

Section III.

The post-Second World War and Society

CHAPTER 11

Multinational Force Structures in Europe

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1. Introduction

European states are engaged in a multitude of military cooperation arrangements.¹ For example, various and numerous multinational relations exist in different military process areas relating to capability development, military training and joint doctrine development. Furthermore, since the end of the Cold War, European states have participated in numerous international military missions together.² Military cooperation in Europe, however, becomes particularly visible in the establishment of standing and non-standing multinational military structures, both at command and unit level, that are dispersed over the whole European continent. This chapter provides an overview on these multinational force structures in Europe and answers questions of how they came about.

2. The Development of Multinational Structures in Cold War Europe

Many of the multinational arrangements that exist in Europe today were put in place after the end of the Cold War. The multifaceted nature that we see today, however, originated from as early as the 1940s. The origin of the institutionalised and long-term cooperation of the armed forces of various European states as we know it today dates back to the cooperation of the Allied Forces during World

¹ The statements contained in this paper are based on the findings of a research project on multinational cooperation in the military that was carried out at the Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences between 2020 and 2021. Parts of this chapter were presented at the 16th ERGOMAS Biennial Conference in Tartu, Estonia, on 20 July 2021 and at a joint workshop held online by the National Institute for Defense Studies (Japan) and the Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences (Germany) on 10 August 2021.

² For pragmatic reasons, the terms “Europe” and “European” are used in this chapter for NATO and EU members, as well as for European democracies of Western character that are closely linked politically to these two organisations. For this chapter, developments within the Warsaw Pact are excluded. For the purpose of the arguments pursued in this chapter, former members of the Warsaw Pact become relevant as their armed forces participated in multinational settings after the end of the Cold War.

War II.³ In 1942, British and US armed forces established a joint headquarters, the Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ). One year later, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces Europe (SHAEF) was created.⁴ It was the precursor of NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), established in 1951.

To this day, SHAPE and the NATO's strategic and operational headquarters, which were gradually established in the course of time following the set-up of NATO's military structure in the 1950s, represent the integrated NATO Command Structure (NCS).⁵ At these headquarters, all of NATO's operations are planned and their implementation is supported. Some of the staff working at these headquarters serve as members of their national delegations and are thus subject to instructions from their countries' respective capitals. This is also the case with NATO's Military Committee, through which the chiefs of the general staff of the armed forces of NATO's member states or their representatives coordinate with one another while also representing their countries' positions. However, the members of the International Military Staff (IMS), as well as the staff of NATO's commands and the subordinate headquarters, do not act as representatives of their respective states, but as members of NATO, even if they continue to wear their

³ During the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900–1901), the so-called *Armee-Oberkommando* (Army High Command) of the German Army exercised command over its own forces and, for a short period, also over British, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian and US troops. However, it had a national, as opposed to an integrated multinational, staff; R. Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition: Joint Coalition Warfare in China, Summer 1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2009). The so-called Supreme War Council, which was created in 1917 to coordinate the operations of the United Kingdom, France and Italy in World War I, was primarily a political coordinating body and not a military headquarters; E. Greenhalgh, *Victory through Coalition: Britain and France during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 173; M. McCrae, *Coalition Strategy and the End of the First World War: The Supreme War Council and War Planning, 1917–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). These military cooperation arrangements can be regarded as precursors to the highly institutionalised multinational structures that came into existence after World War II and that are a focus of this chapter.

⁴ F. Morgan, *Overture to Overlord* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1950); SHAEF and Office of the Chief of Military History, *History of COSSAC (Chief of Staff to Supreme Allied Commander)*, 8-3.6 CA, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History Manuscripts (CMH), 1944).

⁵ G. W. Pedlow, *The Evolution of NATO's Command Structure, 1951–2009* (Brussels: NATO, 2009), <<https://shape.nato.int/resources/21/evolution%20of%20nato%20cmd%20structure%201951-2009.pdf>>, <https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_02/1802-Factsheet-NATO-Command-Structure_en.pdf> (accessed on 3 May 2021). In the context of European unification, the term *integration* designates the transfer of sovereign rights. However, although the NATO Command Structure is referred to as 'integrated', the NATO countries have not transferred sovereign power over their armed forces to NATO.

national uniforms.

