FROM CONSCRIPTS TO VOLUNTEERS

NATO's Transitions to All-Volunteer Forces

Cindy Williams

Since the Cold War ended, twelve of NATO's twenty-six member states have suspended compulsory military service or announced plans to phase it out, thus joining the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Luxembourg in the family of nations with all-volunteer armed forces (AVFs). Most of NATO's other members are deeply reducing the number of conscripts they call up each year, relying increasingly on volunteers to fill their military ranks.[1]

The national decisions to halt conscription were motivated by a variety of factors. Whatever the paths to those decisions, however, advocates of military reform—including senior leaders in NATO—hold that the volunteer militaries will be better suited to NATO's post–Cold War missions and can deliver modern, high-technology, expeditionary capabilities more cost-effectively than can their conscript counterparts.[2] Some hope that switching to the "small but solid" volunteer model will free up money in payroll and infrastructure accounts that can be reinvested in new military equipment, thus narrowing the capabilities gap that has grown up between the United States and its NATO allies.[3] Unfortunately, as the United States discovered when it ended conscription in 1973, the benefits of shifting to an AVF do not materialize immediately, and the period of transition can be more costly and difficult than anticipated.

Ultimately, within a decade, the United States got through its transition with good pay and educational benefits, professional recruiting, improved conditions

Dr. Williams is a principal research scientist in the Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She has previously served as assistant director for national security at the Congressional Budget Office; at the MITRE Corporation; in the Defense Department directorate of Program Analysis and Evaluation; and as a mathematician at RAND.

The author is grateful to the German Marshall Fund of the United States for hosting her at the Transatlantic Center in Brussels, Belgium, during 2002–2003 and for sponsoring the roundtable on military personnel policy cited in this article. She wishes to thank the Smith Richardson Foundation for supporting the research that made the article possible.

Naval War College Review, Winter 2005, Vol. 58, No. 1

of military life, and other measures aimed at attracting and keeping high-quality people. Like the United States at that time, European countries are seeking creative solutions to recruit, retain, and motivate the high-quality uniformed volunteers they need and to encourage them to depart when their services are no longer required. The economic, demographic, labor, and social environments within which militaries compete as employers for qualified people differ from country to country, however. As a result, both the appropriate solutions and the difficulty of transition will vary, and the military benefits of AVFs may be more difficult, more costly, and longer in coming in European countries than they were in the United States.

This article looks at the transition to all-volunteer forces in the militaries of NATO. It begins with a brief overview of changing conscription policies and the factors that motivate the shift to an AVF. It then describes some of the problems the American all-volunteer force encountered during its first decade and the initiatives the United States embraced to solve them. It continues with a look at the problems encountered by Europe's militaries as they shift, followed by a discussion of key differences that may make U.S. solutions less effective in NATO Europe. It ends with an overview of initiatives in several European countries and a brief summary.

THE EMERGENCE OF ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCES IN EUROPE

The United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Luxembourg share a decades-long tradition of all-volunteer service. Since the end of the Cold War, six nations—Belgium, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain—have ended conscription. The Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia plan to phase conscription out within the next several years (see table 1).

The decision to end compulsory service is a national one. A look at the factors motivating the decisions to end conscription reveals both similarities and differences among European countries and between Europe and the United States.

In the United States, the choice was rooted in domestic politics and concerns over social and racial inequities stemming from the draft system that prevailed during most of the Vietnam War. Nevertheless, the deliberations that preceded the decision were informed by studies of a far richer set of issues: social and demographic factors, military effectiveness, economic efficiency, the role of women in the military, the role of and prospects for reserve forces, and other related concerns.[4] The choice to end conscription was particularly favored by economists, who anticipated that a volunteer force would be less expensive in terms of the opportunity costs (foregone wages combined with any preference for civilian life) of individuals who would serve. Economists also predicted that

TABLE 1
CONSCRIPTION POLICIES IN NATO COUNTRIES

Country	Conscription	Number in Active Forces (Thousands)	Number in Reserves (Thousands)	Term of Conscription (Months)	Number of Conscripts (Thousands)	Share of Conscripts in Forces (%)
Belgium	Suspended in 1994	39	14	None	0	0
Bulgaria	Plans to keep	51	303	9	45	88
Canada	No peacetime conscription	60	23	None	0	0
Czech Republic	Phase out by 2006	40	N/A	12	19	48
Denmark	Plans to keep	23	65	4–12[a]	6	25
Estonia	Plans to keep; AVF under consideration	6	24	8[b]	1	24
France	Suspended in 2001	259	100	None	0	0
Germany	Plans to keep; increasing volunteers	283	359	9[c]	93[d]	33
Greece	Plans to keep	178	291	16–19	98	55
Hungary	Called last conscript in 2004	33	90	6	23	70
Italy	Suspend by 2007[e]	200[f]	63	10	40	20
Latvia	Phase out by 2008	5	13	12	2	33
Lithuania	Plans to keep	13	246	12	5	37
Netherlands	Ended in 1996	53	32	None	0	0
Norway	Plans to keep	27	219	12[g]	15	56
Poland	Plans to keep	163	234	12[h]	81	50
Portugal	End in 2003	45	211	4	9	20
Romania	Phase out by 2007	97	104	6–12	30	31
Slovak Republic	Suspend in 2006[i]	22	20	6[j]	8	34
Slovenia	Phase out in 2004	7	20	7	1	18
Spain	Ended in 2001	151	328	None	0	0
Turkey	Plans to keep	515	379	15	391	76
United Kingdom	Ended in 1962	213	273	None	0	0
United States	Ended in 1973	1,434	1,212	None	0	0

Except for dates of conscription, figures are as of 2003.

Sources: Transatlantic roundtable September 2003; IISS, *Military Balance 2003–2004*; U.S. Defense Dept., *Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country (309A)* (Washington, D.C.: 30 September 2003), available at web1.whs.osd.mil/mmid/M05/hst0309.pdf; NATO Parliamentary Assembly, *25–28 March 2003: Visit to Latvia and Estonia,* www.nato-pa.int; NATO Parliamentary Assembly, *16–19 June 2003: Visit to Poland and Lithuania by the Defence and Security Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities,* www.nato-pa.int; NATO Parliamentary Assembly, *Invited NATO Members' Progress on Military Reforms, 2003 Annual Session,* 146 DSCFC 03 E, www.nato-pa.int; and others.

a. Up to 24 months in certain ranks.
b. 11 months for sergeants and reserve officers; see NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "Invited NATO Members' Progress on Military Reforms, 2003 Annual Session," 146 DSCFC 03 E, www.nato-pa.int.
c. May volunteer to extend service to a total of 23 months.
d. Includes some 25,000 service members who voluntarily extended their periods of conscription to total up to 23 months.
e. A government bill was presented in 2003 to accelerate the suspension of conscription to 2005.
f. Under the Professional Law, will reduce to 190,000 troops.
g. Plus refresher periods; for some, possibility of 6 months with follow-on service in Home Guard.
h. Will drop to 9 months in 2004.
i. Retain authority for 3-month conscription to fill any gaps in military specialties.
j. Beginning January 1, 2004.

volunteers would be more cost-effective for the military, because of longer terms of service, lower personnel turnover, reduced training costs, and the substitution of capital for labor.[5]

Advocates of military transformation cite the switch to an all-volunteer force as a key enabler of the fundamental transformation in the U.S. military between the end of the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Today, Pentagon leaders seem united in their support for the volunteer model on military grounds, and economic studies continue to inform policies related to the AVF in the United States.[6] Nevertheless, questions about the sustainability of the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, together with concerns over the social composition of the armed forces, have sparked renewed debate.[7]

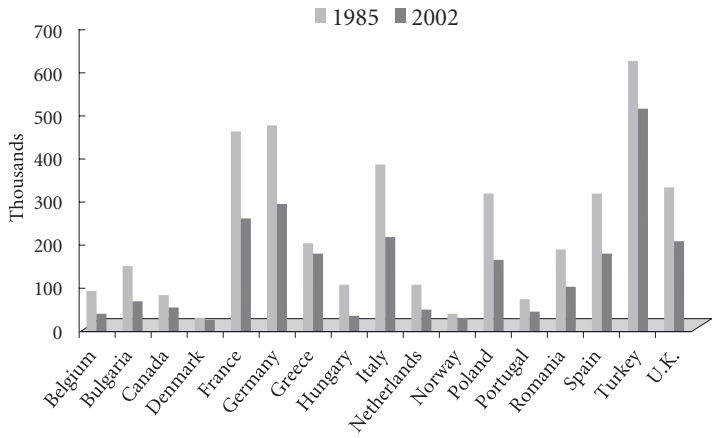
In Europe, economic arguments have been much less important to the national debates than they were in the United States, though budgetary considerations generally have been important drivers. Furthermore, the military reasons often have more to do with the availability of volunteers for foreign missions and less to do with their suitability for high-technology warfare—perhaps reflective of a European inclination toward the lower end of the military spectrum.

