

Policy Department External Policies

THE STATUS AND LOCATION OF THE MILITARY INSTALLATIONS OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THEIR POTENTIAL ROLE FOR THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY (ESDP)

SECURITY AND DEFENCE

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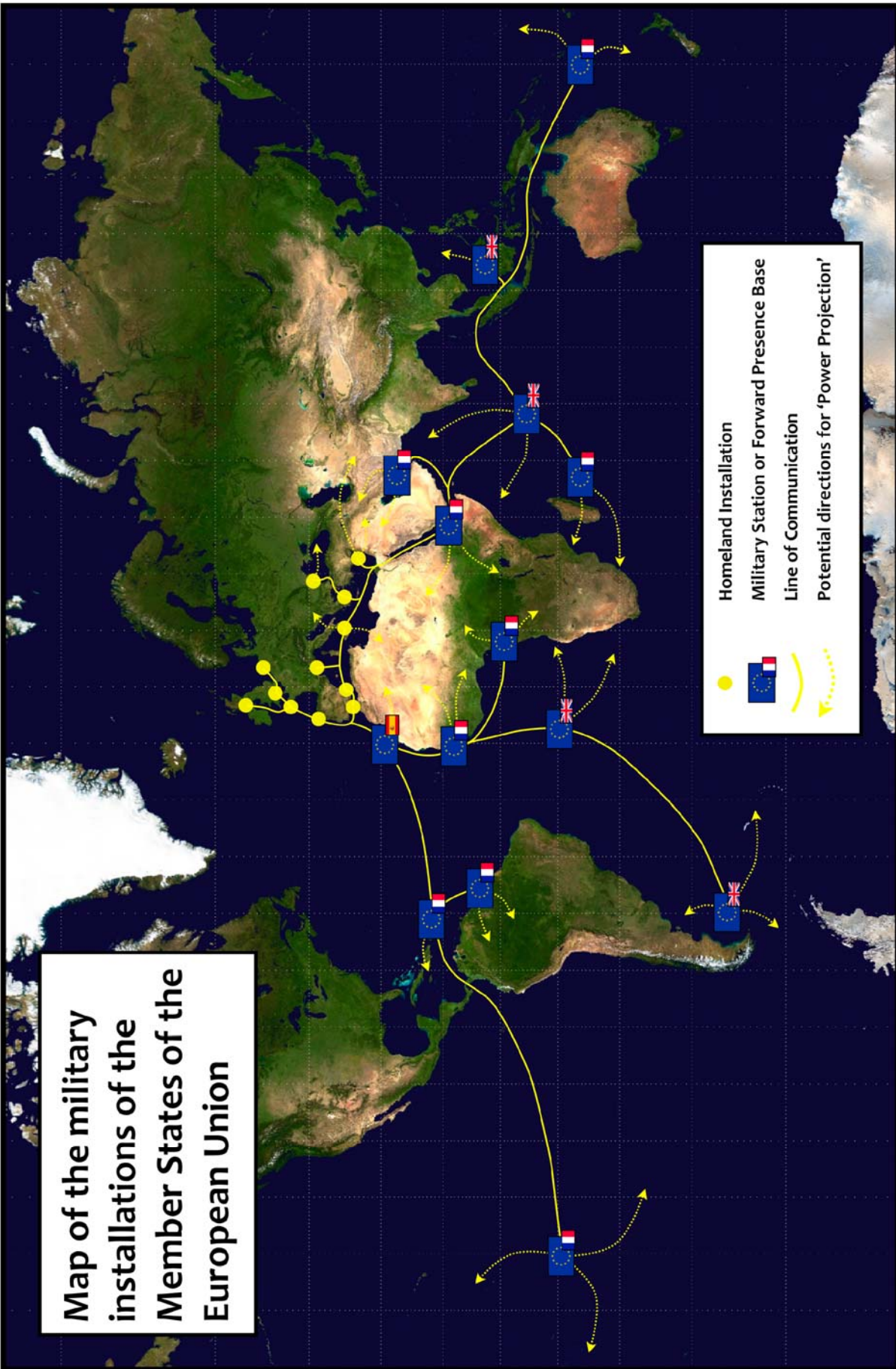
Executive summary

The recently launched European Union (E.U.) mission EUNAVFOR SOMALIA (‘Operation Atalanta’) to fight piracy off the Somali coast and ensure the protection of a key E.U. Sea Line of Communication (S.L.o.C.) is a vivid example of the *coming of age* of European Security and Defence Policy (E.S.D.P.).¹ While such a development should be applauded, the present Briefing Paper argues that the E.U. and its Member States need speed up their efforts to reform, amalgamate and put in place the necessary functional and geographic structures for the protection of European S.L.o.C.s. and to expand the E.U.’s geographical and geostrategic reach.

Key to these structures are the overseas military installations of the E.U. Member States. These facilities, spread out across the world—and concentrated in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans—form part of a far broader set of geographic, political, economic and strategic dynamics, namely the delivery of a credible E.U. ‘forward presence’ (i.e. regional presence, overseas basing, expeditionary military capabilities, and logistical supply systems, etc.) in regions surrounding the E.U., or along critical S.L.o.C.s linking the E.U. homeland to the multiple different nodes and points of the global economy. In an increasingly multipolar world, placing a renewed focus on these military facilities is a pressing European priority, particularly in an age of increasing geopolitical competition along the coastal littoral of Eurasia.

¹ This expression is from French Defence Minister, Hervé Morin. For a detailed description of EU NAVFOR Somalia see: http://consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=1518&lang=en. See also the Report by the Policy Department and the Secretariat of the Sub-Committee on Security and Defence of the European Parliament on the visit by SEDE to the Operational Headquarters of E.U. NAVFOR Somalia at Northwood (Brussels: European Parliament, 9th January 2009).

Map of the military installations of the Member States of the European Union



- Homeland Installation
- Military Station or Forward Presence Base
- Line of Communication
- Potential directions for 'Power Projection'

Introduction

While largely re-affirming the merit of the diagnosis and general prescriptions of the 2003 *European Security Strategy*, the 2008 *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* puts the accent on some of the changes through which the strategic environment has experienced over the last five years. Chief among these are the rise of Asia and the intensification of globalisation, which has emphasised the unrelenting importance of Sea Lines of Communication (S.L.o.C.s) to both European commercial activity and European security.² The emerging geopolitical environment implies that European foreign, security and defence policies—what might be called E.U. Grand Strategy—will now have to focus on both the ‘continental’ and the ‘maritime’ dimensions of the Eurasian landmass.³ The continental dimension has dominated E.U. attention until recently, not least because of enlargement and the simple fact that the E.U.’s eastern flank is surrounded by a number of unstable countries. Compounded by the growing assertiveness of Russia, this calls out for a concerted and effective E.U. approach towards the eastern neighbourhood, including steady progress towards a single European energy market and the diversification of gas supplies. Yet, and without prejudging the vital importance that this continental dimension has to European security, this Briefing Paper’s aim is to draw attention to the growing significance of the maritime dimension of E.U. Grand Strategy. In this respect, it will emphasise the growth of Asia and the mounting significance of E.U. S.L.o.C.s, which imply that the Eurasian maritime ‘rimland’—roughly coterminous with the coastal region from the Suez Canal to the city of Shanghai, and perhaps as far as Seoul—will become increasingly critical to European security over the coming years.⁴ But more specifically, it will show how the Member States’ overseas military installations have, and will continue to have, a key role in upholding European economic, political and military influence—as well as a decisive function in sustaining the security and defence of the E.U. as it assumes a thoroughly global role.

When thinking about the E.U.’s geopolitical development, it might be fruitful to compare it to the evolution of U.S. as a world power. According to Robert Work, the U.S. has gone through four phases of geopolitical development since the American War of Independence; these include the ‘continental era’ (1783-1889), the ‘oceanic era’ (1890-1945), the ‘transoceanic era’ (1945-1991) and the ‘Global Era’ (1992-).⁵ What is clear is that as the U.S. consolidated in North America, it could expand its geographic reach to become increasingly maritime in scope. The E.U. may be experiencing a similar geopolitical trajectory. Here, three different and overlapping stages of European development have occurred since the foundation of the European Community: first, an ‘Era of Continental Integration’ (c.1952-c.1992), where the focus was on the economic and political amalgamation of the Member States, as well as their incorporation into a transatlantic framework (N.A.T.O.) whose sole focus was containing the Soviet threat within the Eurasian heartland; second, an ‘Era of Expansion and Consolidation’ (c.1993-c.2007), with a strong concentration on enlarging the E.U. to cover most of the European continent through territorial expansion and the construction of institutionalised neighbouring peripheries; and, third, the nascent ‘Era of Global Power’ (c.2000, but particularly since 2003)

² Solana, J., *The Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy—Providing Security in a Changing World*, European Council S407/08 (Brussels, 11 December 2008). Available at:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf (accessed 14th January 2009). For an analysis of the evolution of the strategic environment and its consequences for the E.U. see: Gnesotto, N. and Grevi, G., *The New Global Puzzle: What world for the E.U. in 2025?* (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, January 2006). For an updated overview of the strategic environment see: U.S. National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (Washington D.C.: U.S. National Intelligence Council, November 2008). Available at http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_2025/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf (accessed 26th January 2009).

