



Executive Summary

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STEPPING UP: BURDEN SHARING BY NATO'S NEWEST MEMBERS

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has always emphasized collective action and burden sharing among allied members. While allies contribute to NATO using various instruments of national power (diplomatic, intelligence, informational, military, and economic), not all allies contribute at the same level. This book focuses on the contributions of new NATO members in two areas: defense expenditures and troop contributions. While new Alliance members often lack the capability to contribute on par with existing members, they often make up for this with a greater willingness to burden share through robust troop contributions.

Defense expenditures have been the traditional measure of burden sharing in the Alliance and a frequent point of contention between the United States and its European allies. Defense expenditures are important in that they impact both military capability and readiness. Yet, very few members' defense expenditures currently meet or exceed NATO's standard of 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Fiscal constraints and competing domestic demands often limit a state's ability to meet the NATO standards. However, while levels of defense expenditure vary from state to state, there are three commonalities. First, country size and wealth are important determinants of defense expenditures as they directly relate to the ability of states to raise and sustain military forces. Second, NATO member defense expenditures are not correlated to Russian defense expenditures in the post-Cold War period. Finally, defense expenditures of new NATO members, as a percentage of GDP, are relatively higher than older members.

Contributions to NATO missions are perhaps a more important and less studied aspect of burden sharing. In the various NATO missions from 1999 to 2009, larger NATO states provided a significantly greater proportion of the air power during NATO missions. This phenomenon was true in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and, most recently, in Libya. This disparity not only reflects the nonpublic nature of air power, but also an implicit division of labor within the Alliance. This division of labor is manifested in NATO's attempts to maximize the comparative advantages of individual members during force planning and generation processes.

Another interesting finding is that new NATO members contributed troops at a relatively higher level than older members during NATO's International Security Assistance Force mission and the U.S.-led Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. These contributions suggest the successful socialization of new NATO members into NATO burden sharing norms. This is an interesting finding. Most new NATO members are more focused on territorial defense than their older NATO counterparts. Yet, these same countries were willing to deploy their most capable forces thousands of miles from their homeland in support of missions that did not provide a direct security benefit to them.

The relative burden sharing levels between new and old NATO members also varies, depending on the degree of private benefits attributable to a particular mission and the capability of the states to contribute. Immediately after enlargement, older member's troop contributions to the NATO missions, Stabilization Force in Bosnia and the Kosovo Force, exceeded those of new members. This disparity was

largely attributable to the greater military capability of older members; during this time frame, new members were focused on transitioning to democratic political systems and Western-style military systems. However, as the military capabilities of the new members increased, they were more willing and able to assume greater Alliance burdens.

As the Alliance seeks to meet the increasingly complex security environment with declining resources, burden sharing will remain a relevant topic. In addition to encouraging older NATO members to increase their defense capabilities, the United States and NATO should continue to support new members as they continue to increase their capabilities. Understanding the nature and importance of their contributions to NATO will help the Alliance remain relevant and ready.

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