Every European country that decided to adopt an AVF after the Cold War ended did so in the context of its own political environment and for its own unique reasons. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some common themes for each of four groups of countries: those in Western Europe that adopted AVFs shortly after the end of the Cold War; those in Western Europe that made the shift around the turn of the century; countries in Central and Eastern Europe; and the Baltic states.

Belgium and the Netherlands were the first to end conscription. For them, the choice was intertwined with the decision to downsize their militaries. The long-term prospect of peace in Europe undercut the Cold War motivation of a sizable conscript army as an element of national security, and ending compulsory service seemed part of the peace dividend. The Dutch decision was also informed by a Priorities Review in 1993 emphasizing the creation of forces that could be deployed quickly to respond to crises, which conscripts could not do.[8]

Christopher Jehn and Zachary Selden identify broad themes that motivated the next four Western European nations—Spain, France, Portugal, and Italy—to decide on the shift at about the turn of the century. The decision in those countries generally involved a variety of factors, including the changed geopolitical environment, economic pressures, changed military missions, and domestic politics.[9] The end of the Cold War meant an opportunity to reduce military budgets substantially and cut back sharply on the number of people serving in uniform (see figure 1). At the same time, conscripts—generally

FIGURE 1
ACTIVE-DUTY TROOPS OF SELECTED NATO COUNTRIES



Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Military Balance 2003–2004* (Washington, D.C.: Oxford Univ. Press for the IISS).

precluded by law from deployment outside the country—were virtually useless for the out-of-area missions that NATO began to emphasize and that increasingly represented the main missions of Europe's militaries (see table 2).

In addition, the military drawdowns in those countries set off chain reactions that eroded popular support for conscription. For example, in post–Cold War Spain, as the military shrank, so did the proportion of eligible youth called to service each year. As fewer than half of the eligible young men were required to serve, conscription appeared increasingly unfair to those relatively few who did have to enter the armed forces. Both draft resistance and popular sentiment against conscription swelled. Politicians seized on the issue during an election campaign and halted conscription when they gained control of the legislature.[10]

For the Central and Eastern European members shifting to AVFs—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia—the considerations were somewhat different. For them, the new security environment and the prospect of collective defense in NATO made military downsizing possible; developing affordable militaries that would be compatible with NATO made downsizing and force restructuring necessary.[11] The view of alliance leaders and advisers that conscript forces were a vestige of the Cold War also played a role, as did public opinion and increasing levels of draft avoidance.[12]

Finally, of the three Baltic states, only Latvia plans to end conscription during this decade; in addition, Estonia is considering the shift to an AVF. Rather than downsizing, those countries are creating new militaries from whole cloth. Their decisions regarding compulsory service are still driven to some extent by concerns for self-defense. In preparing for membership in NATO, however, they have embraced the goal of integrating their forces into the alliance for missions in other parts of the world. The budgetary costs of new militaries and signals from NATO and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly about the military structures expected of new members have also been important factors in their decisions.[13]

TABLE 2
FORCES OF NATO COUNTRIES OPERATING ABROAD, 2003

Country	Personnel in Operations Outside Country (Thousands)	Personnel in Active Forces (Thousands)	Share of Active-Duty Personnel in Operations Outside Country (Percent)
Belgium	0.7	39	2
Bulgaria	0.5	51	1
Canada	2.6	60	4
Czech Republic	1.2	40	3
Denmark	1.6	23	7
Estonia	Fewer than 100	6	Less than 1%
France	34.7	259	13
Germany	7.3	283	3
Greece	3.2	178	2
Hungary	1.0	33	3
Italy	9.7	200	5
Latvia	0.2	5	3
Lithuania	0.2	13	1
Netherlands	5.5	53	10
Norway	1.3	27	5
Poland	3.9	163	2
Portugal	1.4	45	3
Romania	1.6	97	2
Slovak Republic	0.9	22	4
Slovenia	0.1	7	1
Spain	4.2	151	3
Turkey	39.5	515	8
United Kingdom	47.0	213	22
United States	436.0[a]	1,434	30

Sources: IISS, *Military Balance 2003–2004. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003; and others. Figures for personnel operating abroad include forces based permanently abroad as well as those deployed to military operations.*

a. Active duty only; substantial numbers of reservists are also serving abroad. Includes some 26,000 personnel afloat, 109,000 serving in other NATO countries, and 104,000 deployed to the Pacific theater.

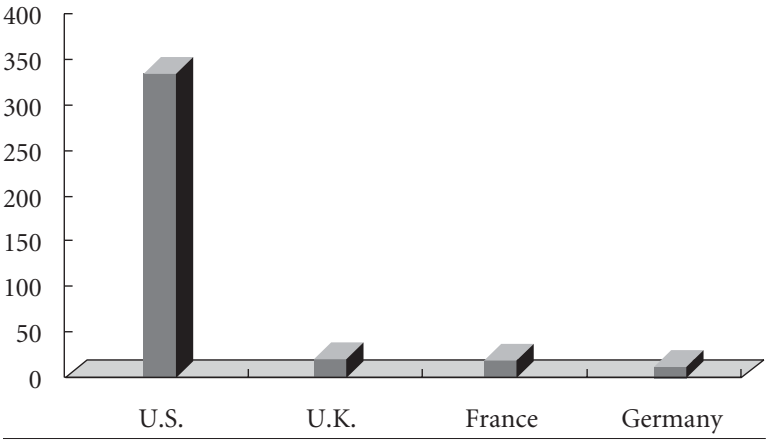
IMPROVING COST-EFFECTIVENESS

Whatever a nation's mix of reasons for suspending conscription, advocacy inside and outside NATO has raised expectations that AVFs will ultimately lead to improved military effectiveness and lowered personnel costs, thus narrowing the transatlantic capabilities gap. At first glance, the numbers seem compelling. In 2000, the United States spent just 27 percent of its military budget on personnel, compared with 34 percent in 1970, before the advent of the AVF.[14] Today, countries with AVFs generally devote smaller shares of their budgets to personnel expenditures and larger shares to developing and purchasing new equipment than do those that retain conscription. For example, taken together, the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom—three NATO countries with long-standing AVFs—devote 28 percent of their total defense budgets to

modernization. In contrast, the combined share of defense budgets dedicated to modernization in all the other countries of NATO comes to just 16.6 percent.[15]

A somewhat more refined example compares NATO Europe's three biggest spenders: the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. While the three countries' total defense budgets are roughly similar, Germany keeps more people under arms than the other two countries (see figures 2 and 3). Of the three, only Germany still has conscripts; France ended conscription in 2001 and is still in the throes of transition. Germany's conscripts add to the size of the Bundeswehr and at the same time drain money that would otherwise be available for modernization, with the result that Germany spends only one-quarter as much money on equipment modernization per active duty service member as the United Kingdom (see figure 4).[16]

FIGURE 2
TOTAL DEFENSE SPENDING (U.S. $ BILLION, 2002)



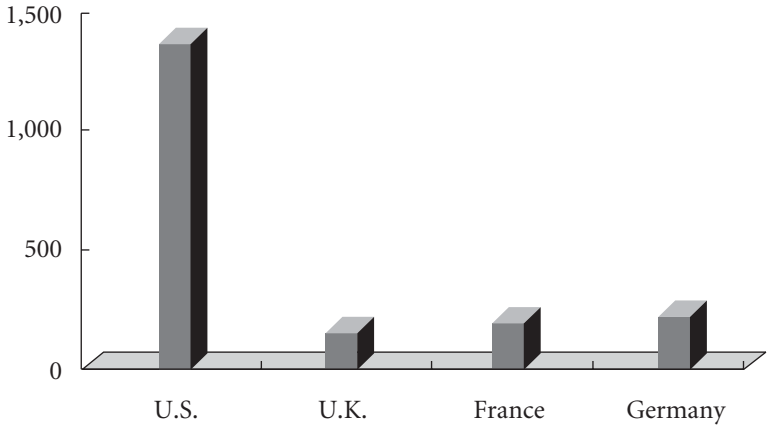
More generally, the U.S. experience appears to validate the arguments made in favor of all-volunteer forces on the basis of economic efficiency and cost-effectiveness.[17] Nevertheless, both the U.S. experience of the middle to late 1970s and the early indications from Europe suggest that the transitions in Europe will be more costly and difficult than many people foresee.