³ The ‘continental’ dimension of the Eurasian landmass has been described as the ‘heartland’, while the coastal perimeter has been called the ‘rimland’. Historically, the ‘rimland’ has been the most important, containing most of the world’s people, wealth and resources—as well as access to the sea. See: Spykman, N., *The Geography of the Peace* (Washington: Harcourt and Brace, Inc., 1944).

⁴ Others have already highlighted the growing importance of the Eurasian maritime rimland. See: Howorth, J., ‘The case for an E.U. Grand Strategy’, Biscop, S., Howorth, J. and Giegerich, B., *Europe: A time for strategy*, (Brussels: Egmont Paper, January 2009), pp. 15-25. Available at: <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/paperegm/eg27.pdf> (accessed 28th January 2009); Rogers, J., ‘From Suez to Shanghai: The European Union and Eurasian maritime security’, *Occasional Paper* (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, forthcoming 2009).

⁵ Work, R. O., ‘The Global Era of National Policy and the Pan-Oceanic National Fleet’, *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Autumn 2008, pp. 596-602. Krepinevich and Work also speak of the ‘second transoceanic era’, starting in 2001. See Krepinevich, A. and Work, R., *A New Global Defence Posture for the Second Transoceanic Era* (Washington: Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2007).

where the changing strategic environment—not least the U.S. refocusing its geostrategic concentration and the rise of new actors—has compelled the E.U. to advance further afield in order to defend and extend European values and interests. This new era requires an appropriate mix of our diplomatic, economic, political and military instruments in order to project E.U. power, along with a clearer geostrategic focus.

In the present geopolitical era, the security and prosperity of the E.U. are increasingly dependent on our own ability to project power into the maritime domain. Today, up to ninety percent of our trade comes to us and leaves us by the sea, as so does at least half of our energy; any credible strategy to implement the much needed diversification of energy supplies (most notably gas) will also rely on the security of the maritime arena. Furthermore, our ability to reach other areas of the world—particularly militarily—will also remain dependent on our unfettered access to the sea. Given its very nature (i.e. freedom of mobility), the sea forms part of the so-called global commons, and while it may be seen as a liability to those unfamiliar to it, it provides those able to master it with enormous strategic mobility, and affords them a highway with rapid access around the globe. History has shown again and again that failure to retain a credible maritime capacity normally leads to disaster—or decline.

The role and utility of overseas military installations

Whereas a powerful fleet is a must-have asset in our quest for maritime dominance, naval strength is but one element underpinning a maritime presence, which in turn is a sub-set of the broader concept of ‘forward presence’. According to Andrew Krepinevich and Robert Work, ‘global posture’—what we call ‘forward presence’—includes an interconnected set of components, including: (1) permanent and temporary overseas military installations, which support ‘forward-based forces’ and ‘forward-deployed forces’; (2) ‘global attack forces’, stationed in the homeland or space, and which can be deployed immediately over intercontinental ranges; (3) a ‘strategic mobility and logistics infrastructure’, which connects all forward-based, forward-deployed and global attack forces; (4) ‘forcible entry and rapid base construction forces’, which are consistent with the accessibility of the overall strategic environment; (5) a ‘global command, control, communications and intelligence network’; and (6) alliances, security relationships, and partnerships with overseas countries, which allow for the construction of facilities on foreign soil and on which the other dimensions of ‘global posture’ rest. They go on: ‘Moreover, the posture’s “connective tissue” comes in the form of *strategic and operational concepts* that link the overall posture with existing or emerging contemporary national security challenges and the military capabilities needed to address them.’⁶ In other words, we must understand the purpose such a posture serves, and the doctrine required for its continued operation.

But what purpose does a ‘forward presence’ serve? According to Krepinevich and Work, ‘the ultimate aim of any global military posture is to achieve advantages in global strategic reaction time, geographic positioning of forces, and force concentration and support, and thereby contribute to a favourable strategic balance in both peace and war.’⁷ In our case, an E.U. ‘forward presence’ must be tailored towards European strategic objectives, as laid out in the *European Security Strategy* and the *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* (combating terrorism, stopping W.M.D. proliferation, fighting organised crime, ending piracy, and so on) and must also reflect European strategic culture, including a preference for preventative defence, comprehensive security, and a balanced synthesis between our civilian and military instruments of power. Yet with the rise of foreign countries and pirate activity within the Eurasian rimland, the security of our S.L.o.C.s stands out, as these critical trade routes are vulnerable to disruption by both traditional and asymmetric actors. Here, the maritime dimension of E.U. Grand Strategy is becoming critically important, as the E.U.’s operation to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden has recently shown. In fact, a successful foreign and security policy—as well as a dynamic, prosperous economy, including a high degree of social cohesion—should all be subsumed into a wider maritime agenda. As Robert Work explains:

The word “maritime” encompasses all activities regarding the seas and oceans of the world, as well as their close interrelationships. Among these activities include international affairs; international law; economics; trade; politics; communications; migration and immigration; science; and technology. More to

⁶ Krepinevich, A., and Work, R., *A New Global Defence Posture for the Second Transoceanic Era* (Washington: Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2007), p. ii.

⁷ *Ibid.*

the point, however, in the conduct of war, maritime strategy...does not concern itself solely with fleet operations or even operations upon the sea, but it “regards the fleet and army as one weapon, which coordinates their action, and indicates the lines on which each must move to realise [sic] the full power of both.” To think of naval and military (i.e., land force) strategy as separate is to disregard the theory of war, “which brings out their intimate relation.”...As should be evident, then, a maritime concept and a naval concept are two sides of the same coin. However, it is a coin that is most definitely “loaded”; when flipping the coin to determine which concept is more important for joint power projection operations, the side marked “maritime concept” will always land face up. Naval strategy is a subset of maritime strategy, albeit an important one, which has as its ultimate object “passage and communication”—which, as will be explained, means the assured transoceanic delivery of armies, navies, and air forces, as well as the joint goods and services needed to support and sustain them. In other words, naval activities to achieve or exploit command of the seas are merely a means to achieve a critical maritime end: the projection of national power over the world’s oceans.⁸

Yet this maritime agenda can only operate when undergirded by the existence of overseas military installations, particularly naval bases and air stations. Not only do these provide access and logistical support to passing military units, but they also afford their owner a significant degree of political influence over the region in which they are located. As Kenneth Boulding pointed out in his seminal study *Conflict and Defence* in 1962, all states are faced with a ‘Loss of Strength Gradient’ (L.S.G.).⁹ His argument was quite simple: that regions further away from a centre of power are harder to influence than those nearby, due to difficulties with communication, command and control. To overcome this problem, the building of overseas bases can boost a country’s power and extend its geopolitical leverage (see Appendix, Diagram 1, for a detailed explanation). And when integrated into a wider maritime system, overseas military installations enable the continuous projection of power—in other words, they help to maintain a ‘forward presence’ and, if positioned correctly, one that is thoroughly global.

U.S. and Chinese overseas military installations

In today’s world, the U.S. operates by far the most extensive maritime system. One of former U.S. President George W. Bush’s biggest legacies will likely be the thorough recalibration of the worldwide U.S. geostrategic posture, resulting in a considerable reduction of American troops based in Europe and South Korea. This is a consequence of the transformation and rationalisation of the U.S. military machine, begun during the tenure of the previous U.S. Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld. As part of a so-called ‘Global Posture Review’, the United States has started to reduce its overseas military installations from over 850 in 2004 to an anticipated 550 by 2014.¹⁰ But the apparent cutback does not necessarily mean that the U.S. government has chosen to decrease its international military presence, but rather reflects changing priorities in American geostrategic posture—away from Europe, and towards Asia. Indeed, 550 overseas military facilities will still give the U.S. an immense lead over all existing and potential rivals, especially in the Asian littorals, where some of the most radical geopolitical changes are already well underway.

The sheer number of U.S. overseas bases reflects an authoritative understanding of the role and importance of geography in the shaping of national defence posture in American strategic discourse. As Zdzislaw Lachowski puts it: ‘Foreign basing is an established instrument of power projection that addresses a wide spectrum of the political, military, economic and other interests of states.’¹¹ The People’s Republic of China has also realised this fact. Since the early twenty-first century, Beijing has started to build a number of commercial harbours, naval stations, and listening posts, linking Sanya naval dockyard on Hainan Island to the

⁸ Work, R., *Thinking about Seabasing: All Ahead, Slow* (Washington: Centre for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2006), pp. 16-17.

⁹ Boulding, K., *Conflict and Defence: A General Theory* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962).

¹⁰ For a solid overview of these changes, see: O’Hanlon, M., *Unfinished Business: U.S. Overseas Military Presence in the 21st Century* (Washington, Centre for a New American Security, June 2008).

¹¹ Lachowski, Z., ‘Foreign Military Bases in Eurasia’, *SIPRI Policy Paper 18* (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Stockholm, June 2007), p. 2.

Middle East. Described as Beijing's 'String of Pearls',¹² these facilities, dovetailing with the Chinese energy supply routes to the Middle East and East Africa, have caused some alarm in India, Japan and the United States. Other countries, notably Russia and India, have also made moves towards a more assertive basing posture in recent years.

European overseas military installations

A similar understanding of maritime power was once prevalent among many Europeans too. As Robert Harkarvy points out, from the mid fifteenth to the mid twentieth centuries, various European countries operated numerous overseas military installations and trading posts.¹³ Portugal and Spain were the first; they built forts and harbours around the littorals of South America and West Africa throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the seventeenth century, the Netherlands erected a string of coastal citadels along its trade lines into Southeast Asia. And from the eighteenth century, until the mid twentieth century, France and the United Kingdom built up long chains of military installations linking their respective homelands to the furthest reaches of their vast empires. France sustained a plethora of barracks and forts across much of north and central Africa, whereas Britain operated a succession of naval stations connecting the main naval dockyards of Plymouth and Portsmouth with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, the Indian subcontinent and holdings in the Mediterranean.