Given that during the Cold War, attacks on NATO's European territory were expected to occur in any geographic region, from the North Cape to the Mediterranean Sea, at any time, for the first four decades of its existence, NATO adopted a comprehensive and regional structure. For that purpose, the Alliance territory was divided into regions and a Commander-in-Chief (CINC) who assumed command and control over land, air and naval forces in his or her area of command via integrated headquarters was assigned to each region.⁶ This regional structure shaped NATO until the end of the Cold War.

Besides the integrated NATO Command Structure, NATO was based on military commands and formations that were provided to the Alliance by its member states. To this day, they represent the NATO Force Structure (NFS). The interrelations between the NATO Command Structure and the national formations were complex and multifaceted. Air defence, for example, was hard to accomplish at a national level due to geographic conditions and technical constraints. As a consequence, a large amount of operational elements of the air forces of European states were integrated into tactical NATO air fleets, which assumed command and control over them. In the case of the German *Luftwaffe*, this applied to almost 100 percent of the troops.⁷

Major land formations, however, mostly retained their national organisation. There were, however, some exceptions. One was the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land) (AMF(L)), a multinational brigade with battalions from various European states that was created in 1961.⁸ AMF(L)'s mission was to protect the northern and southern flank of the Alliance in particular. In addition, Germany and Denmark established the Corps Headquarters Allied Land Forces Schleswig-

⁶ Pedlow, *The Evolution of NATO's Command Structure, 1951–2009* <<https://shape.nato.int/resources/21/evolution%20of%20nato%20cmd%20structure%201951-2009.pdf>>, 2.

⁷ B. Lemke and H. v. d. Felsen, *Die Luftwaffe 1950 bis 1970: Konzeption, Aufbau, Integration, Sicherheitspolitik und Streitkräfte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), 65; B. Mende, "Multinationalität - nichts Neues für die Luftstreitkräfte", in *Multinationale Streitkräfte in der NATO: Gemeinsamkeit verbindet*, ed. C. P. M. G. CPM (Sankt Augustin: CPM, 1994).

⁸ B. Lemke, *Die Allied Mobile Force, 1961 bis 2002 (Entstehung und Probleme des Atlantischen Bündnisses)* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015).

Holstein and Jutland (LANDJUT) in 1962.⁹ In peacetime, approximately 100 officers and noncommissioned officers from Denmark, Germany, as well as the United Kingdom, Canada and the US served at the headquarters of the corps.

As a naval equivalent to the AMF(L), the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT) was established in 1967. It was a multinational naval squadron which is now called Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 and for which the NATO member states detach destroyers and frigates on a regular basis.¹⁰ In 1980, the NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force (NAEW&CF), which many Europeans know by their distinctive aircraft with radar domes mounted on the fuselage, was founded.¹¹ To this day, multinational crews work together on board these military aircrafts.

Shortly before the end of the Cold War, another land formation was created in 1989: the French–German Brigade. When it was established, however, the brigade stood outside the military structure of NATO, which France had left in 1966. Some other binational cooperation structures also existed during the Cold War, for example, the joint Belgian–Dutch Navy Command, created in 1948, or the United Kingdom/Netherlands Amphibious Force, which was formed in 1972.¹²

To conclude, during the Cold War, a handful of multinational military structures had been created on the European continent. These structures were already characterised by a certain degree of differentiation at that time: the AMF(L), for example, was a loosely coupled land formation composed of independent national units. The AWACS fleet, on the other hand, had multinational staff working closely together on a day-to-day basis, and thus exhibited a comparatively high level of multinational integration. While there have been a few attempts to establish multinational military structures at the level of a military formation, it

⁹ W. Gerhard, “What about multinational corps in NATO?”, *Military Review*, vol. 59, no. 3 (Fort Leavenworth: Army University Press, 1979).

¹⁰ H.-G. Fröhling, *Bundeswehr und Multinationalität*, manuscript of a talk held at the Mürwik Naval Academy (Koblenz: Zentrum Innere Führung, 1998), 2; H.-P. Weyher, “Multinationalität auf See”, in *Multinationale Streitkräfte in der NATO: Gemeinsamkeit verbindet*, ed. C. P. M. G. CPM (Sankt Augustin: CPM, 1994).

¹¹ The unit is also known as the AWACS air surveillance force. AWACS is an abbreviation of Airborne Warning and Control System.