THE U.S. TRANSITION TO AN AVF WAS NOT EASY

In 1973, in the United States, the idea of shifting to an all-volunteer force was opposed by most senior military leaders, by many in Congress, by influential academics, and even by the *New York Times*.[18] The first decade of the new force was rocky and marked by calls to revert to some form of national service.

During the first three years of the AVF, the services generally met their overall requirements for staffing and quality. During those early years, however, the number of first-term enlistees who left the service before completing their contracted terms of service rose from 26 percent to 37 percent, pushing turnover rates (the annual requirement for enlisted recruits divided by the total size of the enlisted force) to nearly 22 percent—far exceeding the 13 percent anticipated in studies commissioned before the change.[19] The high attrition rate meant that more recruits were needed every year than anticipated. The constant churning

FIGURE 3
TROOPS IN ACTIVE FORCES (THOUSANDS)



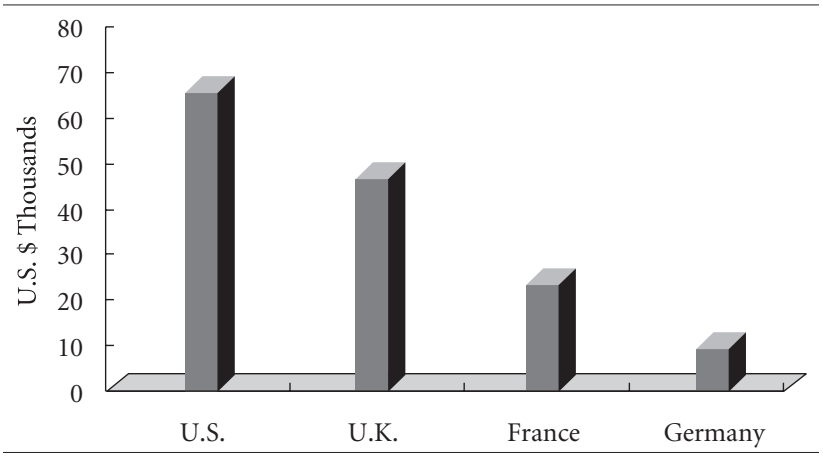
of the force translated into lower levels of experience and expertise in units as well as higher costs for recruiting and training. As a result, the share of the military budget devoted to personnel actually rose during the first few years of the AVF, despite a small reduction in the size of the force.[20]

The next few years brought the AVF close to crisis. During that period, the U.S. economy grew briskly and private-sector wages rose sharply. Military pay raises did not keep up, and budgets for recruiting and advertising were cut back. Congress suspended the GI Bill, which provided college money for military veterans and had served as an important enlistment incentive.

During that period, overall force levels were not a big problem. The services generally came close to meeting their targets for overall staffing; the largest proportional shortfall in total end strength was just 1.2 percent, in 1979.[21] Unfortunately, however, the quality of entering personnel plummeted. By 1980, nearly 50 percent of U.S. Army enlistees (compared with 28 percent in 1968) fell in the bottom 30 percent of American youth in terms of cognitive aptitude, while only 29 percent scored above the median on the military entrance test (compared with 49 percent at the end of the draft).[22] Across the four services, the proportion of low-scoring enlistees was worse than at any time since the Korean War.[23]

People with higher cognitive aptitudes do better at most military tasks; people whose aptitudes fall in the bottom 30 percent have difficulty acquiring the skills they need to be successful in the military. Thus, the high number of entrants who scored at the bottom of the test meant a lower-quality force, more work for trainers and leaders, and greater attrition for the entrants, too many of whom grew discouraged or were pressed to leave when they could not handle their assigned duties. In addition, that period coincided with a time of reduced investment in military equipment, resulting, some said, in a "hollow force." Some experts hold that problems stemming from reduced investment translated into morale problems that compounded the difficulties of getting the AVF started.[24]

FIGURE 4
MODERNIZATION SPENDING PER ACTIVE-DUTY SERVICE MEMBER (2002)



Fixing the problems cost money, but by the early 1980s a combination of efforts brought the U.S. military out of its transitional problems. Perhaps the most important was to raise military pay for recruits and, later, all ranks. Though pay raises lagged during the late 1970s, double-digit increases in 1981 and 1982 brought pay levels for most military people above the seventy-fifth percentile for people with similar levels of education and experience in private-sector firms. Despite the widely reported "pay gap" of the late 1980s and the 1990s, military pay continued to compare favorably with pay in the private sector throughout the second and third decades of the AVF.[25] Today, U.S. military pay raises are explicitly linked to average wage hikes in the private sector.

In addition, the United States expanded bonus programs to entice high-quality youth to join up and to induce people in critical occupations to reenlist. Following the mistaken decision to reduce educational benefits, the nation developed a new program that provides generous benefits for service members who wish to go to college or technical school after leaving the military. The services were also permitted to design educational bonuses of their own, an extra tool to attract people they most want to bring in. Money for post-service education proved to be particularly useful in attracting the high-aptitude people likely to be most successful in the military.[26]

The services also worked to identify and put a stop to military traditions that had little real value in a military sense but annoyed members greatly. Two emotionally charged issues were haircuts and "KP" (kitchen police) duty, which required soldiers to handle menial tasks on a routine basis. The issues pitted military commanders and veterans in Congress—who typically saw military "buzz cuts" and menial tasks as rites of passage supportive of good order and discipline—against the desires of recruits, who saw them as lifestyle detriments.[27] Ultimately, the desires of recruits won out. While the services still enforce haircut standards, they are more relaxed than during the draft era, and KP is largely a thing of the past.

Another initiative of the American transition was a focus on the quality of life for military families. Recruiters emphasized the benefits of family housing, health care, and cut-rate groceries, and money was added to budgets to improve the facilities, goods, and services that families appreciate. In the late 1980s, the Department of Defense opened its own child-development centers to provide subsidized, high-quality child-care services on military bases. The initiative probably paid off in improved recruiting and retention, but it also had a side effect that now raises costs for the military and complicates things both for commanders and for the people who serve—that is, the number of military people with young families grew.

In addition, the United States greatly expanded the pool from which talented recruits might be drawn by removing a 2 percent limit on the share of women in the forces, opening numerous jobs to women and transforming the conditions under which women serve. The proportion of women in the force rose from 1.9 percent in 1972 to 9.3 percent in 1983 and has since climbed to about 15 percent. The proportion of minorities who serve also increased, as individuals found better opportunities in the military than in the private sector.[28]

Finally, the military built a professional cadre of recruiters and invested heavily in marketing research and mass-media advertising. The general sales pitch emphasized the training and other opportunities the military can offer, a rich array of family benefits, good pay, a chance for an adventurous and yet more ordered life, as well as patriotism, a chance to be part of something important, and other intangibles. Increased advertising and recruiting can be the quickest and most cost-effective means to improve recruitment levels, which still typically lag when the economy heats up.

EUROPEAN MILITARIES ALSO FACE CHALLENGES IN TRANSITION

For European militaries that suspended the draft after the Cold War ended, the transition pains are real, and costs are higher than anticipated. The problems are compounded by the military drawdowns that preceded or accompanied the adoption of AVFs.