Unfortunately, yesteryear's robust and globally-focused geographic understanding of politics and security strategy seems wholly lacking at the European level. It is often forgotten in contemporary European strategic thinking that France and the United Kingdom still both maintain a large number of overseas military installations (see Map).¹⁴ Many of these are located in the two powers' remaining sovereign overseas territories, but others are based in foreign countries in geopolitically sensitive regions, such as the Middle East and the northern part of Africa. While this worldwide 'forward presence' pales in comparison with that of the U.S., it still constitutes the second largest collection of overseas military facilities in the world. Europe's basing presence is also dynamic and subject to change with new geopolitical realities. For example, after the 1982 Falklands War, the United Kingdom upgraded its garrison on the Falkland Islands considerably, whereas France confirmed in its 2008 Strategic Defence Review that it would open a military outpost in the United Arab Emirates near the critical Strait of Hormuz.

Of course, these European military facilities are not all equal in size or scope. Some amount to nothing more than a few small buildings, which are used as storage depots; others include large barracks for hundreds of troops, sizeable naval stations, or even full-scale aerodromes. In the United States, American overseas military facilities are officially catalogued according to their size, location and geostrategic purpose.¹⁵ First, *Main Operating Bases* account for the largest military installations, with permanently stationed U.S. combat forces, extensive command and control facilities, and strengthened defences. Such bases also include robust logistical support infrastructure, as well as supplementary facilities to sustain the families of garrisoned U.S. service personnel. In short, they represent Washington's ongoing political commitment to key allies, and serve as the main geostrategic hubs of U.S. power around the world. Examples include Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Kadena Air Base in Japan, and Camp Humphreys in South Korea, among others. The second category, *Forward Operating Sites*, accounts for smaller facilities, which may not have any permanently garrisoned U.S. troops present. As a component in the worldwide U.S. base network, they are 'anchored' to the Main Operating Bases, and can rapidly be reinforced in times of crisis. These facilities are also a focus for bilateral relations between the U.S. military and the military forces of the host nation. Examples of this sort of installation include the Sembawang dockyards in Singapore and the Soto Cano Air Base in

¹² Pehrson, C. J., 'String of Pearls: Meeting the Challenge of China's Rising Power Across the Asian Littoral', *Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy* (Washington: U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, July 2006). Available at: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=721> (accessed 11th January 2009).

¹³ Harkarvy, R., 'Thinking about basing', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 58, No. 3, Summer 2005, pp. 13-42.

¹⁴ Note this report focuses almost exclusively on French and British facilities, as they are the only E.U. Member States who hold military installations across the whole geographic and functional spectrums (i.e. from homeland installations to forward operating sites). Spain also maintains overseas military installations; none of the other E.U. Member States operate permanent facilities, let alone on the scale of France and the United Kingdom.

¹⁵ Feith, D. J., *Strengthening U.S. Global Posture: Report to Congress* (Washington: U.S. Department of Defence, September 2004), pp. 10-11.

Honduras. The third category includes *Cooperative Security Locations*, which have little or no permanent U.S. military presence. They are maintained through sporadic garrisoning, or by contractors, or even by troops from the host nation, or any combination thereof. They form staging areas for U.S. peace support operations, as well as the focal points for security cooperation activities, often with smaller U.S. allies in places like Africa.

But the nature of the European basing posture necessitates a different classification scheme. Unlike the U.S. stance, the British and French ‘forward presence’ is no longer thoroughly global. While a French maritime influence stretches as far as the Pacific, it is quite limited. Rather, the modern European—or Anglo-French—posture is focused on the Mediterranean basin and North Africa and up into the Persian Gulf (particularly in France’s case), with two ‘tentacles’ stretching down either side of Africa into the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean (particularly in Britain’s case). Unlike the lattice or network of installations operated by the U.S., the European military posture is more like a traditional hub-and-spokes model. The E.U. therefore needs to come up with its own criteria for the conceptualisation of its own overseas presence and the role overseas military installations have in that posture. Here, we can already begin to outline four categories applicable to the European situation:

(1) Homeland Installations

The ‘hub’—the Homeland Installations—contains the Permanent Joint Headquarters and the major air stations, naval dockyards and barracks, such as Portsmouth and Toulon, or the air stations of Brize Norton or Istres.

(2) Military Stations

The ‘spokes’ include those military facilities like Ascension Island, Akrotiri or Djibouti. These operate as ‘lily pads’, or Military Stations, allowing military forces from the Homeland Installations to move further afield. During the Falklands War, for example, the British stations in Gibraltar and Ascension Island allowed the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force to reach the South Atlantic more rapidly and with less need to send costly relays of refuelling ships or tanker aircraft to supply equipment on the front line.

(3) Forward Presence Bases

And at the end of the ‘spokes’ are the Forward Presence Bases, which are effectively the termini of the overseas military basing infrastructure and logistical supply capacity. European Forward Presence Bases function similarly to their U.S. counterparts, the Forward Operating Sites. But in Britain and France’s case, these bases can either be sovereign or foreign-hosted. The former are normally permanent, and have two functions: firstly, as a centre of operations for protecting and upholding sovereignty over the overseas territory in which the Foreign Presence Base is located; and secondly, projecting power into the surrounding geographic region. Sovereign Foreign Presence Bases include Reunion, Diego Garcia, New Caledonia or the Falkland Islands. In comparison with these, or the Military Stations, the foreign-hosted Forward Presence Bases are often less permanent and more transitory. They can be moved and relocated as events and conditions dictate, a good example being France’s geostrategic push into the Persian Gulf with the opening of a new Foreign Presence Base in the United Arab Emirates in 2009.

(4) Strategic Projection Vessels

The Homeland Installations, the Military Stations, and some of the Forward Presence Bases, all operate to keep afloat another, somewhat unique, category of military bases: those that float. Strategic projection vessels, which include aircraft carriers and amphibious assault vessels, as well as logistical support ships and cruise missile firing submarines, thereby reducing the infrastructural imprint of the static maritime infrastructure. These unique vessels can then be deployed into almost any theatre for many different purposes, ranging from full-scale warfare, to humanitarian assistance operations and search and rescue. They afford their owners with several hundred square metres of floating airfield, which can move around as circumstances dictate, reducing the likelihood of attack.

To be sure, the installations in the second category—the Military Stations—can also function as Forward Operating Bases if conflict or insecurity breaks out within their geographical vicinity. This applies particularly to Djibouti, which operates not only as a ‘lily pad’ for French forces on route to Reunion or New Caledonia, but also a major locus of French power in North Africa. This could apply equally to some of the

Homeland Installations, particularly those on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, such as Toulon or Taranto, which have already been used to project power directly into the Mediterranean Sea, the Balkans and North Africa. But given that these Homeland Installations are not 'overseas', we will not concentrate on them. In the next section, we will show where the other two categories of static base are located, as well as their size and operational capability.

The overseas military installations of the Member States

In all, E.U. Member States maintain and operate sixteen major military installations (see Appendix, Table 1). France has nine overseas military facilities. Five of these are sovereign installations, whereas foreign countries host four. The United Kingdom has military installations in twenty-eight different territories and countries overseas. Of these, only six can be described as large military installations, while the others account for a myriad of training, recruit and support facilities. All major British overseas bases are located on sovereign territory. Other European Union Member States, such as Spain, the Netherlands and Germany, also maintain, or have assembled, military facilities overseas: Spain has a permanent naval dockyard in the Canary Islands, whereas Germany and the Netherlands operate a small temporary staging airfield in Tajikistan for the supply of their forces in Afghanistan.

Overseas military installations of France

French (permanent) military installations and forces overseas are distributed throughout French overseas departments and territories (sovereignty forces), as well as allied countries of strategic importance to France (presence forces).

Sovereignty forces are located in Antilles, French Guiana, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and in the Southern Indian Ocean. Their missions include the protection of national territory, strategic installations and French interests in its zone of responsibility against foreign aggression in, the support of the State action, humanitarian assistance, and the fight against drugs, illegal immigration, and other forms of trafficking.

Antilles: The Army counts 1,150 personnel, including the 33rd Infantry Regiment, located in Fort de France, and the 41st Marine Infantry Battalion in Guadeloupe. The Navy, also stationed at Fort de France, counts 500 personnel and includes four ships: the surveillance frigate *Ventôse* with its Panther helicopter, the light transport ship *Francis Garnier*, and the patrol vessels *La Fougueuse* and *La Violette* (Gendarmerie). Additionally, the Navy is reinforced with a maritime surveillance aeroplane for several months of the year. The Air Force, with 200 personnel, is based in Lamentin, the military zone of Raizet in Guadeloupe, and includes three 'CN235 CASA' high-wing, pressurised, twin turbo-prop aeroplanes with Short Take Off and Landing (S.T.O.L) performance, and two 'Puma' and two lighter 'Fennec' helicopters. The forces in Antilles also include 400 civilians, 1,250 Gendarmerie personnel and 1,050 personnel from the Adapted Military Service (S.M.A.).¹⁶

French Guiana hosts 1,300 Army personnel, including the 9th Marine Infantry Regiment, based in Cayenne and Saint-Jean du Maroni, and the 3rd Foreign Infantry Regiment based mainly in Kourou, Saint-Georges and Régina (a training centre in the equatorial forest). The Navy includes 180 personnel and holds a naval station in Dégrad des Cannes, with two 'P400' patrol ships, and two high-speed motorboats for coastal maritime surveillance, operated by the Gendarmerie. The Air Force holds an Air Base 367 in Cayenne Rochambeau, with the overseas helicopters squadron 00.068 (four 'Puma' and three 'Fennec'). The S.M.A. comprises 700 men, including the 3rd Regiment in Cayenne and the G.S.M.A. in Saint-Jean du Maroni. The Gendarmerie counts 750 personnel, with five mobile squadrons.