¹² See <<https://english.defensie.nl/topics/international-cooperation/other-countries/the-belgian-and-netherlands-navies-under-1-command>>, <<https://english.defensie.nl/topics/international-cooperation/other-countries/british-dutch-cooperation-between-marine-units>> (accessed on 3 May 2021).

is mainly due to the highly integrated NATO Command Structure that NATO can be regarded as already having been a multinational military organisation during the Cold War.

3. Multinational Structures in Europe Since 1990

The end of the Cold War has significantly changed the picture of military cooperation in Europe, and four intertwined developments deserve attention: first, NATO streamlined and changed its integrated command structure while preserving its multinational character. Second, the European Union, an international and supranational organisation that, for decades, had focussed on economic and political integration in Europe, also began to develop its own defence identity, consequently establishing multinational military planning capabilities. Third, many European states reduced their armed forces, decommissioned many of their national major formations, and in turn, participated in multinational headquarters and units. At the same time, the Alliance started to rely increasingly on multinational force structures. In consequence, the NATO Force Structure became ever more multinational over time. Fourth, in addition to the establishment of multinational formations and units in Europe, armed forces of European states even began to integrate some multinational features into their national structures. In the following section, these four developments will be studied in greater detail.

3.1 The Multinational NATO Command Structure After the Cold War

After the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, NATO as a collective defence alliance not only continued to exist, but also saw the number of its members, as well as the size of its territory, increase through the admission of several former states of the Warsaw Pact and of the Soviet Union.

During the Cold War, the primary task of the Alliance was to ensure the preservation of the member states' territorial integrity. With the imminent threat of an attack by forces of the Warsaw Pact gone after the end of the Cold War, the Alliance started to focus on rather diffuse risks, such as terrorism or political instabilities, that might pose a challenge to the Alliance's security. Subsequently,

international crisis management and regional cooperation augmented NATO's main task of territorial defence.¹³ As early as 1990, NATO had launched its first out-of-area operation at the Iraqi–Turkish border (Operation Anchor Guard).¹⁴ Following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, the threat of international terrorism became an even more important factor in the strategic thinking of the Alliance.¹⁵ However, the war in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 and the concern about a conflict with Russia eventually led to a readjustment of NATO's strategy and a revived focus on territorial defence.

The multinational structures of NATO reflect these strategic developments, with a delay that organisational adaptations of a major organisation generally require. Against the background of the elimination of the existential threat posed by the Warsaw Pact and the troop reductions carried out in many NATO countries for almost two decades, the NATO Command Structure has also been reduced in several steps from 33 to 7 commands and from 22,000 to 6,800 staff members between 1990 and 2018.¹⁶ In line with this changed strategic orientation focussing on international crisis management, the remaining multinational headquarters were furthermore not organised on a geographical but a functional basis, into strategic, operational and tactical levels.

In reaction to the Ukraine conflict, however, both trends, i.e., downsizing and functionalisation, were halted, and to some extent, even reversed. In 2018, the NATO leaders agreed on the establishment of two new commands.¹⁷ A Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) was established in Ulm, Germany, in

¹³ NATO, *The Alliance's New Strategic Concept agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council* (Brussels: NATO, 1991), <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm>; *The Alliance's Strategic Concept Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C.* (Brussels: NATO, 1999), <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm>.

¹⁴ See <<https://awacs.nato.int/operations/past-operations>> (accessed on 30 September 2021).

¹⁵ *Comprehensive Political Guidance Endorsed by NATO Heads of State and Government on 29 November 2006* (Brussels: NATO, 2006), <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_56425.htm>.

¹⁶ *The NATO Command Structure (Fact Sheet)* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) – Press & Media Section, 2018).

¹⁷ *Brussels Summit Key Decisions 11–12 July 2018 (Fact Sheet)* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) – Press & Media Section, 2018).

September 2019.¹⁸ Its mission is to ensure the quick movement of troops and military equipment across the European continent. The Joint Force Command Norfolk (JFCNF), NATO's Atlantic Command headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, was established in July 2019¹⁹ to protect sea lanes between Europe and North America. Through that, the number of commands increased, as did the number of staff. Furthermore, the Joint Force Command Norfolk is a regional headquarters with a regional military task portfolio, thus it emphasises geography over functionality.