Downsizing Brought Its Own Problems

Across NATO, maintaining forces with an appropriate distribution of people in uniform with respect to rank, length of service, occupation, and ability level during the downsizing of the past decade and a half was a challenge. The United States managed its rank and experience profiles fairly carefully, through a system of attrition, lowered recruitment, and financial incentives to leave. Nevertheless, imbalances across occupations remain, with too few people in critical occupations and more than are needed in others. In some occupations, decisions made

during the drawdown had lasting effects. For example, the U.S. Air Force managed the drawdown by cutting back on the number of pilots it trained, and afterward found itself short of pilots.[29]

In Canada, much of the downsizing was accomplished through attrition and reduced recruiting. As a result, the Canadian Forces retained more older service members than are needed for current operations and has too few younger ones coming up the ranks. The older members, mostly married and settled in their lives, resist deployment. Yet shedding the older members at this point would leave too few experienced people to train incoming cohorts.[30]

Across Europe, strong programs of employee protection and generous retirement systems kept the armed forces from separating excess older members (see table 3). As a result, European militaries generally are left with too many older officers for their missions and a lack of experience in the lower officer ranks. In Belgium and the Netherlands, for example, most members of the professional military saw service as a lifetime career. After the downsizing, both countries were left with marked age and experience imbalances in their armed forces. Belgium has forty-seven-year-old corporals, and an average length of service of thirty-eight years. Leaders in both countries say that older members are not suited for current missions. In addition, Belgium faces an imbalance across occupational specialties, with too few people with the aptitudes, technical ability, and training needed. The Slovak Republic faces similar concerns.[31]

Romania found that its youngest and most capable members saw good opportunities on the outside and volunteered to depart as the military downsized, leaving the forces with too many high-ranking, older officers. After attempting to balance the pyramid based only upon rank and years of service, the Romanian armed forces are now working to improve the overall quality of the force as well.[32]

Shifting to AVFs Brought Unexpected Challenges

Across Europe, countries differ in their needs for military volunteers and the demographic, economic, labor, and social environments in which their militaries compete as employers. Thus, no two countries face precisely the same transition problems. Nevertheless, a look across NATO Europe reveals a number of shared challenges.[33]

- The level of military pay necessary to make the military competitive as an employer is typically higher than foreseen before the transition.
- Attracting high-quality recruits can be more difficult than anticipated; the private sector puts up particularly stiff competition for information specialists and other people with technical skills.

TABLE 3
CHARACTERISTICS OF MILITARY RETIREMENT SYSTEMS IN SELECTED NATO MILITARIES

Country	Type of Plan	Retirement Age or Years of Service (YOS)	Other
Belgium	Defined benefit: 75% of salary beginning at retirement age	45–61 for officers, depending on rank and whether "flying personnel"; 56 for soldiers and NCOs not flying personnel; 51 for NCO flying personnel	Reduced benefit for those who leave early; no pension for members in the new contract status
Canada	Individuals and government contribute into pension plan; defined benefit for service beyond 20 YOS; portable contributions for fewer than 20 YOS	Compulsory retirement recently raised to age 60 from 55. Pensions comparable to federal public service, indexed for cost of living. Full pension after 28 YOS for officers, 25 YOS for NCOs; members can retire after 20 YOS, with 5% penalty per year short of thresholds. Before 20 YOS, members can transfer a share of individual and government contributions into another pension plan	Option for paid, reduced annuity beginning at age 55–60 for those departing before 20 YOS
Czech Republic	Defined benefit and severance pay, with choice of lump-sum severance pay	Immediate annuity of 5% to 55% of average salary after 15–30 YOS; members revert to national pension system after 60 years of age, receiving the difference between service pension and other retirement pension if the service pension is higher	Members also receive severance pay equal to 4–6 months' salary for 15–20 YOS; "Smart Money" option equal to 2–18 months' salary for 2–26 YOS for members' who serve for fewer than 5 years or who opt out of the service pension and severance pay
France	Defined benefit	Career members: retirement age depends upon rank; deferred annuity option (at retirement age) after 15 YOS for NCOs, 25+ YOS for officers Contract members: immediate annuity after 20 YOS; deferred annuity option (at career retirement age) after 15 YOS	
Germany	Defined benefit	Contract soldiers: no retirement benefit Career personnel: lifetime annuity equal to about 70% of last pay, beginning at age 52–60 (depending on rank)	
Italy	Defined contribution (under public employee retirement system revised between 1992 and 1997)	Retirement eligibility based on age (usually 60 years) and YOS (currently in flux, consistent with reform of public sector retirement system), but military contributions of individuals who depart before then can be credited to pension accounts at the Italian Social Security Administration	Contributions are portable to Italian Social Security Administration for early retirees; defined benefit and mixed scheme retained for members already in service at the time of the reform; early retirement "seniority pensions" optional until 2008
Norway	Defined benefit	60	Option to retire at age 57 with 28 YOS

TABLE 3 CONTINUED
CHARACTERISTICS OF MILITARY RETIREMENT SYSTEMS IN SELECTED NATO MILITARIES

Country	Type of Plan	Retirement Age or Years of Service (YOS)	Other
Romania	Defined benefit	Men: Age 55 (somewhat later for flag officers) with 30+ years of work, including 20+ YOS in military Women: Age 55 with 20+ years of work, including 10+ YOS in military	Partial pension for younger retirees
Slovak Republic	Defined benefit and severance pay	Immediate pension equal to 30–60% (depending on YOS) of average pay of the best year from the final 10 years, after 15 or more YOS. In addition, retirement allowance equal to 2% of average pay of the best year from the last 10 years, paid monthly for a number of years depending on YOS, for members with 5+ YOS	In addition, members with 5 or more YOS receive severance pay equal to Gross Pay + .5 x GP x (YOS – 5)
Spain	Defined benefit	Permanent members may stay to age 58; pension possible after 8 years as temporary and 15 years as permanent member	No pension for temporary volunteers, who must leave after 12 years if they do not become permanent soldiers
United Kingdom	Defined benefit	Possibility of pension beginning at age 55 with 15–20 YOS; pension based on YOS and age at retirement, up to national retirement age	Some limited pensions before age 55
United States	Defined benefit	Immediate annuity for 20+ YOS; annuity indexed to cost of living, beginning at 50–75% of basic pay near end of military career	Some members may choose a lump-sum payment at 15 YOS, with a lower annuity. Severance pay for members separated involuntarily before 20 YOS

Source: Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

- Poor working conditions and inadequate facilities can scare recruits away, but improving such conditions usually costs more money than has been set aside for the purpose.
- Anticipated savings may not materialize as soon as expected—because, for example, bases made redundant by the absence of conscripts cannot be closed, for political reasons.
- The costs to train longer-serving volunteers (thus capitalizing on a key advantage of volunteers) are usually higher than expected.
- Unanticipated costs, tight budgets, and budget cuts typically eat into resources needed to implement the reforms surrounding the transition.
- Initially, uniformed leaders may not be motivated to make the transition a success. The situation is exacerbated when tight budgets and unanticipated costs prevent the improvements in equipment, infrastructure, and training that were touted as benefits to be gained from the shift to all-volunteer forces.

The resulting lack of high-quality recruits, high turnover rates, and unanticipated costs are reminiscent of the difficulties the United States encountered during the first decade of its AVF.[34] It would be easy to jump to the conclusion that by adopting U.S. strategies, Europe's militaries could get through their own transition pains and bring about circumstances conducive to narrowing the military capabilities gap within a decade.

IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES LIMIT THE TRANSFERABILITY OF LESSONS

Unfortunately, the U.S. lessons may not apply to European militaries. Fundamental differences in demographics, social programs, educational systems, and labor models mean that initiatives that worked in the United States may be less effective in European countries.

For example, population growth in most of northern Europe is very low; in southern, Central, and Eastern Europe, populations are declining.[35] To maintain a force of its current size through 2020, Spain would need every year to recruit 2.5 percent of the cohort between the ages of eighteen and twenty-eight years, compared with just 1.6 percent in 2001 and 2002.[36] In contrast, the United States, where immigration makes up for relatively low birthrates, will need only about 1.5 percent of its annual cohort to keep a force of a similar size. High rates of conscientious objection may also dampen the success of recruitment efforts; by the time the draft ended in Spain, for example, 75 percent of draft-age men had identified themselves as conscientious objectors.[37] Europeans may also balk at joining the military with the prospect of being deployed in American coalitions that lack popular support.