French Polynesia: 700 Army personnel are located in Papeete (Tahiti). The Navy comprises 600 people, a 'Prairial' surveillance frigate, an 'Alouette III' helicopter, one 'Batral' ferry, two 'P400' patrol boats, a supply tugboat and two port tugboats, a fusilier detachment, the maritime patrol craft 'Jasmin' (Gendarmerie) and the flotilla 25F with three 'Gardian' vessels in Papeete. The Air force includes two 'CASA', one 'Super Puma' and one 'Fennec'. The S.M.A. comprises 280 personnel, including a headquarters in Tahiti and four

¹⁶ The Adapted Military Service (S.M.A. or *Service Militaire Adapté* in French) is under the shared authority of the Ministry of Defence and the Overseas Ministry, its main mission being helping to socially and professionally integrate young people from overseas.

professional formation companies (Tahiti, Marquises, Australes and Tuamotu). 540 Gendarmes are also deployed in the French Polynesia.

New Caledonia: The Army comprises 990 soldiers, namely a company from the Pacific Marine Infantry Regiment in Nandāï and four companies from the Pacific Marine Infantry Regiment in Plum. The Navy counts 500 personnel, two 'P400' patrol boats, one 'Batral' light ferry ship and a Gendarmerie 'Vedette' patrolling ship, as well as a flotilla with two 'Gardian' vessels and protection elements in Tontouta and Nounéa. The Air Force has got 170 personnel, including three 'CASA', four 'Puma' and one 'Fennec' in Tontouta. The Gendarmerie includes 760 personnel, a surveillance high-speed motorboat and two 'Ecureuil' helicopters. The S.M.A. comprises two companies based in Koumac and Koné.

South Indian Ocean: The Army counts 750 personnel, namely the 2nd Regiment of Marine Infantry Parachutists in Reunion Island and a Detachment from the Foreign Legion in Mayotte. The Navy comprises 430 people, a naval station in Reunion Island with two 'P400' patrol boats, an 'Austral' patrol boat, a maritime affairs patrol, one 'Batral' ferry, a Gendarmerie maritime patrol and a fusiliers detachment. In Mayotte there is a marine detachment with a servitude high-speed motorboat, a boat for transporting material and a high-speed motorboat for coastal maritime surveillance (Gendarmerie). There are 1,000 S.M.A. and 1,150 Gendarmerie forces in Reunion Island and Mayotte, including an 'Alouette III' and a high-speed motorboat. The Air Force includes 280 personnel in Reunion Island, including two 'Transall' and two 'Fennec'.

Presence forces are located in Djibouti, Gabon, the Indian Ocean and Senegal.

Djibouti hosts the largest contingent of French presence forces (2,900 personnel) and a joint H.Q. The Army includes the 5th *Régiment Interarmes d'Outre Mer*, the 13th *Demi-Brigade de Légion étrangère* and a detachment from the *Aviation légère de l'armée de terre* (A.L.A.T.), namely five 'Puma' and two 'Gazelle' helicopters. The Navy has a tank and infantry unloading ship and two barges for carrying material. The Air Force has ten 'Mirage 2000', a 'Transall' transport aircraft, a 'Fennec' and two 'Puma' helicopters, located in an air station at the Djibouti International Airport (BA 188). The missions of French forces stationed in Djibouti include the, assistance to the Djiboutian government and Armed Forces, contribution to regional stability, fostering regional cooperation in the framework of sub-regional organisations, and the projection of pre-positioned forces to eventual operations. The forces pre-positioned in Djibouti have taken part in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, E.U. Operation ARTEMIS in the Congo and the Licorne Operation in Côte d'Ivoire among others.¹⁷

In **Gabon**, there is a joint H.Q. and 980 military personnel. Army assets include the 6th Marine Infantry Battalion and a detachment from the A.L.A.T. with three 'Cougar' helicopters. Air Force assets include an Operational Transport Group, with a light helicopter, and two 'Transall' transport aircraft. French forces in Gabon are oriented to the maintenance of operations and unit training. They constitute a valuable support for all operations undertaken in Africa.¹⁸

France's contingent in the **Indian Ocean** (A.L.I.N.D.I.E.N.) includes three joint command facilities; one based in Reunion Island, another in Djibouti and a third one is permanently based aboard a command ship. A.L.I.N.D.I.E.N. contributes to the peacekeeping and stabilisation of the Indian Ocean, contributing to coalition enterprises outside the Persian Gulf (i.e. Operation Active Endeavour), as well as maritime security, humanitarian operations and defence diplomacy. A.L.I.N.D.I.E.N.'s means include a command and resupply boat with its own H.Q. (with thirty-five personnel), two surveillance frigates based in Reunion Island, a marine commando unit and a maritime surveillance plane based in Djibouti. Additionally, France often de-

¹⁷ For a more detailed overview of the French contingent in Djibouti, see the website of the Ministère de la Défense: http://www.defense.gouv.fr/ema/layout/set/wai/forces_interarmees/forces_de_presence/djibouti/ffdj (accessed 26th January 2009).

¹⁸ For more on the French contingent at Gabon, see the website of the Ministère de la Défense: http://www.defense.gouv.fr/ema/layout/set/wai/forces_interarmees/forces_de_presence/gabon/ffg (accessed 26th January 2009).

ploys other means to the Indian Ocean, including a carrier group or a force projection group around a projection and command ship (B.P.C.).¹⁹

In **Senegal**, France has a joint H.Q. (with seventy-five personnel), 600 soldiers (the 23rd Marine Infantry Battalion, located in Bel-Air), 225 sailors and 300 airmen (including the 160 Air Base close to the Léopold Sédar Senghor). French forces in Senegal carry out three missions: contributing to the defence and territorial integrity of Senegal on the basis of Franco-Senegalese bilateral defence agreements, Franco-Senegalese military cooperation, and military support to the Economic Community of West African States in the framework of the African Standby Force.

France is in the process of setting up a military facility at **Abu Dhabi**, which will come online in late 2009 and will host approximately 500 people, including personnel from the three armed services and the Gendarmerie.²⁰ France also holds military facilities and personnel in current operational theatres, such as Afghanistan, Kosovo, Chad, Côte D'Ivoire, Lebanon, and so on.

Overseas military installations of the United Kingdom

Like many of France's bases, the military installations of the United Kingdom are mostly distributed on small or remote islands in the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. The British describe their largest and most significant facilities as 'Permanent Joint Operating Bases'.²¹ Smaller military facilities are located on other British overseas territories in the South Atlantic, as well as foreign countries in strategically critical locations, or nations with strong political connections to the United Kingdom.

Permanent Joint Operating Bases are located in Gibraltar, to the south of Spain; British Sovereign Base Areas, on the island of Cyprus; the Falkland Islands, in the South Atlantic; and Diego Garcia, an island within British Indian Ocean Territory, in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Their roles include the ongoing demonstration of British sovereignty over the territories on which they are located, the protection of national territory, and the projection of British power into the surrounding vicinity.

Sovereign Base Areas, Cyprus: The island of Cyprus is home to one of Britain's largest sovereign overseas installations, which is divided into two sections. One part is called the Western Sovereign Base Area, and the other is called the Eastern Sovereign Base Area, unsurprisingly. The western sector includes both Episkopi Cantonment, which serves as the command centre of the entire Cypriot facility, and the air station of R.A.F. Akrotiri, one of Britain's largest and busiest overseas air stations. The Royal Navy also maintains a small presence off the coast with two patrol boats. The Eastern Sovereign Base Areas include the British Army garrison of Dhekelia, housing a significant number of personnel. The eastern sector is also home to Ayios Nikolaos, a large British listening post run by the British Army on behalf of Government Communication Headquarters (G.C.H.Q.). The bases house a population of approximately 14,500, including 7,000 Cypriots, and 7,500 British military personnel and their families. 2,960 of these military personnel are permanently stationed on the islands.²²

Diego Garcia: Diego Garcia is situated in the middle of British Indian Ocean Territory, in the centre of the Indian Ocean. The islands are outside of the cyclone belt, meaning that the weather is less hostile than it oth-

¹⁹ See the website of the Ministère de la Défense:

http://www.defense.gouv.fr/ema/layout/set/wai/forces_interarmees/forces_de_presence/ocean_indien/zone_maritime_de_l_ocean_indien (29th January 2009).

²⁰ *La France crée une base militaire face à l'Iran*, *Le Figaro*, 15th January 2008. Available at:

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2008/01/16/01003-20080116ARTFIG00002-la-france-cree-une-base-militaire-face-a-l-iran.php> (accessed on 28th January 2009).

²¹ See the website of the Ministry of Defence:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/DoctrineOperationsandDiplomacy/PJHQ/PjobsIndex.htm> (accessed 11th January 2009).