3.2 Multinational Military Planning Structures of the EU

It was not only NATO, but also the European Union, that was the driving force for military developments in Europe after the Cold War, albeit to a much lesser extent than the Alliance. The collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as the crises in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, especially the wars in the disintegrating state of Yugoslavia, challenged Europeans with regard to their foreign policy response and revealed that their so far poorly developed cooperation mechanisms in the field of foreign, security and defence policy were no longer sufficient to meet the complex difficulties that European states encountered after the end of the Cold War.

In consequence, the heads of state or government of EU member states gradually extended the European Union's competences in the field of foreign and security policy by the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the early 1990s. In addition, starting in the late 1990s, they established some military planning and command structures in the frame of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).²⁰ In 2003, the EU launched its first military

¹⁸ See <<https://jsec.nato.int/newsroom/news-releases/natos-new-joint-support-and-enabling-command-declares-initial-operational-capability>> (accessed on 3 May 2021).

¹⁹ See <<https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2019/jfc-norfolk-formally-activated-by-nac>>, <<https://www.usff.navy.mil/Press-Room/News-Stories/Article/2351970/natos-new-command-in-the-atlantic-reaches-its-first-operational-milestone/>> (accessed on 3 May 2021).

²⁰ For a comprehensive insight into the development of the EU's foreign, security and defence policy, see W. F. v. Eekelen, *Debating European security, 1948–1998* (The Hague: Sdu Publishers; Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 1998); *From Words to Deeds: The Continuing Debate on European Security* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies; Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2006).

operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Today, the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) is the highest military body within the EU.²¹ It is composed of the Chiefs of Defence of member states or their representatives. The EU Military Committee provides the EU with advice on military affairs and directs the planning and conduct of EU operations. The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) is the working muscle of the EUMC. Its approximately 200 personnel provide military expertise in the fields of operations and capabilities. Within the EU Military Staff, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) is a 30-staff strong planning structure at the strategic and operational level. As the name suggests, it is responsible for the planning and conduct of EU military operations.

The EU's military planning structures are not just a very small copy of NATO's Command Structure. On the contrary, unlike NATO, the EU only has limited means to command and control its own military operations.²² Three command options are available: first, the use of national headquarters; second, the use of the NATO Command Structure in line with an agreement between the EU and NATO dating back to 2003 (i.e., the Berlin Plus agreement)²³; and third, the use of its own institutional resources in the MPCC for the conduct of small missions, e.g. military training missions.²⁴

Ambitious plans to establish an up to 60,000-strong European response force, as was outlined in the context of the so-called European Headline Goal in 1999, have not been realised. Instead, the EU has been implementing the considerably more modest concept of the EU-Battlegroups since 2004. In accordance with that concept, two battalion-sized rapidly deployable force packages are established for a period of six months on the basis of voluntary contributions from EU member states. The EU-Battlegroups are supposed to be operational within 10 days to

²¹ See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/european-union-military-committee/> (accessed on 25 September 2021).

²² See European External Action Service, *EU Concept for Military Command and Control (Rev8)* EAS/ CSDP/PSDC 194 8798/19, EUMC 44, CSDP/PSDC 194, (Brussels: EEAS, 2019), <<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8798-2019-INIT/en/pdf>>.

²³ See https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/berlinplus_/berlinplus_en.pdf (accessed on 24 January 2022).

²⁴ T. Tardy, "MPCC: towards an EU military command?", *EUISS Brief Issue*, no. 17 (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 2017).

conduct operations within a radius of 6,000 km around Brussels. However, until today, the EU has never activated an EU-Battlegroup.

The EU's planning, command and control structures are much less developed than equivalent NATO structures mainly because of path dependencies: by the time Europeans started to develop their Common Security and Defence Policy, NATO's comprehensive military structures had long been established. For EU members, many of which are also members of NATO, the creation of equally sophisticated EU command structures would have led to a costly and, with regard to their commitment to NATO, politically sensitive duplication of capabilities.

Instead, the EU developed some features qualitatively distinct from NATO, that is, a focus on the civil–military aspects of crisis management, which resonates with the EU's self-conception as a civilian actor in the field of security policy. The civilian component of military missions is the EU's signature trademark, which is demonstrated by the fact that since 2003, the EU has conducted 11 military operations but more than 20 civilian missions.²⁵ An example is the European Union Police Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM/BiH) that was launched in 2003.

