

Crisis in Atlantic Alliance: Has Peace Activism Weakened NATO?

Peace Culture Weakens NATO: The US is becoming increasingly frustrated with Europe

By [Global Research](#)

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Editor's Note

The following article published in The Australian acknowledges the surge in NATO troop deployments to Afghanistan, while tacitly deploring the "wave of pacifism" in several countries of the European Union, which has led to a reduction in troop deployments by several NATO countries.

What is required, according to The Australian, quoting Defense Secretary Robert Gates is to promote a "military culture" with a view to encouraging Western European NATO countries to send more troops to Afghanistan.

Michel Chossudovsky, February 28, 2010

Peace Culture Weakens NATO: The US is becoming increasingly frustrated with Europe

NATO'S recent deployment of 20,000 extra troops to Afghanistan was vital to the allied war effort. Despite the increase, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates has identified a serious problem when he refers to a "crisis" in the NATO alliance. He is concerned about the wave of pacifism sweeping Europe's political leadership, which, he says, makes it difficult for the US to operate and fight with its continental partners.

With the exception of the British, the French and to a lesser extent the Dutch, who are unfortunately withdrawing their 2000 soldiers from Afghanistan, the remaining NATO nations, in general, have lost the facility to fight. On the ground, their efforts do not match the heavy fighting of Australia's contingent in Afghanistan, for instance, especially the SAS and commandos. Some of NATO's newer members, formerly part of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe have retained a sense of military culture, but most, except Poland, are insufficiently equipped to play significant frontline roles.

Under-spending on defence is a part of the problem, with equipment shortages hampering the war effort in Afghanistan. Fewer than a fifth of NATO's 28 member nations are meeting their commitment to spend 2 per cent of gross domestic product on defence. Nor are foreign and strategic issues afforded sufficient priority by the European Union, which last year

appointed a relatively obscure and inexperienced British politician, Baroness Catherine Ashton, to the new position of EU foreign affairs chief.

In Western Europe's prosperous decades of peace that followed World War II, there was little reason to promote a military culture. In a world threatened by terror and radical Islam, however, that lack of fighting spirit, as Dr Gates says, "has gone from a blessing in the 20th century to an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st". It is not realistic, long-term, for Western security to rest solely on the military might of the US.

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