²² Defence Analytical Services Agency, *Tri-Service Publication 6* (London: Defence Analytical Services Agency, 31st July 2007).

Available at: http://www.dasa.mod.uk/natstats/tsp6/tsp6_jan06.pdf (accessed 12th January 2009).

erwise could be—making the installation an ideal place for the establishment of a military presence. Most of the facilities on the island, including a large air station, are run by the U.S. Air Force, although the United Kingdom has continual access over the naval and air facilities, which are used as a staging post for projecting power into the Middle East. The installation is also an emergency landing ground for U.S. Space Shuttles, as well as a host to significant intelligence-gathering capabilities and a Global Positioning System relay station. The U.S. gained access to the facilities through an agreement reached with Britain in 1966, which is due to expire in 2036, although either party can opt out of the arrangement in 2016. Britain’s permanent commitment is rather limited: the installation houses approximately forty permanently stationed personnel and no permanently deployed British military units.²³

Falkland Islands: Situated on East Falkland, the British military installation on the Falkland Islands is very large. It is linked to Stanley, the Islands’ capital, by a purpose-built road. The showpiece is the air station of R.A.F. Mount Pleasant, which was completed in 1984 and became operation a year later. It has two hardened runways, 2,590 and 1,525 metres in length, respectively, meaning that it is capable of taking trans-Atlantic aircraft—including civilian aeroplanes (it is also the Islands’ main civilian airport). There is a deep-water naval station—called Mare Harbour—within the facility, which is frequented by vessels from the Royal Navy that are used to patrol the South Atlantic. HMS Endurance, Britain’s Antarctic survey vessel, also uses the installation during its expeditions. The number of personnel stationed permanently on the Islands is 340, although the number of temporary personnel based in the South Atlantic can exceed 1,200.²⁴

Gibraltar: 330 personnel are permanently stationed on Gibraltar.²⁵ The territory includes an air station, R.A.F. Gibraltar, as well as a Royal Navy dockyard. The base is frequently used as a staging post for British forces moving from the United Kingdom to the Mediterranean Sea and beyond, as well as for British naval vessels and aircraft moving down into the South Atlantic. The air station no longer houses any permanently stationed air squadrons, although there is a small detachment of military personnel. The Royal Navy has two small patrol boats stationed at the port, although far larger vessels frequent the dockyards, including aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines.

Other military installations

The United Kingdom also has a number of other military installations, although only a few of these provide much more than a limited regional presence. However, R.A.F. Ascension Island in the Atlantic Ocean, and the Sembawang dockyards in Singapore (although this facility is not owned by Britain), provide important staging posts and logistical support facilities for British and allied forces passing nearby. Britain also maintains a small garrison in Brunei and an outpost in Nepal, primarily for the recruitment of Gurkhas. Other small units and facilities—often used principally for training—are located in the U.S., Canada, Belize, and Kenya.²⁶

Basing as a tool for strategy: the French and British cases

While British and French military installations have tended towards differing areas of geographic concentration; and although British and French strategic doctrine has evolved at slightly different speeds, reflecting historical and political expediencies; there is some evidence of convergence—particularly after the 2008 French Strategic Defence Review. Britain consolidated its ‘forward presence’ during the 1990s, which accelerated after the 1998 British Strategic Defence Review, and included the consolidation of the country’s bases and the construction of a number of strategic projection vessels, not least helicopter carriers and amphibious assault ships. France is now undergoing a similar series of reforms.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See: Rest of the World Core Sites. Defence Estates, *Defence Estates Development Plan* (London: Ministry of Defence, 2008), p. B-7. Available at: http://www.defence-estates.mod.uk/publications/dedp/DEDP_Annex_B.pdf (accessed 6th January 2009). The R.A.F. has a training unit at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada to operate Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. For further information, see the R.A.F.’s website: <http://www.raf.mod.uk/currentoperations/opsnevada.cfm> (accessed 6th January 2009).

France's 'forward presence' and its basing sub-strategy are tools of the National Security Strategy as laid out in the 2008 Defence White Paper, one that turns around the five core strategic functions of knowledge and anticipation, prevention, deterrence, protection and intervention.²⁷ Central to this strategy is the idea that a more efficient functional and geographical concentration of French assets will better deliver the five so-called strategic functions in the changing strategic environment. Fighting geographical dispersion abroad and functional compartmentalisation at home therefore becomes the new mantra of France's 'forward presence'. At the *functional* level, the White Paper asserts that military cooperation and coordination in the realm of internal and civil security are insufficiently synchronised, given the fact that the current security challenges are more and more a mixture that cuts across both realms.²⁸ At the *geographical* level it is the so-called 'geographic axis of strategic priority' ('from Dakar to Peshawar') that provides the framework for a 'forward presence' that must be comprehensive in nature, that is, it must take stock of the acknowledged interdependence at the functional level—that is to say, between internal and external security and between civilian and military security. Such a comprehensive approach to 'forward presence' provides the basis for three of the five core strategic functions laid out in the White Paper, namely knowledge and anticipation, prevention and intervention. Not surprisingly, central to this approach are the Mediterranean Sea and northern Africa.

Both the basing and other strategic capabilities that make up France's 'forward presence' (i.e. space-based assets, strategic sealift and airlift, etc.) are currently under review, as the country tries to adapt to the new strategic diagnosis laid out in the 2008 White Paper on Defense and National Security.²⁹ Whereas the 2008 White Paper does not go very far into the specifics of France's 'forward presence'—for example, it leaves open the issue of base restructuring at both home and abroad and remains silent on key procurement projects such as the planned construction of a second aircraft carrier—it does more than just setting out the framework which informs the important decisions concerning France's future 'forward presence' (i.e. the reference to the so-called *geographic axis of strategic priority*). Arguably, it is the White Paper's calls to reform the country's 'forward presence' in the African continent that provides the blueprint for rationalisation of basing through concentration:

France does not have a vocation for being permanently militarily present in the same bases. France will, therefore, proceed to the progressive conversion of her former holdings in Africa, reorganising her means around two dominating logistical poles of cooperation and instruction, one for each front, Atlantic and eastern, of the continent, while preserving a prevention capacity in the Sahel area.³⁰

An important reform advanced by the White Paper includes the intensification of France's involvement in the Persian Gulf littorals, shaped by the growing significance of the region to the European economy.³¹ The new base in Abu Dhabi, while a key asset for guaranteeing France's presence in the resource-rich Persian Gulf region, has a broader geographical and functional meaning. That is to say, it will help to extend French power into the Indian Ocean, a region that has taken on new significance for France. According to François Heisbourg, Special Counsellor to the *Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique* and one of the authors of the 2008 White Paper: 'the new base in Abu Dhabi, combined with existing facilities in Djibouti and Reunion Island, gives the French military a "string of pearls" with which to influence events in the (Indian Ocean) region.'³²

Finally, whereas East Asia's visible absence from France's 'geographic axis of strategic priority' might appear striking to some—even more so given that the White Paper describes the region as the emerging economic and geopolitical epicentre of the coming decades—it is important to note that France's new basing design is not unaware of its rising importance. For Thérèse Delpech, Director of Strategic Affairs at the Atomic Energy Commission, and another one of the authors of the White Paper, the 'geographic axis' reflects 'the

²⁷ Défense et Sécurité Nationale, *Le Livre Blanc*, La Documentation Française (Paris, June 2008), pp. 127-199.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²⁹ For a thorough analysis of the White Paper see the discussion meeting with François Heisbourg at the International Institute of Strategic Studies: <http://www.iiss.org/events-calendar/2008-events-archive/june-2008/discussion-meeting-francois-heisbourg/>. See also: Tertrais, B., *The French White Paper on Defence and National Security: Towards a Stronger and more Streamlined Force*, ARI 89 (Madrid: Real Insitituto Elcano, 2008).

³⁰ *Livre Blanc*, pp. 156-157.

³¹ *Livre Blanc*, p. 157.

³² Quoted in Moran, M., *Background: France's new military vision* (Washington: Council on Foreign Relations, 24th June 2008).

most direct threat against French interests while being realist from the viewpoint of (French) capabilities'.³³ And François Heisbourg has reminds us that the consequences of a conflict in East Asia would be major for France, which obviously has a strategic interest in the region, as the space post in Korun (Guyana) shows.³⁴

The location of Britain's overseas military installations and the projection of its 'forward presence' is a product of historical circumstances, which have helpfully merged with current operational and geopolitical requirements. Most of Britain's current installations were once the imperial strongholds or nodes undergirding the British Empire, an attribute that applies particularly to Gibraltar, Cyprus and the Falkland Islands. For example, while the strategic importance of the location of the facilities on Gibraltar have declined since World War Two, the installation still holds a commanding position over the western entrance of the Mediterranean Sea, and provides an excellent staging post for military deployments into the North African littoral and the South Atlantic.