The future development of the EU's multinational military planning structures continues to depend on member states' willingness to promote integration in the area of security and defence. In that context, the fact that the United Kingdom, a country that has traditionally played a blocking role with respect to the development of a common European defence policy, has withdrawn from the EU may accelerate the further development of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy.²⁶ At the same time, the United Kingdom was a cooperation partner with considerable military assets. Its exit from the EU thus leaves a capability and expertise gap that will require a particular effort by the EU member states to be filled.

²⁵ See <https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en> (accessed on 8 June 2020).

²⁶ J. Howorth, "The European Union's Security and Defence Policy: The Quest for Coherence", in *International Relations and the European Union*, ed. C. Hill, M. Smith and S. Vanhoonacker (Oxford: OUP, 2017), 361; Deutscher Bundestag, "Mögliche sicherheits- und verteidigungspolitische Folgen des britischen Referendums über den Austritt des Vereinigten Königreichs aus der Europäischen Union", *Ausarbeitung (Wissenschaftliche Dienste des Bundestages)* WD 2 – 3000, no. 020/17 (2017).

3.3 Multinational Forces

The establishment of multinational planning and command structures in NATO and the EU after the end of the Cold War was paralleled by the set-up of multinational headquarters and units all over the European continent. On their meeting in London in 1990, the NATO Heads of State and Government declared that the Alliance “will rely increasingly on multinational corps made up of national units”.²⁷ Starting with the establishment of the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) in 1992, nine multinational corps have been created in Europe to date (see figure 1).²⁸ The corps serve NATO as Rapid Deployable Corps. In that capacity they can be dispatched to lead NATO missions. Furthermore, on a rotational basis they assume command of the NATO Response Force, a multinational rotational force system where NATO members commit military units for a period of 12 months. They may also have additional national and multinational roles. One state or a small group of states act as the respective corps’ framework nation(s). The costs for operating the corps are imposed on the framework nations that also provide the majority of personnel and infrastructure.

Figure 1: The Rapid Deployable Corps

Name	Founded	Head quarters	Participating Nations
Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps /Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC)	1992	Innsworth, Gloucester, United Kingdom	Framework Nation: United Kingdom Participants: Albania, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey, USA
Eurocorps*	1993	Strasbourg, France	Framework Nations: Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg Participants: Poland, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Romania, Canada (until 2007), Finland (until 2005), Austria (until 2011)

²⁷ NATO, “London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance” (London: NATO, 1990), <<https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c900706a.htm>>.

²⁸ M. Meyers, “Grundsätze und Perspektiven der Multinationalität”, *Wehrtechnischer Report*, November issue (Hamburg: Report Verlag, 1996); De Decker, *European armed forces*, Document A/1468 (Paris: Assembly of the WEU, 1995); Wilkinson, *Multinational European forces*, Document A/1804 (Paris: Assembly of the WEU, 2002).

1st (German/ Netherlands) Corps (1 GNC)	1995	Münster, Germany	Framework Nations: Germany, Netherlands Participants: Belgium, Denmark (until 2017), France, Greece, United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Spain, Czech Republic, Turkey, USA
Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE)	1997	Szczecin, Poland	Framework Nations: Denmark, Germany, Poland Participants: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Sweden, United Kingdom, France, Greece, Netherlands, Turkey, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Norway, USA
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Spain	2000	Valencia, Spain	Framework Nation: Spain Participants: Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy	2001	Solbiate Olona, Italy	Framework Nation: Italy Participants: Albania, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Turkey **	2001	Istanbul, Turkey	Framework Nation: Turkey Participants: Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom, USA
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Greece	2003	Thessaloniki, Greece	Framework Nation: Greece Participants: Albania, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - France	2005	Lille, France	Framework Nation: France Participants: Germany, Belgium, Canada, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, United Kingdom, Albania, USA, Turkey

Source: Compiled by the author on the basis of the following links: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50088.htm, <https://arrc.nato.int/about-us/HRFL>, <https://arrc.nato.int/about-us/participating-nations>, <https://mncne.nato.int/about-us/organisation/organisational-structure>, <http://www.nrdc-ita.nato.int/26/contributing-nations>, <http://www.hrf.tu.nato.int/brochure.pdf> (accessed on 03 May 2021).

*Under an agreement made in 1993, the Eurocorps can be placed under NATO command. In 2002, the Eurocorps was certified as a High Readiness Force (Rapid Reaction Corps). See <<https://www.eurocorps.org/a-force-for-the-eu-nato/>>.

