



Why Europe Won't Fight

by Patrick J. Buchanan ([more by this author](#))

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"No one will say this publicly, but the true fact is we are all talking about our exit strategy from Afghanistan. We are getting out. It may take a couple of years, but we are all looking to get out."

Thus did a "senior European diplomat" confide to *The New York Times* during Obama's trip to Strasbourg.

Europe is bailing out on us. Afghanistan is to be America's war.

During what the *Times* called a "fractious meeting," NATO agreed to send 3,000 troops to provide security during the elections and 2,000 to train Afghan police. Thin gruel beside Obama's commitment to double U.S. troop levels to 68,000.

Why won't Europe fight?

Because Europe sees no threat from Afghanistan and no vital interest in a faraway country where NATO Europeans have not fought since the British Empire folded its tent long ago.

Al-Qaida did not attack Europe out of Afghanistan. America was attacked. Because, said Osama bin Laden in his "declaration of war," America was occupying the sacred soil of Saudi Arabia, choking Muslim Iraq to death and providing Israel with the weapons to repress the Palestinians.

As Europe has no troops in Saudi Arabia, is exiting Iraq and backs a Palestinian state, Europeans figure they are less likely to be attacked than if they are fighting and killing Muslims in Afghanistan.

Madrid and London were targeted for terror attacks, they believe, because Spain and Britain were George W. Bush's strongest allies in Iraq. Britain, with a large Pakistani population, must be especially sensitive to U.S. Predator strikes in Pakistan.

Moreover, Europeans have had their fill of war.

In World War I alone, France, Germany and Russia each lost far more men killed than we have lost in all our wars put together. British losses in World War I were greater than America's losses, North and South, in the Civil War. Her losses in World War II, from a nation with but a third of our population, were equal to ours. Where America ended that war as a superpower and leader of the Free World, Britain ended it bankrupt, broken, bereft of empire, sinking into socialism.

All of Europe's empires are gone. All her great navies are gone. All her million-man armies are history. Her populations are all aging, shrinking and dying, as millions pour in from former colonies in the Third World to repopulate and Islamize the mother countries.

Because of Europe's new "diversity," any war fought in a Muslim land will inflame a large segment of Europe's urban population.

Finally, NATO Europe knows there is no price to pay for malingering in NATO's war in Afghanistan. Europeans know America will take up the slack and do nothing about their refusal to send combat brigades.

For Europeans had us figured out a long time ago.

They sense that we need them more than they need us.

While NATO provides Europe with a security blanket, it provides America with what she cannot live without: a mission, a cause, a meaning to life.

Were the United States, in exasperation, to tell Europe, "We are pulling out of NATO, shutting down our bases and bringing our troops home because we are weary of doing all the heavy lifting, all the fighting and dying for freedom," what would we do after we had departed and come home?

What would our foreign policy be?

What would be the need for our vaunted military-industrial complex, all those carriers, subs, tanks, and thousands of fighter planes and scores of bombers? What would happen to all the transatlantic conferences on NATO, all the think tanks here and in Europe devoted to allied security issues?

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the withdrawal of the Red Army from Eastern Europe and the breakup of the Soviet Union, NATO's mission was accomplished. As Sen. Richard Lugar said, NATO must "go out of area or out of business."

NATO desperately did not want to go out of business. So, NATO went out of area, into Afghanistan. Now, with victory nowhere in sight, NATO is heading home. Will it go out of business?

Not likely. Too many rice bowls depend on keeping NATO alive.

You don't give up the March of Dimes headquarters and fund-raising machinery just because Drs. Salk and Sabin found a cure for polio.

Again, one recalls, in those old World War II movies, the invariable scene where two G.I.s are smoking and talking.

"What are you gonna do, Joe, when this is all over?" one would ask.

Years ago, we had the answer.

Joe stayed in the Army. He couldn't give it up. Soldiering is all he knew. Just like Uncle Sam. We can't give up NATO because, if we do, we would no longer be the "indispensable nation," the leader of the Free World.

And, if we're not that, then who are we? And what would we do?

Mr. Buchanan is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of [Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War": How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World](#), ["The Death of the West,"](#) ["The Great Betrayal,"](#) ["A Republic, Not an Empire"](#) and ["Where the Right Went Wrong."](#)

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