Cyprus' geostrategic location, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea—only a few hundred kilometres from the Suez Canal—make it particularly valuable asset in the pursuit of British interests in the wider Middle East and the Red Sea. This was a key reason behind the British decision to retain the Sovereign Base Areas in 1960, following the Treaty of Establishment, which rendered Cyprus as a sovereign state. Britain also has a treaty with the Cypriot government, allowing complete air access to the installations, which are frequently used as a staging post to project military equipment further afield, into the Middle East, Afghanistan and British territorial holdings in the Indian Ocean. Similarly, due to their imposing reach over the geographically significant Cape of Good Hope and the only S.L.o.C. between the Atlantic Ocean and the South Pacific, the Falkland Islands have a long reputation as a key maritime node. The Islands were home to a British naval station and coal store during the latter age of sail and particularly during the coal-fired battleship era. After the opening of the Panama Canal and the end of the World Wars, however, the base lost much of its significance and was run down, containing only a nominal garrison of Royal Marines by the early 1980s. But the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982 changed the strategic significance of the military facilities on the Islands, leading the British government to dramatically upgrade the airfield, the naval station and the barracks, to the benefit of the islanders, as well as British interests in the region. In turn, this elevated the importance of Gibraltar and Ascension Island, which became a series of 'strategic trampolines' in order to reach the Falklands themselves.

Current operational doctrine does not foresee any significant changes to the British 'forward presence', and particularly to the situation of the current Permanent Joint Operating Bases. While a number of smaller facilities have been opened in countries where there is a British military deployment or commitment (i.e. Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, or Iraq), these merely reinforce the existing infrastructure.

³³ 'Livre Blanc sur la defense, deux des auterurs s'expliquent', *Le Monde*, 19th June 2008. Available at: http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30J&objet_id=1040686 (accessed on 28th January 2009).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Future geostrategic and asymmetric security considerations

A running theme throughout this Briefing Paper is that maritime security is a pre-requisite for international trade and, consequently, the well being of the international system. The importance of maritime security only increases in an age of mounting economic globalisation, when ninety percent of E.U. trade depends on the sea. If the E.U. is to live up to its promise of being a stakeholder of the international system, active participation in securing the S.L.o.C.s and the global maritime domain that sustains them are a must. But in order to do this, Europeans must first know from where the likely threats and challenges will emerge in the years ahead.

Geostrategic considerations

Two years ago, Paul Kennedy, the renowned geopolitical historian, published a commentary in the *International Herald Tribune* lamenting the degraded state of European maritime reach. What he found particularly alarming was the rapid ascent of Asian naval power, particularly that of China, Japan and South Korea. To contemporary Europeans, tucked away on the extreme northwestern promontory of Eurasia, it sometimes seems as if such developments are either remote or of only supplementary significance. This is compounded by European navies' fall from the public eye—even in traditional maritime powers like the United Kingdom. Long gone are the days when the names of particular battleships and naval commanders were commonly known household names. As Lee Willett, Head of the Maritime Security Programme at the Royal United Services Institute in London, warns:

The out-of-sight nature of naval forces, and the fact that their effectiveness is gauged in no small part by how they ensure that things do not happen, makes “sea-blindedness”—a term used to describe the apparent political and public lack of awareness of the importance of the use of the sea—somewhat inevitable and certainly difficult to overcome.³⁵

Yet Kennedy, having written extensively on geopolitical transformations in his magnum opus, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, understands squarely the critical role played by the oceans in contemporary geopolitical affairs. It is worth citing him at some length:

To world historians, there is nothing more fascinating than to notice a coincidence or a disjuncture across space but within roughly the same time...There is occurring, most interestingly—and not covered by any of the world's main media outlets—another remarkable global disjuncture at work. And it involves...massive differences in the assumptions of European nations and Asian nations about the significance of sea power, today and into the future.

Let me make clear that I am not talking here about American attitudes regarding naval power. I am also not talking about Vladimir Putin's Russia...[which] truly believes that it has to be strong at sea.

So, too, do the governments of the fast-growing economies of East and South Asia...Right now, for example, South Korea is constructing three large destroyers that displace more than 7,000 tons and possess extremely powerful armaments.

...But, as the Koreans point out, Japan is in the midst of an even greater naval build-up...The Japanese, however, will point to the extremely rapid build-up of the Chinese Navy, which already deploys 71 destroyers and frigates, not to mention 58 submarines...Yet the Chinese naval build-up is only in its early stages, like, say, the U.S. Navy was in the 1890s.

³⁵ Willett, L., ‘British Defence and Security Policy: The Maritime Contribution’, *Occasional Paper* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2nd June 2008), p. 6. Available at: http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/BDSP_MaritimeContribution.pdf (accessed 18th December 2008).

But let us return to the European scene. Here the trend seems to be in the opposite direction, with naval budgets being held down and...actual fleet sizes being reduced...Nobody in Europe, as far as I can see, is paying any attention to the naval arms race in Asia. And nobody in Asia is paying any attention to the severe retrenchments of maritime power that are going on in Europe.³⁶

Europeans should be deeply disturbed by this growing mismatch. The E.U. is first and foremost a maritime power; many of its Member States are among the most sea-dependent in the world. Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and France all require secure and unfettered access to the oceans for trade and the import of raw materials. So the geopolitical changes underway in Asia—including the rapid growth of China; the emergence of India; the transformation of Japan and South Korea; and the resurgence of Russia—should be acknowledged and countered. Not only should Europeans observe the maritime rise of these Asian powers, but also the rapid expansion of their geopolitical reach. They are building considerable constellations of overseas military installations, above all naval stations. China, in particular, has under construction an extensive line of ‘lily pads’ that will connect its mainland seaboard with the Middle East and East Africa.³⁷ These facilities have been described as Beijing’s ‘String of Pearls’.³⁸ India too has begun to take greater interest in foreign bases, having built a listening post in Madagascar and an air station in Tajikistan, as well as having been suspected of planning with the Vietnamese to open a deepwater harbour in Cam Rahn Bay.³⁹ But that is not all: flush with revenues from oil and gas sales, Russia has been busily spreading its tentacles too, reopening a Soviet-era naval station in Syria, while sniffing around in Libya and Yemen for the opening of new facilities there as well.⁴⁰ The potential impact of climate change in opening up the Arctic Ocean could also provide Russia with an even more readily accessible area for a new round of geopolitical struggle, particularly given the region’s rich mineral resources and potential for a shorter shipping route between East Asia and Northern Europe.

Indeed, so active have these three powers been that it would not be extreme to claim that they have underway a series of geostrategies predicated on mutual encirclement. China is trying to ‘break out’ of American, Japanese and South Korean encirclement in East Asia, put in place during the Cold War; China is also attempting to hedge against India, by ensnaring it with its so-called ‘String of Pearls’, which curl around the sub-continent like a snake;⁴¹ India is trying to counter-encircle China, by building-up its relationships with countries on the Indian Ocean littoral and pushing up into the South China Sea; and Russia is juggling its holdings in Central Asia, while simultaneously attempting to contain European and American advances in what was formerly the Soviet empire.⁴²

But why should this matter? In short, because it has the potential to produce an extremely volatile and unpredictable atmosphere in a region of critical geopolitical interest to the E.U., namely the southern littoral underbelly of the Eurasia: the rimland. It is along this route that the E.U.’s most important trade route and S.L.o.C. runs, connecting the European homeland with the rising Asian economies, and their large commercial ports. This S.L.o.C. runs through three of the world’s most important and potentially explosive ‘strategic chokepoints’, including the Suez Canal and the Bab-el-Mandeb, the Strait of Malacca, and critically, the

³⁶ Kennedy, P., ‘The rise and fall of navies’, *International Herald Tribune*, 5th April 2007. Available at: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/04/05/opinion/edkennedy.php> (accessed 2nd January 2009).

³⁷ Holmes, J. R. and Yoshihara, T., ‘China’s Naval Ambitions in the Indian Ocean’, in *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, June 2008, pp. 367-394.

³⁸ Pehrson, C. J., ‘String of Pearls: Meeting the challenge of China’s rising power across the Asian littoral’, *Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, July 2006).

³⁹ See: Scott, D., ‘India’s Drive for a “Blue Water” Navy’, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, Winter 2007, pp. 1-42 and Scott, D., ‘The Great Power “Great Game” between India and China: “The Logic of Geography”’, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 13, 2008, pp. 1-26.

⁴⁰ For Syria, see: Macleod, H., ‘From Syrian fishing port to naval power base: Russia moves into the Mediterranean’, *The Guardian*, 8th October 2008. For Libya, see: ‘Gaddafi offers to host Russian naval base’, *France24*, 31st October 2008. Available at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20081031-kadhafi-Muammar-Gaddafi-offers-host-russian-naval-base-libya> (accessed 12th November 2008). For Yemen, see: ‘Russia could resume naval presence in Yemen’, *NOVOSTI: Russian News and Information Agency*, 16th October 2008.

⁴¹ See, for example: Raman, B., ‘Gwadar, Hambantota and Sitwe: China’s Strategic Triangle’, *Paper No. 2158*, South Asia Analysis Group, 6th March 2007. Available at: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers22%5Cpaper2158.html> (accessed 8th November 2008).

⁴² For an analysis of these encirclements, see: Rogers, ‘From Suez to Shanghai: The European Union and Eurasian maritime security’.

Strait of Hormuz. Europeans have already witnessed the chaos caused by a mishmash of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden during the latter part of 2008—how severe would the consequences be if one of those strategic chokepoints, least of all Hormuz, was closed through hostile foreign action or a conflict between two third parties? The Strait of Malacca is a case in point.⁴³ Given that it is only 2.5 kilometres wide and twenty-five metres deep at its narrowest and shallowest point to the south of Singapore, some observers believe that a single sunken supertanker or large commercial vessel could have an enormous downstream impact.⁴⁴ In short, the consequences would be truly devastating for European consumers and industrialists alike.