**As of 2014.

Multinational structures in Europe are neither limited to the western part of Europe, as the location of many of the NATO's Rapid Deployable Corps might suggest, nor are they confined to corps headquarters. Starting with the creation

of the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT) by Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia in 1994, a variety of units below the corps level were established, in which Eastern European states participated at the forefront. Today, more than 40 multinational force structures exist in Europe. Apart from NATO's Rapid Deployable Corps, the list of multinational formations comprise, for example, four Multinational Division Headquarters (Multinational Division Southeast, North East, North and Center); a number of brigade-sized formations such as the NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force, the French–German Brigade, the South-Eastern Europe Brigade, the European Gendarmerie Force, the Command Support Brigade of the Multinational Corps Northeast, the Multinational Brigade Southeast and the NATO Alliance Ground Surveillance Force, and battalion-sized military structures such as the TISA Multinational Engineering Battalion, the NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) and the Multinational Multirole Tanker Transport Unit.

In addition to these standing multinational structures, several other multinational arrangements exist in Europe today which are either only active for a limited period of time or for which the European states only detach units on a temporary basis. Examples include the European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR), the NATO Response Force and the EU-Battlegroups.

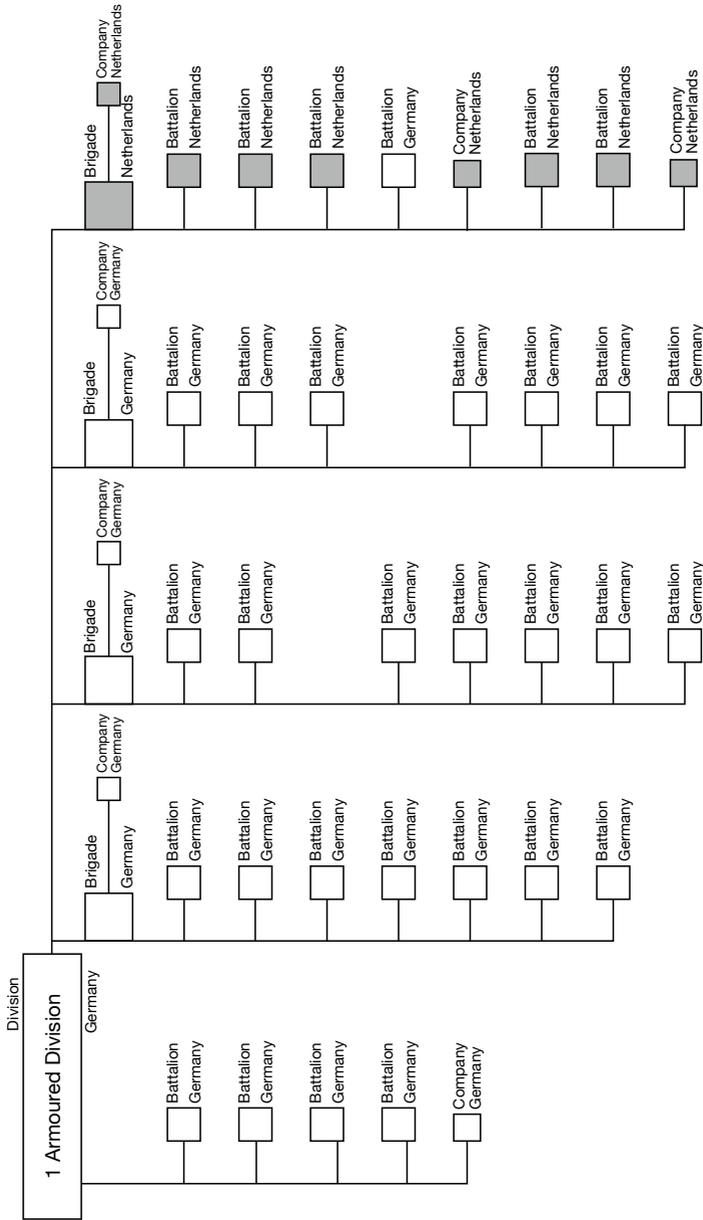
3.4 National Formats with a Multinational Character

Although it might seem counterintuitive, multinational structures can ultimately also develop in a national context. That happens, for example, in cases where military units from one country are integrated into the national force structure of another country by means of military cross-attachments.