While Europe's immigrant minorities are often disadvantaged, they may also come to their new homes with a negative image of the military.[38] Moreover, if immigrants perceive that they will not be welcomed by military leaders or that opportunities for advancement that are open to others will not be open to them, European militaries may find it more difficult to attract talented disadvantaged youth and minorities than do the U.S. armed forces. Concepts of pay equity across society, and between the military and other public employees, can also make it difficult to improve military pay without raising political charges that members of the armed forces have become mercenaries or are robbing other public servants of their due.

In the United States, recruiting and retention surge during economic downturns, when jobs on the outside are not as plentiful as they are during boom times. Because Western European nations typically offer more extensive public programs for the unemployed, including cash benefits, health care, and other social services, such economic cycles and high unemployment rates may not

advantage their militaries as much. In general, Western European social safety nets may catch people who in the United States would see military service as an alternative to unemployment or part-time employment. Strong social protections may also water down the appeal of family benefits offered by the military.

Models of youth training and education also differ sharply between the United States and most European countries. In the United States, vocational/technical education can seem like a last resort for high school students in trouble. In Western Europe, however, vocational schools and apprenticeships can be engines of the trades. As a result, learning a skill in the military may not provide the same opportunity to a European youth as to an American. Also, of course, in countries where college is virtually free, U.S.-style college bonus programs hold little attraction.

The immobility of European labor presents another striking difference. Strong employee protections typically apply to the military as well as the private sector, and many members of European militaries are represented by associations that amount to quasi–trade unions.[39] Members of the professional forces often expect to serve for a lifetime, whether or not the services need them that long. In addition, even young people resist the moves that a military career can entail. In the Bundeswehr, for example, it is not uncommon for service members to keep their families at home and commute several hours daily or on weekends because they prefer to live in the communities where they grew up. Such immobility can make it difficult for the military to attract qualified people. Lower employee turnover rates in private firms may also make it more difficult for service members to find new jobs when they leave the military.

For the countries new to NATO, the transformation from authoritarian rule and centralized, command economies to transitional democracy and market-based economies also makes for fundamental differences. The transformation is utterly altering relationships between political authorities and the military, as well as the role of the military in society. As recently as fifteen years ago, for example, political officers in most Central and Eastern European militaries still exercised substantial influence within military units. Promotions based upon Communist Party membership and ideology were not uncommon. Militaries consisted primarily of officers and conscripts, with very few longer-serving noncommissioned officers. The armed forces were called upon routinely as sources of free labor for the agricultural sector.

Reforms in the new and invited member states call for depoliticization of the armed forces, merit-based promotions, establishment of noncommissioned officer corps, and transformation of the roles and tasks of the armed forces. But the communist legacy may translate into political resistance to initiatives, such

as market-based pay and bonuses and merit-based promotions, that can appear inequitable to those raised in the former system.[40] On the other hand, the fact that the new member states are working from clean slates may make some changes easier and cheaper for them than for either the United States or Western Europe.

Finally, countries that are experiencing economic problems or working to meet the limits on national budget deficits imposed by the European Stability and Growth Pact may find it difficult to boost budgets for military pay and recruiting resources as the United States did during the late 1970s, when it faced mounting problems in transition to its AVF.[41]

EUROPEAN INITIATIVES TO SPEED THE TRANSITION

NATO nations seeking to expand the ranks of volunteers are undertaking initiatives to improve their capacity to recruit, retain, and motivate the high-quality members they need and to encourage them to depart when their services are no longer required. While the details are geared to the circumstances each country faces, in broad outline the initiatives are generally consistent with those the United States pursued during its transition period. But the measures differ in their details, and they may result in longer and more costly transitions than envisioned.

Improve Military Pay. Like the United States during its transition, European countries in transition hope to make military pay more competitive and to use bonuses or other supplements to basic pay to attract and keep people with key skills and offset the negative impact of frequent deployments. For example, France increased starting pay for privates. Belgium raised pay, introduced changes that would allow for overtime compensation, and expanded allowances for some occupational specialties. Spain added generous bonuses for volunteers who renew their contracts and hopes to fund a large basic pay raise this year, despite severe budgetary pressures. The Czech Republic instituted bonuses for serving in some operations.[42]

While they recognize the importance of boosting military pay, however, European countries generally have not moved to link military pay or pay growth explicitly to the private sector (see table 4). In contrast, the United Kingdom, with decades of AVF experience, benchmarks military pay directly against that of the private-sector professions; the United States links its military pay raises to average wage hikes in the private sector. Over time, the nations of continental Europe may find it necessary to develop such explicit links. Doing so may cost substantially more than their leaders currently anticipate.

TABLE 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF CASH PAY IN SELECTED NATO MILITARIES

Country	Link to Other Public Employees	Link to Private Sector	Variation by Occupation or Duty
Belgium	No automatic link, but General Staff works to keep pay comparable by education level to pay in public sector	Through public-sector link; public-sector pay is tied to average pay rates in private sector	Differential pay for pilots, medical, civil engineers, graduates of staff colleges; skills-based special pays for, e.g., pilots, divers, paratroopers; special pays for operations
Canada	Not officially tied, but tracks salaries in federal civil service	No systematic tie, but salaries and bonuses in some trades have been boosted to be competitive with private sector	Special pays for combat, deployment to theater, living abroad or in the Far North
Czech Republic	Yes	No	Bonuses for hazardous positions, missions abroad
France	Basic pay tied to public-sector pay	No	Special pays, bonuses for, e.g., pilots, submariners; living in Paris or abroad; deployed to interventions
Germany	Yes	No	Bonuses in specified occupations; daily bonus for service abroad, up to 92 euros per day
Italy	Pay is set separately for defense and security-sector employees	No	Operational allowance depending on grade and assignment: people in deployable units earn up to 50% more than in administrative units; elite units (e.g., airborne) up to 80% more
Norway	Pay is negotiated for public sector as a whole, military included	No	Special pay for pilots
Romania	Yes	No	Special pays for merit, based upon recommendation of supervisor
Slovak Republic	No	No	Bonuses for hazardous conditions from 1% to 6%
Spain	No explicit tie, but pay is comparable with that of other public-sector employees	No	Special pays for, e.g., parachute, marine, pilot, submarine, units with expeditionary capacity
United Kingdom	No	Independent military pay review body monitors pay in "equivalent" private-sector professions to benchmark its pay recommendations; adds an "X factor" to help offset the difficulties of military life	Extra pay for some skills, e.g., pilots, submariners
United States	Annual pay raise often linked to raise for federal civilian workers	Current law requires pay raise in excess of average wage rise in private sector; earlier law called for raise somewhat lower than in private sector; law can be rewritten through new defense legislation each year	Numerous special pays and bonuses for specific occupations and duties

Source: Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

In some European countries, military pay is tied directly to the compensation of other public-sector workers, and public-sector/military-pay equity is deeply ingrained in national politics. In Germany, the linkage is so strong in the popular mind that people in uniform often call themselves "bureaucrats in uniform," which most American soldiers would find unflattering. The public-sector link can make it difficult to raise military pay without also raising pay for all civil servants, whose rights are often protected by powerful unions. As a result, some countries are seeking ways to boost military rewards through substantial noncash benefits, which they hope to justify based upon the military mission. In France, for example, where the government currently provides very little housing for service members, leaders are considering a sizable investment in housing, in the hope that the new benefit will satisfy military people without raising equity concerns for other public-sector workers.[43] New government-provided housing will greatly increase the cost of transition; unfortunately, providing it will almost surely cost the government substantially more than it is worth to the members.[44]

Provide Incentives for Redundant Senior People to Leave the Service. Like the United States in recent years, some European countries used financial incentives to encourage members to leave the armed forces during the post–Cold War downsizing. In France, for example, career officers were offered forty-five months of basic pay, tax free, to resign.[45] Romania provided a generous lump-sum payment and retraining for civilian employment, while the Czech Republic provided retirement allowances and retraining for civilian professions through the military education system.[46] While technically not a cost of transition to an all-volunteer force, the large costs of separating redundant people seriously complicate the budget picture for countries that adopted an AVF simultaneously with deep force reductions.

