet and officer exchange programs
   d) Cooperation between NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) and Ukraine

2) European Union approach
   a) Collaboration between EU’s Digital Education Action Plan and the Department of Education
   b) Subsidize development of technology to detect AI generated photos and videos.
   c) Mandate social media companies incorporate AI content detection tools into their programs
   d) Incentivization of expanding American defense company manufacturing in Europe
   e) Ease export controls on military products
   f) Encouragement of collaborative research and design between US-EU allies

5. **Recommendation:**

The United States should encourage the United Nations to develop a Cyber Peacekeeping force, push NATO to both expand its presence on its borders with the Russian Federation and implement exchange programs to bring the militaries of its member nations closer together and take action to expand its presence in Europe’s defense industry. This multifaceted course of action will allow the United States to confront challenges to the international order head-on with a strong Europe by its side.

6. **Implementation:**

The State Department should reaffirm its commitment to NATO allies and European stability by
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encouraging the development of a United Nations cyber Peacekeeping force, collaborate with the Department of Defense in advocating for the expansion of NATO presence on its borders with the Russian Federation, expanding NATO programs to facilitate inter-military exchanges, and foster cooperation with Congress to economically incentivize private American investment in the European defense sector. The Executive should also continue to facilitate and utilize open lines of diplomatic and military communication at the highest levels of government between NATO allies.

7. Point of Contact:
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Innovation in the Future of American Foreign Policy
SCUSA 74
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