One example of the cross-attachment of units and personnel is the close cooperation between the German and Dutch armies. In 2004, the Dutch 11 Airmobile Brigade was integrated into the German Special Operations Division (since 2014: Rapid Response Forces Division). In 2016, the 3,000-strong Dutch 43rd Mechanised Brigade was integrated into the German 1 Armoured Division. At the same time, the German Tank Battalion 141, in which Dutch soldiers serve as well, was placed under the command of the Dutch brigade (see figure 2).²⁹

²⁹ See <<https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/friedenssicherung/bilaterale-kooperation/deutschland-niederlande>> (accessed on 3 May 2021).

Figure 2: Organisational Structure of the German 1 Armoured Division (2021)



Source: Compiled by Catharina Gottschalk and the author based on a chart provided by the German 1 Armoured Division on 27. July 2021.

Other cases of national structures with multinational features are those national headquarters at which a larger number of foreign soldiers work on a permanent basis as foreign officers (as opposed to liaison officers who represent their sending nations). One example of this is the Multinational Joint Headquarters, established in Ulm, Germany in 2013, which is tasked with the planning and conduct of military operations for both the EU and NATO. Legally, the Multinational Joint Headquarters is a German national military headquarters.³⁰ Yet, it employs soldiers not only from Germany, but also from Bulgaria, Italy, Croatia, Luxemburg, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the US.³¹

4. Motives for Establishing Multinational Structures

Why do European states pool and integrate military planning, command and control capabilities? Why do they establish multinational force structures? For what purpose do they open their national commands to foreign military personnel? These questions will be discussed briefly in the remaining part of this paper.

One motive for creating multinational command structures in the early stages of the Cold War was the expected increase in the defence capability of armed forces in Europe. The presence of NATO forces on the European continent during the Cold War in the face of the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact made it seem necessary to place them under a unified command.³² By that, defence plans, the determination of the required force strength, as well as necessary training standards, were to be regulated centrally, and thus more effectively, for all NATO members.³³ The principle of an effective organisation of military force remained one of the main motives for multinational cooperation in Europe even after the end of the Cold War. In 2006, to give an example, NATO referred to its own role in European defence as “a catalyst for generating the forces needed to meet

³⁰ M. Sadlowski, *Handbuch der Bundeswehr und der Verteidigungsindustrie* (Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler: Bernard & Graefe in der Mönch Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 2020), 412–13.

³¹ See <<https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/organisation/streitkraeftebasis/organisation/multinationales-kommando-operative-fuehrung>> (accessed on 5 May 2021).

³² BMVg, *Weißbuch 1983. Zur Sicherheit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bonn: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 1983), 146.

³³ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Die Organisation des Nordatlantikvertrages NATO* (Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 1956), 57.

requirements and enabling member countries to participate in crisis management operations which they could not otherwise undertake on their own".³⁴

In addition to the operational advantage of pooling military resources in common structures is the strategic advantage of the deterrence effect. The aggregation of military capabilities may increase the deterrence potential of the countries involved. Common doctrines, command and control structures and a joint military structure might have a greater potential for action than single contributions made by respective individual armed forces. What is more, multinational structures concentrate military personnel locally in one place. Allied forces stationed in West Germany during the Cold War would have not only made an operational contribution to defence in the event of an attack—their mere presence on the border of the Warsaw Pact also had a strategic deterrence effect, given that an attack on West Germany would have not only meant an attack on abstract Alliance territory, but also an attack on Danish, Dutch, Belgian, British and American soldiers present in that area. The consequence would have been that these countries at the very least would potentially have participated in a counterstrike.

This 'trip wire'-logic of deterrence is once again being applied today, as the presence of a larger number of multinational headquarters and foreign armed forces in the Eastern Alliance territory illustrates. Common structures thus increase the deterrence potential of an alliance. Also, in respect to multinational forces in Europe, it can be argued that deterrence is not only based on a contractual defence commitment in an alliance framework, but also on the physical collocation and regional presence of allied armed forces.

Another operational motive for increased multinational cooperation in Europe is that multinational structures might make it easier for NATO to master the challenge of generating forces for operations.³⁵

However, the multitude of multinational force structures in Europe is not only a result of strategic or operational considerations. It also has a political rationale.

³⁴ NATO, *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 2006), <www.nato.int>, 16.

³⁵ J. R. Deni, *Alliance Management and Maintenance: Restructuring NATO for the 21st Century* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 6–7.