Improve Working Conditions. European militaries are also working to eliminate traditions that annoy service members but do not improve military outcomes, as well as to improve facilities and infrastructure. The Belgian military is reviewing staff regulations with an eye toward adopting more flexible procedures and improving morale.[47] Spain's Ministry of Defense has established a hotline for soldier complaints.[48] The Czech Republic is investing in infrastructure at its military garrisons.[49] For Germany, the modern equivalent of the U.S. "haircut war" of the 1970s is a body-piercing jewelry war; the Bundeswehr has undertaken a study to determine whether jewelry rules should be relaxed, as a symbol of a lifestyle more attractive to today's potential volunteers.[50] Improving working conditions by eliminating annoying traditions and regulations can be virtually cost free from a budgetary point of view and a net win for everyone. Improving

infrastructure is expensive, however, a fact that may seriously delay and undermine the benefits of AVFs in Europe.

Improve Career Paths. Especially in NATO's new member states, where a decade ago the armed forces were made up almost exclusively of officers and junior-ranking conscripts, militaries are working to create new corps of noncommissioned officers with good prospects for careers in the military. Romania, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic are investing substantial sums in technical training and leadership development for these new senior enlisted personnel.[51] In addition, the new member states plan to develop merit-based, more transparent promotion systems.

In an attempt to make military careers more flexible, France has opened new positions for specialists, who will be allowed to rise in rank and pay without taking up the duties of command. Romania is working to attract more officers with civilian academic backgrounds.[52] All of these initiatives are important to the technologically capable militaries that NATO leaders hope will emerge with all-volunteer forces.

Improve Quality of Life for Service Members and Their Families. Like the United States during its transition, European countries are striving to provide family benefits and other quality-of-life features to make military life more attractive for volunteers. The U.S. slogan "recruit the soldier, retain the family" has become popular among military personnel managers across Europe (see table 5).[53]

For example, France has expanded such family assistance programs as aid in searching for schools, and it is considering new family housing. Romania also is building new housing. The Czech Republic is working to improve family support; in addition, Prague has established a housing allowance and now permits service members to rent on the open market. Germany and Belgium are opening child-care centers for military families, and the Netherlands is considering it. Several countries are working to reduce family separations.[54]

Family-friendly policies can provide important extra leverage in attracting and keeping volunteers, but they have their drawbacks. The incentives they provide to marry and have children at an early age may not operate in the best interest of the service member or the military. Because their costs do not appear in the pay accounts, they may not be visible to decision makers or the public. Moreover, when family benefits are delivered as subsidies or as goods and services provided directly by the government, as they often are, their value to recipients is typically less than their cost to the government.[55] To the extent that raising cash pay raises insurmountable equity concerns with respect to other public employees, however, expensive family benefits may provide needed tools for Europe's militaries seeking to attract qualified volunteers.

TABLE 5
FAMILY-FRIENDLY BENEFITS IN SELECTED NATO MILITARIES

Country	Military Housing	Child Care	Other Family-Friendly Benefits
Belgium	Housing generally not provided; a few government-owned houses available for rental; members abroad receive cash allowance	Limited services available in 7 locations until age 3	Subsidized hospitalization insurance for families
Canada	Government is getting out of the housing business; Canadian Forces Housing Authority maintains housing, disposes of it for government; members get location-dependent housing allowance and are charged prevailing local rents for CFHA housing	Family resource centers include subsidized child care	Counseling and other services at on-base family resource centers; the centers are new, and members complain they are underresourced and ignored
Czech Republic	New, generous, location-dependent housing allowance; housing no longer provided in-kind for career officers	Not available	Family support programs planned
France	Government provides shared rooms on base for privates; low-cost studios or apartments on base for NCOs; MOD estate agency owns some apartments for rent by officers at below-market rates.	Not provided	Higher pay for members with families; military holiday centers; family assistance centers; health care for family members; subsidized insurance; discounts on rail travel; special pays to offset strain of military duties on families
Germany	Some government housing available to members at below-market rates	Creating child-care centers	Government pays cost of relocation
Italy	Government housing available for officers, NCOs; may be provided to volunteer career soldiers	Reimbursement of crèche expenses	Government pays costs of relocation; tax reduction based upon family size
Norway	Government provides housing for up to four years (longer in rural areas) at new posting	Government assisted local communities in establishing child-care centers open to military and nonmilitary families	None described
Romania	Government provides housing in garrison for members and families; if unavailable, member receives housing allowance equal to 50% of monthly wage; recently launched program to build new houses for members and their families	Low-cost child-care centers in larger garrisons	Free medical care and medication provided through military medical facilities; free or discount access to military sports areas and recreational facilities; reimbursement of transportation during vacations

TABLE 5 CONTINUED
FAMILY-FRIENDLY BENEFITS IN SELECTED NATO MILITARIES

Country	Military Housing	Child Care	Other Family-Friendly Benefits
Slovak Republic	Government-provided accommodation for conscripts and students of military schools; apartments or military hostels for all members, or allowance to rent nearby; soldier pays for family members in hostels	Summer camps in military facilities for children of members	Recreation in military facilities; discounts for foreign travel
Spain	After 5 years of service, cash bonus to offset costs of housing transition at every change of post; some military housing	Child-care centers in some units	Some scholarships available for children; access to medical care for families
United Kingdom	Housing provided for all members, with type of housing based on rank	For officers, cash allowance toward private education for children	Allowances for relocation; child welfare assistance, family support services, and medical treatment for families posted overseas; confidential support telephone line for military members and families.
United States	Government provides housing for majority of single members and about 30 percent of members with families; others receive housing allowance based on rank, family status, and location	Government provides on-base child-care centers at subsidized cost that varies by family income (lower cost for lower income)	On-base family assistance centers; access to military recreation facilities; subsidized on-base grocery and department stores; health care for family members provided directly by government or through insurance at no cost to member; others

Source: Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

Seek Recruits from Nontraditional or Underrepresented Sources. Like the United States during the 1970s, Europe's militaries are seeking to expand the pool of prospective volunteers by opening more jobs to women. The German Bundeswehr, for example, which just a few years ago permitted women only in the music corps and the medical profession, now opens all jobs to women.[56] In addition, some of Europe's militaries are placing more emphasis on recruiting less-advantaged and minority citizens, immigrants, and even foreigners. Spain is actively recruiting service members from South America and Guinea; it currently limits to 2,400 the number of service members from those regions, but it is considering raising that figure.[57] The Bundeswehr is particularly attractive to volunteers from eastern Germany, even though military pay is lower for those born in the East than for West Germans.[58] The Royal Netherlands forces are looking to tap into the "unused potential" of the ethnic minority population.[59] Belgium's strategic plan recommends opening military recruitment to all European citizens, thus raising the specter of an east-west migration within Europe's

militaries.[60] Unfortunately, however, many of Europe's immigrants may find military service unattractive, and Europeans may find that their efforts in this aspect of the transition are not as fruitful as the successful U.S. model of attracting minorities and other youth who see the military as a good opportunity.

Improve the Post-service Employment Prospects of Service Members. Like the United States, European countries hope to attract a share of their recruits through the prospect of a good future "on the outside" after they serve for a few years in the military. However, differences in educational systems and labor mobility make for substantial differences in the mechanisms for improving post-service prospects. While initial training in a skill valued outside the military, combined with money for college, can be crucial in the U.S. case, the prevalence of high-quality trades training in the high schools in some European countries means that many European youth are more likely to be attracted by transition assistance and training as they depart service, and by the guarantee of public-sector jobs afterward.