Asymmetric security considerations

The dynamics of geopolitical competition produce, arguably, the greatest existential threat to the overall maritime security of the E.U. and that of the world system. Indeed, the growing level of geopolitical competition in Asia might increase the degree and number of asymmetric maritime security threats to the European homeland. Above all, these asymmetric threats include terrorism, piracy, illegal immigration and other forms of organised crime. Among these threats, climate change could behave as a ‘threat multiplier’. In this regard, as the December 2008 *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* points out: ‘natural disasters, environmental degradation and competition for resources...can also lead to disputes over trade routes, maritime zones and resources previously inaccessible’.⁴⁵

Cooperation along the Suez to Shanghai axis has already proven a fruitful and effective confidence building measure. For instance, E.U. Member States have coordinated efforts with the U.S., some African countries, Russia, China, Japan or India in different enterprises aimed at fighting terrorism in the Mediterranean Sea (Operation Active Endeavour); or piracy in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.⁴⁶ International cooperation also offers the potential for enormous added value in the fight against drugs and other forms of illicit trafficking (i.e. human beings, small weapons, minerals, etc.) that might menace maritime security.

The considerable stability of the North Sea neighbourhood and the wider North-Atlantic area put a high premium in the security of the Mediterranean Sea and that of the African littoral, this being central to European homeland security (particularly in the fields of illegal immigration and the traffic against narcotics)⁴⁷. A more coordinated use of Member States’ civil and military installations and facilities along the southern periphery of the E.U. mainland (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Gibraltar, Greece, etc.) would prove an important asset in the crucial enterprise of securing the basin of the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, the forward possessions of some E.U. Member States in the African continent (i.e. the Spanish enclaves in Ceuta and Melilla) or in the Atlantic seaboard of the African continent (i.e. the Canary Islands) could play the role of a functional and geographical *bridge*. Not only could they contribute to existing homeland security tasks (i.e. fight against immigration, drug trafficking, etc.), but also function as an intermediate element in the E.U.’s existing and potential ‘forward presence’ system—facilitating European intervention in the African continent, for example, and fostering security cooperation with African partners (prevention).

The fight against non-traditional threats such as terrorism or illicit trafficking (small arms and light weapons, human beings, drugs, minerals, etc.) illustrates well the extent to which the acknowledged interdependence between the internal and external dimensions of security play into the maritime realm. In this regard, European maritime security can only come through greater internal coordination, not only at the E.U. level

⁴³ For an analysis of the Strait of Malacca’s importance, see: Zubir, M., *The strategic value of the Strait of Malacca* (Kuala Lumpur: Maritime Institute of Malaysia, 2004). Available at: <http://www.mima.gov.my/mima/htmls/papers/pdf/mokhzani/strategic-value.pdf> (accessed 2nd January 2008).

⁴⁴ Evers, H-D. and Gerke, S., ‘The Strategic Importance of the Straits of Malacca for World Trade and Regional Development’, *Working Paper Series No. 17* (Bonn: University of Bonn, 2006), p. 7. Available at: http://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/zef_wp/WP17_Evers-Gerke.pdf (accessed 2nd January).

⁴⁵ European Council, *The Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ On Operation Active Endeavour see: http://www.nato.int/issues/active_endeavour/index.html (accessed 23rd January 2009). On the joined efforts in the fight against piracy in the Gulf of Aden see:

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/18/world/asia/18patrols.html?_r=1&ref=world (accessed 23rd January 2009). For a good roundup of E.U. naval cooperation to date, see: Germond, B., ‘Multilateral Military Cooperation and its Challenges: The Case of European Naval Operations in the Wider Mediterranean Area’, *International Relations*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 173-191.

⁴⁷ See: Assembly of the Western European Union, *Surveillance of Europe’s maritime frontiers—reply to the annual report of the Council* (Paris: Assembly of the Western European Union, 3 December 2007). Available at: http://www.assembly-weu.org/en/documents/sessions_ordinaires/rpt/2007/1986.php (accessed 29th January 2009).

(between the Commission—notably FRONTEX—and the Council), but also within Member States (navy, police, coast guard), among themselves and between Member States and the Union, as noted by the 2008 *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy*, but also by leading Member States who have put special emphasis on the need to fight ‘compartmentalisation at home’ (see above).⁴⁸ Both inter-agency and interstate cooperation would play in favour of a much-improved *enhanced maritime picture* and *enhanced maritime awareness*.⁴⁹ More generally, this would not only result in a considerable asset in the fight against asymmetric threats but also add up to the confidence building enterprise required for the prevention of more traditional threats to maritime security, both in the neighbourhood and on the high seas.

⁴⁸ Note also in this regard the U.S. *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (jointly produced by the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Coast Guard) to overcome inter-agency obstacles. See: Conway, J. T., Roughead, G. and Allen, T. W., *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (Washington: U.S. Navy, U.S. Marines and the U.S. Coast Guard, 2008).

⁴⁹ Bruckhert, D., Fournier, M. and Pasco, X., ‘Further steps towards a European Maritime Policy: The case of earth observation from space to support maritime surveillance’, John Chapman (ed.), *The Questionmarks Over Europe’s Maritime Security* (Brussels: Security and Defence Agenda, 2007), pp. 6-8. Available at: http://www.securitydefenceagenda.org/Portals/7/Reports/2007/Final_Discussion_Paper.pdf (accessed 5th January 2009).

Conclusions and recommendations

This Briefing Paper has argued that the E.U. Member States' military installations—mainly French and British—would provide a formidable asset for the geographical and functional expansion of E.U. Grand Strategy. While modest by U.S. standards, the French and British bases stretch out across the geopolitical zones most likely to affect European interests in the twenty-first century. Of course, the level of the challenge presented to the E.U. and its Member States in the coming years will have some influence in shaping the evolution of the British and French 'forward presence'. France has long placed far greater emphasis on its access to operational military installations since the end of the Second World War, whereas Britain has tended to concentrate its resources into large Permanent Joint Operating Bases, while investing in Strategic Projection Vessels that are mobile and can operate almost anywhere in the world. Both approaches are a consequence of differing historical experiences and slightly different geostrategic perspectives, but they are beginning to converge—especially geographically.

As the world moves towards a dynamic multipolar system and U.S. relative maritime power declines as powers like China and India rise, there is a growing and compelling need for Europeans to take responsibility for the S.L.o.C.s that link them to the farthest corners of the world, particularly those most vital to European trade and security. Europeans will therefore need to take much greater interest in their own defence, not only in the Mediterranean Sea and its littoral approaches, but also further afield. Keeping track of the naval ambitions of Eurasian countries, whose foreign policies could potentially run against the grain of the E.U.'s, is no longer an option. This does not mean that great power confrontation is inevitable, but rather that increasing geopolitical competition could exacerbate or create new asymmetric security threats to European interests. The growing cost of sustaining a comprehensive maritime infrastructure therefore calls for further E.U. co-operation to 'Europeanise' the Anglo-French 'forward presence' and undergird E.U. maritime security more effectively, while simultaneously protecting European S.L.o.C.s and maintaining an extended E.U. 'forward presence' overseas.

If or as the E.U. develops into a global power, it will be confronted by five overlapping geographical objectives, which means it will have to merge its existing continental agenda into a maritime one, while simultaneously integrating this with reformed instruments and institutions:

(1) The Member States will have to utilise their existing Homeland Installations in order to protect and defend E.U. coastlines, airspace, territory, and even the space above the European continent. We propose that a 'Special Representative for Geostrategy' be appointed by the High Representative to provide geostrategic guidance in the formulation of European foreign and security policy. Among the tasks of this Special Representative would be the production of a detailed overview of the existing assets operated by Europeans and how they might be integrated into a comprehensive E.U. 'forward presence'. This could flow from a pan-European strategic defence review, or form a component of permanent structured cooperation once the Treaty of Lisbon is ratified. A significant part of this review should concentrate on 'maritime strategy', which should bring together strategists, experts, and personnel from the central E.U. institutions and Member States, in order to analyse the best way to take advantage of the existing capability and institutional assets in favour of a European maritime approach. Moreover, as the E.U. assumes a wider role in the security and defence of the entire bloc, institutional reforms will be required so that it can handle the new and demanding tasks. One of these may be for Britain and France to transfer the maintenance and upkeep of their military installations to a central institution, funded by all of the Member States. Alternatively, linking the E.U. 'forward presence' system with the nascent but growing planning and command institutions in Brussels, and also the Satellite Centre in Torrejon, could produce greater synergies.

(2) In order to realise the objective as specified in the *European Security Strategy* (both the 2003 and 2008 versions), it is elemental that the Member States *eliminate all threats* to the E.U. and its interests from within the eastern and southern neighbourhoods. With this region secured, European influence can then be projected further afield, not least into the Indian Ocean. Inevitably, this will require the deepening of security partnerships with coastal countries like Georgia, Ukraine, Lebanon, Israel and some of the North African states, which sit on geopolitical gateways into Central Asia and Africa and their considerable mineral wealth. It might also require a significant boosting of the E.U.'s 'forward presence' (espe-

cially civilian services and police forces), and the granting of E.U. security guarantees to unstable or volatile countries, not least to discourage potential competitors from taking hostile actions or stirring-up regional disorder.

