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European Army NOT REAL: Changing Political Landscape and Tight Budgets. Part 2

Europe's push for a unified military force faces severe challenges, including recruitment shortages, logistical struggles, and a lack of public support, raising doubts about its viability and effectiveness in modern.



A second problem of fielding a European Army is where do all the troops, i.e., boots on the ground, to man complicated weapons systems and engage in combat in the trenches come from? Despite its much larger population, Europe has a massive recruitment crisis, and, even worse, is failing to retain trained service personnel, resulting in units existing mainly on paper.

Even if Europe moves forward, standardizing equipment, overcoming language barriers, and agreeing on a unified military doctrine would be monumental challenges

This is particularly noticeable in the UK, Germany, France, as well as Eastern Europe, all of who are seeing their smallest (and still shrinking) militaries in over 150 years. General Karel Rehka, Czech army chief, summed the dire situation up well:

“We cannot do anything without people – if we modernise equipment and don’t have enough competent people and motivated people, that is all wasted money,”

The recruitment situation is so bad that countries such as Germany and Poland are considering reintroducing conscription, with Poland framing this as “all men undergoing military training”. By doing so, the Poles hope to achieve a force size (including reservists) of 500,000 men from the current 200,000.

Conscription seldom results in a high-quality force, and European and Ukrainian reluctance to serve should be contrasted with the enthusiastic response of Russian men to voluntary enlistment calls, which have seen the Russian army grow to over 1.3 million men since the start of the Special Military Operation.

More than Numbers to Win

These two vital aspects of warfare, logistics, and the enthusiasm of the soldiers, are both lacking in Europe. Tusk’s simplistic equation also belies the historical record, which is replete with stories of smaller, more motivated, armies defeating far larger, less motivated forces. From the age of empire, we can look at the British conquest of India, or the Anglo-French invasion of China in the 1860s, and the conquest of Africa, and, most ominously for Europe, and Macron in particular, the Russian victory in the first Great Patriotic War.

Napoleon’s invasion of Russia is the most fruitful lesson, where the French Grand Armee, significantly outnumbered the Russian forces, who used, as they did in late 2022 in response to the Ukrainian counter-offensives in Khakov and Kerson provinces, the Russian tactic of trading land for time, before forcing the French to retreat.

This resulted in the disaster of the retreat from Moscow, the pivotal point of the Napoleonic wars. In Ukraine, it resulted in Russia springing the trap of the Surovikin line which annihilated the much anticipated Ukrainian 2023 summer offensive, gutting the Ukrainian army’s elite formations and resulting in so much film of burning western wunderwaffen tanks.

Much like the war on the Eastern Front was won in 1943 at Kursk, we can say that the Russians won in 2023, the final victory parade being a matter of time, especially in light of recent events.

As Putin said in response to Macron’s “Napoleonic moment”:

“There was a talk about Smolensk and the museum from the time of Napoleon’s invasion. Some still long to return to those days, forgetting how it ended,”

Even if Europe moves forward, standardizing equipment, overcoming language barriers, and agreeing on a unified military doctrine would be monumental challenges. Public support is

another issue—do European citizens even back this idea? And if not, does democracy still matter in the EU’s decision-making process?

For now, the idea of a European Army remains theoretical. But if pursued, it risks deepening divisions, straining economies, and potentially escalating global tensions rather than preventing them.

Based on the current state of the SMO, and all things considered, any European Army would likely find itself not using modern techniques and strategies of warfare, such as the high mobility forces favored by the US and its allies in the “Great War on Terror” in Afghanistan and Iraq, but instead reverting to 1917 trench warfare methods up to its ears in “mud, blood, and guts” as we have seen repeatedly in the last three years.

The arrogance of western militaries that their “wunderwaffen” will “punch through” the Russian army remains, sadly, fully in place. In response to the failure of the NATO planned 2023 Ukrainian counteroffensive’s failure and scenes of burning Leopard 2, Challenger 2, and M1A1 SEP Main Battle Tanks and Bradley and Marder IFVs, was that it would have been different if (insert appropriate country here)’s soldiers had been using them.

This is far from reality.

The simple fact is that no western military, including that of the USA, has trained for this kind of warfare since the September 11th attacks of 2001. Instead, the focus has been on Counter Insurgency (COIN) operations against lightly armed guerilla forces like the Taliban, Iraqi Mujahedeen, and ISIS*. As a result, NATO forces, even the Americans, have let heavy units such as armored and mechanized divisions atrophy away to almost nothing, focusing on light mobile forces. It has been an entire generation since western militaries even thought of fighting against an enemy equipped with its own heavy artillery, tanks, helicopter gunships, air defense, and fighters and bombers, let alone the advanced drones, cruise and ballistic missiles, and 3000kg (6600lb) guided glide bombs. Western militaries have become firmly welded to a specific way of war that relies far too much on “flying artillery” in the form of air power and light ground forces. This combination will be a disaster if used against the Russians, who rely on immense amounts of artillery, guns and rockets, as well as air defense missiles and long-range fighters capable of engaging western aircraft from up to 400km away, twice the range of the latest western missiles.

This explains the rather angry response to western criticism made about the failure of the Ukrainians to make any real impact in 2023, where the UAF accused the west of training them for the wrong war.

Changing tack will be an expensive and time-consuming problem, with the entire logistical chain and training system requiring complete rebuilding. This made even more difficult by the large head start the Russians have in understanding modern warfare, and their proven ability to adapt quickly to any enemy development, as seen with the failure of western weapons to make any noticeable, let alone decisive, impact on the war each time one is introduced.

From the Javelins and drones, to HIMARS, and ATACMS ballistic missiles, and the air launched British Storm Shadows, US AGM-88 HARMS, and French SCALPs, as well as western supplied maritime unmanned suicide boats, the Russians have always quickly found workable solutions, while the opposite cannot be said for the much vaunted west.

Perhaps this is why the head of Germany's BND intelligence service, Bruno Kahl, recently stated that the war needs to be prolonged until 2030, saying:

“An early end to the war in Ukraine would enable the Russians to direct their energy where they actually want it, namely against Europe.”

This was accompanied by the usual panic inducing rhetoric about a “Russian threat to Europe” which, as the Russians have repeatedly stressed, bears no relation to reality.

I see this sort of rhetoric as a desperate attempt to buy time to try and create a new European Army. However, given the fact that in 3 years of conflict in Ukraine, the Europeans have singularly failed to increase weapons production, or the size and quality of their armed forces (actually, quite the opposite), I see little chance of success at this stage.

If fact, the illusion of a European Army is colliding with the hard realities of recruitment shortages, logistical failures, and an overall lack of public support. Even if Europe somehow overcame these challenges, history suggests that superior numbers alone do not win wars—motivation, strategy, and resources do. Europe is already losing on those fronts.

More troubling is the prospect that this push for militarization could backfire, not by strengthening European security, but by dragging the continent deeper into conflict and economic instability. If European leaders persist in this illusion, they may find themselves not commanding a modern fighting force, but instead reliving the horrors of past wars—mired in trenches, out of options, and up to their necks in a self-inflicted catastrophe, this time with no USA to rescue them a third time.

As Slovakian MEP Lubos Blaga recently said, it's time for Europe to recognize that Ukraine has lost in the conflict with the Russian Federation, and there is little chance the Europeans can reverse that. The same thing that holds true for Afghanistan, holds true for Russia, they are destroyers of invading empires.

Unfortunately, most of Europe, unlike Donald Trump, is blind to that truth.

**-banned in Russia*

Seth Ferris, March 29, 2025

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