To start with, multinational structures are visible symbols of political cohesion between contributing nations. This motive becomes particularly visible with the French–German Brigade, which was referred to as “a signal and role model for European Armed Forces”.³⁶ Consequently, the main rationale for its establishment had not been a military one but a “successful French–German integration”.³⁷

From the 1990s onwards, the motive of political integration through military cooperation can also be found in other instances of multinational force structures, albeit in a modified form, when the integration of the armed forces of Eastern European states into NATO is concerned. The Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin, Poland can serve as an example. During the 2000s it was referred to as the “integration corps”.³⁸ It mainly served the purpose of improving Poland’s integration into NATO. Only later did the corps assume an operational role in crisis management and, following the Ukraine crisis, the defence of Allied territory. Multinational military structures thus may also serve the objective of politically binding together their participating countries.

Multinational structures are furthermore an expression of the Alliance’s solidarity with its member states and burden sharing. Following a deterrence logic, they may represent an external strategic communication to military adversaries; however, multinational force structures also represent an internal political communication addressed to their allies: with their commitment to multinational structures, powerful states express that they are willing to assist in crises faced by partner states that have less military power; smaller partners, on the other hand, signal their willingness to participate in efforts towards a successful common defence.

Being part of multinational structures might also promise international prestige. In his case study on the establishment of the Rapid Deployable Corps, John Deni explains that the formation of such a corps on one’s own national

³⁶ P. Klein and E. Lippert, *Die Deutsch-Französische Brigade als Beispiel für die militärische Integration Europas*, ed. S. I. d. Bundeswehr, SOWI-Arbeitspapiere, no. 53 (Strausberg: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 1991), 2.

³⁷ Alain Carton quoted in *ibid.*, 3.

³⁸ M. Wróbel, “Das Integrationskorps”, *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, vol. 39, no.1 (Vienna: Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung, 2001).

territory augments international perceptions of credibility.³⁹

Not only strategic, operational and political motives are at play when the establishment and continuance of multinational formations and command structures are concerned. A third cluster of motives can be found at the organisational level of the armed forces. Membership of major multinational formations and higher command structures provides smaller countries with the opportunity to assign their military personnel to posts that do not exist at the national level due to the small size of their armed forces. This applies to the level, as well as the diversity, of assignments, with military advancement being the focus of the assignment level and the transfer of knowledge being the main purpose with regard to the diversity of assignments. Furthermore, participation in multinational headquarters in some cases ensures access to joint sources of funding and training capacities.⁴⁰

The establishment of multinational structures is often also a way for European armed forces to preserve some of their size and capabilities in times of force cuts. Many of the current multinational forces emerged from military structures that had initially lost their original purpose: the British I Corps of the British Army of the Rhine stationed in Germany was the nucleus of the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps, the Headquarters Allied Land Forces Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland was the core of the Multinational Corps Northeast and the Multinational Division North, established in 2019, emerged from the Danish Division based in Haderslev, Denmark. Multinational cooperation may therefore contribute to the survival of military structures. Despite their strategic rationales and political impetus, multinational cooperation might also have a self-referential motivation based on an organisational interest in the survival of national military structures.

5. Conclusion

The institutionalisation of military cooperation in Europe originated in US–British cooperation during World War II. During the Cold War, NATO

³⁹ J. R. Deni, *Alliance Management and Maintenance: Restructuring NATO for the 21st Century*, 50, 70.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 50, 75.

member states engaged in the establishment of a highly integrated multinational NATO Command Structure. Since 1990, there has been a sharp rise in the number of military cooperation structures in Europe. Furthermore, representations of military cooperation have become more diverse. Today, the NATO Command Structure is just one type of multinational military structure in Europe amongst many others. The EU has seen the creation of some of its own multinational military planning structures, and its EU-Battlegroups could be regarded as a form of multinational force structure. In addition, European states are engaged in the set-up of numerous and diverse multinational headquarters and units. Additionally, they have also established sophisticated cross-attachments and multinational staff integration with respect to national commands.

The rationale for committing to multinational cooperation in Europe is not always necessarily a strategic or operational one. As this paper has demonstrated, the pooling and integration of national military capabilities has also sometimes followed a political logic. Even the organisational interests of the armed forces might have contributed to the close-knit web of multinational force structures present in Europe today.