(3) The Member States will have to use their Homeland Installations on the periphery of the European continent to maintain complete dominance over the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and the North Atlantic. The ‘Northern Dimension’ of E.U. Grand Strategy will also necessitate greater attention towards the Arctic Ocean, particularly if the region’s rich mineral wealth is contested as the seas become more navigable due to the impact of climate change.⁵⁰ Command over the maritime approaches to the E.U. will effectively stall and prevent many of the future geopolitical and asymmetric threats to E.U. social, political and economic cohesion. This will require a high degree of aerial surveillance and the deployment of patrol boats, which could operate readily out of many of the already-existing Homeland Installations along the European coast. As it is already extensive, it is *unlikely* that Europeans would have to improve their ‘forward presence’ in this part of the world, although an integrated E.U. Coast Guard, modelled on the U.S. or Japanese Coast Guards, could provide a useful endpoint to which Europeans could work. Freeing up European naval vessels from everyday policing duties would enable their better deployment elsewhere, not least in regions further from home, where their decidedly threatening presence could be brought more effectively to bear.

(4) With the European homeland and neighbourhoods secure, the Member States will then have the task of pressing E.U. maritime power further out and along the Red Sea and deep into the Indian Ocean—all the way to the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Malacca. This is the *only way* we will be able to guarantee the safety of our foremost S.L.o.C. and protect our increasingly precious energy shipments of oil and liquid natural gas from the Middle East. In this sense, the E.U. must ask itself whether the security of Europeans is really being served by E.S.D.P. operations in the Congo, or whether E.U. military instruments, political resolve and civilian and financial assistance could be better deployed elsewhere (such as Somalia). As we have seen—and as the Map shows clearly—Britain and France already have under their belts a range of Military Stations and Forward Presence Bases, which link the E.U. to the Indian Ocean. In fact, when taken together, the French and British holdings complement one another decisively, with the former’s giving access to North and East Africa and the Middle East, and the latter’s opening up the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, where Asian naval competition is most likely. While Europeans must pay careful attention to the naval build-ups in Asia, they should only do so as part of a wider set of maritime objectives. Whether or not we are currently prepared for a conflict between two third parties in Asia is supplemental to our wider need to project power and sustain a constant and sizeable presence in a region of absolutely *critical importance* to the flow of European energy and trade. Instead, the E.U. should work to bolster its political visibility in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The E.U.’s anti-piracy mission, Operation Atalanta, is certainly a start, but the Member States should work on conducting regular naval exercises in the region, and agree to open their military installations up for common E.U. use. Similarly to the ‘Erasmus’ Military Programme, the British and French could open their overseas infrastructure to ‘familiarise’ other Member States’ armed forces with existing facilities, by sending E.U. military personnel to garrison bases like Diego Garcia, Reunion and Djibouti. This would help contribute to the development of the maritime dimension of the emerging European strategic culture.

(5) Working with the U.S. and potentially other major actors with interests in maintaining the stability and cohesion of the world trading system, the E.U. must prevent any budding aggressor from usurping the democratic world’s leading geopolitical position. We—Europeans—must therefore sustain our naval pre-eminence with new shipbuilding programmes coordinated at the E.U. level. Britain, in particular, has under construction two new 65,000 tonne ‘pocket supercarriers’. The sheer size and capability of these vessels will provide the Royal Navy—and potentially, the E.U.—with a greatly enhanced expeditionary and

⁵⁰ For example, other than Russia’s recent claims on parts of the Arctic, Canada has also re-asserted its sovereignty by opening a naval station at Nanisivik on the North Western Passage and a garrison in Resolute Bay. See: ‘Harper announces northern deep-sea port, training site’, *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, 11th August 2007. Available at: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2007/08/10/port-north.html> (accessed 26th January 2009).

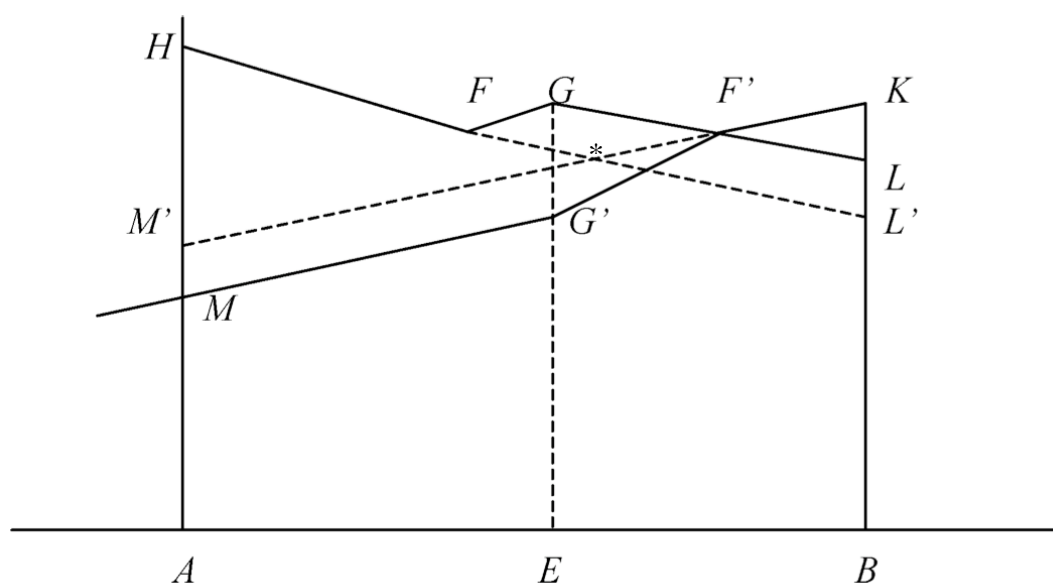
maritime power projection capability.⁵¹ Spain and Italy are bringing online a new generation of amphibious assault vessels and aircraft carriers, while France is still awaiting a decision—to be taken sometime between 2011 and 2012—to build a second aircraft carrier using British designs. If the carrier were put on order, it could enhance and potentially make permanent naval cooperation with the United Kingdom, while furnishing the E.U. with another major maritime asset. And if the vessel were able to transform into an amphibious assault ship (which the British have planned for their own carriers), it would further increase flexibility, interoperability, and afford the E.U. a truly valuable capability.

To sum up, it is the contention of this Briefing Paper that the Member States of the E.U. would benefit from placing their overseas military installations and maritime power at the crux of the European Security and Defence Policy. Indeed, it is a serious possibility that our failure to do so could lead to a severe challenge to the vital interests of the E.U. and all of its Member States in the years ahead.

⁵¹ 'Pocket supercarrier' would be an apt term for these new vessels. Weighing 65,000 tonnes, they are considerably larger than a conventional aircraft carrier (approx 30,000-50,000 tonnes), but considerably smaller than the largest U.S. supercarriers (90,000-100,000 tonnes).

Appendix

Diagram 1—The Loss of Strength Gradient and the utility of overseas bases



In Diagram 1, *A* and *B* represent two rival states. *H* represents the combined strength of state *A*, which declines from its capital city, signified by the vertical line linking *A* to *H*. Like almost any state, the capital city is usually the locus of organised power, and this is no different for state *A*. Likewise, *K* represents the power of state *B*, and the line running between the two denotes the capital city of state *B*. In our scenario, state *A* is automatically larger and stronger than state *B*, marked by the height of the line *A/H*. Under these circumstances, the power of state *A* would gradually descend with geographic distance, represented by the solid and dashed lines *H/L'*, which symbolises the Loss of Strength Gradient (L.S.G.) in action. In the same way, state *B*'s power would descend with geographic distance along the solid and dashed lines *K/M'*, which run in the opposite direction.

Point * represents the position where state *A* and *B* are of equal power; everything to the left would tend to come under state *A*'s 'sphere of influence', whereas everything to the right would be within the 'sphere of influence' of state *B*. So how could state *A* reduce the impact of the L.S.G.? In short, by constructing a military installation at point *G*. This base would have both an offensive and a defensive character. Regarding the former, it would inflate state *A*'s 'on-the-spot' strength, particularly between *F/G*, then raising it above what it would have otherwise been everywhere beyond *G*. Regarding the latter—that is, the base's defensive capability—*G* actively reduces state *B*'s power. Rather than declining gradually, represented by *K/M'*, the strength of state *B* now descends far more rapidly, marked by the solid lines *K/F'/G'/M*. This is because 'the base requires an effort to circumvent, and this reduces *B*'s strength at all points beyond it; the reduction, in fact, probably begins as soon as the effective range of the base is reached at *F'*'.⁵² So the 'sphere of influence' of state *A* is greatly enhanced, whereas that of state *B* is greatly compressed. If a weaker state existed at position *E*, it would come very much under the political sway of state *A*, whereas state *B* might have had some impact prior to the construction of state *A*'s military installation at point *G*.

⁵² Boulding, *Conflict and Defence*, p. 263.

Table 1—Key overseas military installations and their functions

Legend

1 = Principal role 2 = Secondary role 3 = Tertiary role

Blue = French Red = British Yellow = Spanish

Location	Homeland Installation	Military Station	Forward Presence Base
Ascension Island *		1	2
Antilles *^		2	1
Brunei			1
Canary Isles **		2	1
Cyprus Areas *^	3	1	2
Diego Garcia *^		1	2
Djibouti^		1	2
Falkland Islands *^			1
French Guiana *^			1
French Polynesia *^			1
Gabon			1
Gibraltar *^	2	1	3
French Indian Ocean *^			1
New Caledonia *^		2	1
Reunion (S.I.O.) *^			1
Senegal			1

* Located on sovereign territory

^ Can support all forces—naval, air and ground