Thus, for its twelve-year enlisted volunteers, Germany provides a full year of training at the end of service, followed by a full year of government pay in a transitional job in the private sector. Spain offers its volunteers two to ten months of training in an occupational specialty at the beginning of their careers and additional training for the return to the private sector. In addition, Spain's volunteers now have the opportunity to receive degrees as "military technicians," which the Ministry of Defense hopes will help soldiers and sailors as they return to civilian life. The Netherlands also plans to invest in training courses where needed to help service members transition to civilian employment. Romania is establishing a career-assistance program for veteran volunteers. The ministries of defense of Italy and the Netherlands have established new offices to tap into the private sector and help volunteers find jobs as they leave the military. In addition, the Italian Ministry of Defense will now pay for six months of training as volunteer members depart service. Belgium is considering new programs to provide retraining for volunteers at the end of their contracts and to award diplomas and other skills accreditation that will be recognized in the private sector.[61]

In some countries, perhaps the most important transition initiative is to reserve a substantial share of public-sector jobs for military volunteers. Italy guarantees a job at the end of military service for every volunteer. The Italian government reserves 60 percent of Carabinieri, 50 percent of national police force, and 45 percent of national forest police and firefighting jobs for short-term military volunteers; eventually all national police posts will be reserved for them. Spain reserves 60 percent of Guardia Civil posts for veterans; the Spanish Ministry of Defense is negotiating agreements with other ministries

to hold jobs for separating soldiers and sailors. In addition, the Spanish government is reaching out to private-sector employers' organizations in the hopes that they will set jobs aside for veteran volunteers. Belgium has opened its civilian jobs in ministries to former service members. In other European countries, ministries of defense are making arrangements with employer associations, labor associations, and other public agencies to assist former service members with placement.[62]

The European model of substantial end-of-service training, government-paid post-service jobs, and nearly guaranteed post-service employment may cost more than the American system of money for college and training necessary for duties in the military. The high costs of post-service training and placement will likely eat into national resources that might otherwise be available for military equipment.

Improve Recruitment Efforts. Finally, as in the United States during the 1970s, European militaries are working to boost recruiting through professional recruiting teams, mass-media advertising, and other measures.

In summary, the countries in transition are working to develop creative solutions to the specific challenges they face. Some of the steps they are taking resemble those the United States found beneficial during its transition phase. Nevertheless, profound differences in the demographic, social, economic, and labor settings of Europe and the United States may make the European transitions take longer and cost more than the American one, or than NATO's leaders currently hope.

MODERN, EXPEDITIONARY, HIGH-TECHNOLOGY

NATO's member states rely increasingly on volunteers to fill their military ranks. A growing number of European countries suspended compulsory service during the past decade or are now phasing it out. American and NATO leaders believe the all-volunteer model is more consistent with a modern, expeditionary, high-technology military.

Military personnel policies vary across NATO countries. Views of the appropriate balance between military capability and equity for individuals within a military also seem to vary. For example, what sounds to a Western European like reasonable equity and career stability can sound to an American like a jobs program. Conversely, suggestions by U.S. experts that European militaries should reduce the number of people in uniform and change their personnel policies to free up money for high-technology weapons can strike Europeans as self-serving attempts to develop partners for a style of war they would prefer not to fight, and

to drum up customers for weapons they would rather not buy. Similarly, to Americans, the quasi–trade union associations that represent many European service members can seem antithetical to a strong military, while to Europeans such organizations can seem central to protecting the rights of military members as "citizens in uniform."

Across the alliance, the military drawdowns of the past fifteen years created personnel management challenges. In some countries, they resulted in severe staffing imbalances that will take years or even decades to reverse. Moreover, the transition from conscription to an all-volunteer force creates its own challenges. Among other problems, nations that have undertaken it recently are finding the costs higher than they planned for.

The United States faced similar problems, but efforts along multiple fronts brought success within a decade. European militaries are undertaking similar efforts, tailored to their own national environments. But demographic, social, and other realities in most of Europe are different from those of the United States. Unfortunately, the differences are likely to make it more difficult and expensive, not less so, for Europe's militaries to attract, retain, and motivate high-quality volunteers and to induce them to leave when their services are no longer needed. As a result, AVF transitions in Europe may take longer and be more difficult and more costly than the American experience of the 1970s and early 1980s.

The implications of all this for narrowing the military capabilities gap are not good. Even a transition period as brief as that of the United States could mean that the expected improvements would not be evident for a decade after an armed service said good-bye to its last conscript. If the transitions take longer, the high cost of personnel will continue to drain resources from equipment accounts. More fundamentally, if the quality of recruits does not improve within a few years, troops will lack skills and cognitive aptitudes necessary to operate and maintain the high-technology equipment required to narrow the gap.

NOTES

1. Much of the information for this article is drawn from a transatlantic roundtable, "Filling NATO's Ranks: Military Personnel Policies in Transition," held at the Transatlantic Center of the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Brussels, Belgium, 8–9 September 2003. Participants at the roundtable included experts on military personnel policies from twelve NATO countries. In addition to providing presentations at the meeting, a participant from each country responded to a detailed questionnaire about current military personnel policies, challenges, and initiatives. The forum made it possible to collect substantial information, in English, from a consistent time period, from several countries at once. Information collected from the questionnaires or the roundtable discussion is cited as "transatlantic roundtable September 2003."
2. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, former Secretary General of NATO, views conscript forces

as a vestige of the Cold War and volunteer militaries as more deployable and effective; see "No, We Ain't Dead: Interview with NATO Secretary General George Robertson," *Newsweek,* 20 May 2002, and "The Role of NATO in the 21st Century," speech by Lord Robertson as Secretary General at the "Welt am Sonntag Forum," Berlin, 3 November 2003, available at www.nato.int/docu/speech/2003/s031103a.htm. For the view that smaller volunteer militaries are better suited to modern equipment, see David R. Sands, "Even Military Experts Consider Draft Antiquated," *Insight on the News*, 12 February 2001; François Heisbourg, "Europe's Military Revolution," *Joint Force Quarterly,* no. 30 (Spring 2002), p. 29; Catherine Miller, "The Death of Conscription," *BBC News Online,* Friday, 29 June 2001.

3. For the view that conscripts "siphon off funds" that could otherwise be invested in equipment (thus narrowing the capabilities gap), see Richard L. Russell, "NATO's European Members: Partners or Dependents?" *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 1 (Winter 2003), pp. 30–40; David S. Yost, "The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union," *Survival* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2000–2001), pp. 100–101; Elinor Sloan, "Military Matters: Speeding Deployment," *NATO Review* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 30–33; and Philip Shishkin, "How Europe's Armies Let Their Guard Down," *Wall Street Journal,* 13 February 2003. Nicholas Burns, the U.S. ambassador to NATO, holds that "even without spending more money, many allies could use their existing defense euros more wisely by providing professional military units . . . rather than retain static conscript forces"; see "Launching NATO's Transformation at Prague," speech at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Berlin, 30 October 2002, available at nato.usmission.gov/ambassador/2002/s021030a.htm. The report of the German Weizsäcker Commission to the German federal government, *Common Security and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (23 May 2000), provides explicit estimates of personnel and infrastructure savings that would accrue from reducing the number of conscripts in the German forces.

4. Chief among them was the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force (known as the "Gates Commission" for its chairman, Thomas S. Gates).

5. The economists' predictions have largely been borne out; see John T. Warner and Beth J. Asch, "The Record and Prospects of the All-Volunteer Military in the United States," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2001), pp. 169–92.

6. Guy Taylor, "Rumsfeld Rejects Idea of Returning to the Draft," *Washington Times,* 23 April 2004.

7. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Addressing the National Security Challenge of Our Time: Fighting Terror and the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction," speech at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 25 February 2004 (available from the Miller Reporting Co., Washington, D.C.); Helen Dewar, "Hagel Seeking Broad Debate on Draft Issue," *Washington Post,* 22 April 2004, p. A25.

8. "A Benchmark Study of the Armed Forces of Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Canada," Canadian Ministry of National Defence, 10 December 2002, available at www.dnd.ca/site/minister/eng/benchmark/bench_nether_e.htm.

9. Christopher Jehn and Zachary Selden, "The End of Conscription in Europe?" *Contemporary Economic Policy* 20, no. 2 (April 2002), pp. 93–100; "France Ends Military Draft, as External Threats Ebb," Associated Press, 27 June 2001, 9:49 AM ET.

10. Jehn and Selden, p. 95.

11. U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *Integrating New Allies into NATO* (Washington, D.C.: 2000).

12. David Price (Rapporteur), "Military Preparations of NATO Candidate Countries," Draft Report of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Defence and Security Sub-committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities, 2 April 2002, p. 9; Jeremy Bransten, "Czech Republic: Government Moves to Abolish Conscription, Joins European Trend," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,* Prague, 31 August 2001.

13. Vaidotas Urbelis, "Defence Policies of the Baltic States: From the Concept of Neutrality towards NATO Membership," NATO-EAPC Individual Fellowship Report 2001–2003

(Vilnius, Lith.: 2003), pp. 7, 11–12, 16; Price, p. 9; and Jehn and Selden, p. 98.

14. Warner and Asch, p. 179.

15. The figure excludes the seven members that joined NATO in April 2004. Author's estimate, based on U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, *Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense* (Washington, D.C.: July 2003), tables D-4 and D-8.

16. Author's calculations, based on U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, *Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense* (Washington, D.C., July 2003), tables D-4, D-8, and other sources. The comparisons are offered as illustrative of the arguments made by proponents of ending conscription for military reasons. The figures overstate the case, however. Although Germany's modernization spending is low compared with other countries in its military class, Germany still provides a greater share of NATO's ground combat capability than any other country in NATO besides the United States. Moreover, integrating the militaries of the East and West after the Cold War brought challenges for Germany that the other countries in the example did not face.

17. Warner and Asch, pp. 169–92.

18. Martin Anderson, "The AVF Decision, History, and Prospects," in William Bowman, Roger Little, and G. Thomas Sicilia, eds., *The All-Volunteer Force after a Decade* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1986), p. 11.

19. Gary R. Nelson, "The Supply and Quality of First-Term Enlistees under the All-Volunteer Force," in Bowman, Little, and Sicilia, eds., pp. 27–28.

20. Warner and Asch, pp. 178–79.

21. Nelson, p. 26.

22. The large number of entrants with poor cognitive aptitudes was initially masked by an error in norming the military entrance test, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), which was introduced in 1976. Thus, from 1976 until 1980, many of the recruits who the services at first thought were in the middle band of aptitudes compared with other American youth actually turned out to fall within the bottom thirty percent. See Curtis L. Gilroy, Robert L. Phillips, and John D. Blair, "The All-Volunteer Force Fifteen Years Later," *Armed Forces and Society* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1990), pp. 329–50; and Nelson, pp. 31–32. The figures cited here reflect appropriate renorming of the initially misnormed tests.

23. Nelson, p. 32.

24. Maxwell R. Thurman [Gen., USA], "Sustaining the AVF," in Bowman, Little, and Sicilia, eds., p. 269.

25. Congressional Budget Office, *What Does the Military "Pay Gap" Mean?* (Washington, D.C.: June 1999). For comparison purposes, military pay is "regular military compensation," which includes military basic pay, allowances for food and housing (whether or not an individual lives in military housing), and the tax advantage associated with nontaxable allowances.

26. Thurman, p. 271.

27. Robert K. Griffith, Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force 1968–1974* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office for the U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1996), pp. 167–69.

28. U.S. Defense Dept., *Population Representation in the Military Services, Fiscal Year 2001* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense, Personnel, and Readiness, March 2003).

29. Carl Conetta and Charles Knight, *The Readiness Crisis of the U.S. Air Force: A Review and Diagnosis,* Briefing Report 10 (Cambridge, Mass.: Project on Defense Alternatives, 22 April 1999), available at www.comw.org/pda/afreadtc.html.

30. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

31. Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, *Summary of the Defence White Paper 2000* (The Hague: 17 July 2001), available at www.mindef.nl/nieuws/media/170701_whitepaper2000.html, p. 13; Shishkin; and transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

32. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

33. Ibid.

34. For example, a French parliamentary report of the mid-1990s estimated that the French drawdown and shift to an AVF would save as much as $2.8 billion in noncapital costs. Instead, those costs rose slightly in real terms. Personnel compensation costs rose by about

10 percent in real terms between 1996 and 2002, despite a nearly 30 percent reduction in the total number of personnel. See William Drozdiak, "Chirac Pushes to Cut Back French Army, Eliminate Draft," *Washington Post,* 23 February 1996, p. 2; Vincent Medina and Sylvain Daffix, "Challenges in the French Transition to an All-Volunteer Force," presentation of the Economic Observatory of Defence, Ministry of Defence (France), to the transatlantic roundtable September 2003. Italy's parliament also presumed that its costs would be small; see Michele Zanini, "Italy's All-Volunteer Army: An Analytical Framework for Understanding the Key Policy Issues and Choices during the Transition," dissertation, RAND Graduate School (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2002), p. 12.

35. Martha Farnsworth Riche and Aline Quester, "The Effects of Socioeconomic Change on the All-Volunteer Force: Past, Present, and Future," paper prepared for U.S. Department of Defense Conference, "The All-Volunteer Force: 30 Years of Service," Washington, D.C., 16 September 2003.

36. Rickard Sandell, *The Demographic Obstacles to Military Recruitment: Benchmarks for Preserving the Numerical Strength of the Armed Forces* (Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano, 19 November 2003).

37. David R. Sands, "Even Military Experts Consider Draft Antiquated," *Insight on the News,* 12 February 2001. On the other hand, the high levels of draft resistance and conscientious objection may not make things worse for recruiting in European countries than youth antipathy toward the military and the draft did in the United States in the wake of the Vietnam War.

38. There are exceptions, and things may be changing. The French forces, for example, have a tradition of minority service, and they successfully recruit members from the territories outside continental France. Market research for the Dutch military indicates that "young people from ethnic minorities are more interested in a job in the armed forces than are indigenous youngsters"; see Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, p. 13.

39. Canadian Ministry of National Defence, *A Benchmark Study of the Armed Forces of Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Canada* (Ottawa: 10 December 2002), available at www.dnd.ca/site/minister/eng/benchmark/bench_nether_e.htm; Shishkin; EUROMIL e.V., *Social Policy for Servicemen in Europe: Fundamental Principles of the European Security and Defence Policy Subsequent to Nice* (Bonn: Bundesdruckerei GmbH, October 2001); for a description of and materials related to EUROMIL, an umbrella organization for military associations in Europe, see www.euromil.org.

40. Anton Bebler, "The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Central and Eastern Europe," *NATO Review*, Web ed. no. 4 (August 1994), pp. 28–32; transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

41. "The Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) is the concrete EU answer to concerns on the continuation of budgetary discipline in Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). [The principal concern of the SGP,] adopted in 1997, . . . was enforcing fiscal discipline . . . [and safeguarding] sound government finances as a means to strengthening the conditions for price stability and for strong and sustainable growth conducive to employment creation." "The Stability and Growth Pact," [European Union] *Economic and Financial Affairs,* europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/about/activities/sgp/sgp_en.htm.

42. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

43. Interview with official of French Ministry of Defense, 29 November 2002.

44. Richard Buddin, Carole Roan Gresenz, Susan D. Hosek, Marc Elliott, and Jennifer Hawes-Dawson, *An Evaluation of Housing Options for Military Families*, MR-1020-OSD (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, April 1999).

45. Interview with official of French Ministry of Defense.

46. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Interview at Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 4 February 2003.

51. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.

52. Ibid.

53. Interview with personnel official of French Ministry of Defense; interview with personnel official of German Ministry of Defense, February 12, 2003; transatlantic roundtable September 2003.
54. Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, p. 19; transatlantic roundtable September 2003.
55. See Cindy Williams, "Flawed Military Model, Made in the USA," *Wall Street Journal Europe,* 10 April 2003; U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *Budget Options* (Washington, D.C.: March 2001), "Health Care Benefits" and "Other Noncash Benefits," pp. 157–74.
56. For data on the growing representation of women in NATO's forces, see NATO Committee on Women in the NATO Forces, *Year-In-Review 2001,* 25th Anniversary Special Edition.
57. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.
58. Interview at Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr.
59. Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, p. 13.
60. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.
61. Ibid.; and Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, p. 19.
62. Transatlantic roundtable September 2003.