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The Security Dilemma and Arms Race Dynamics in Europe's Response to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the escalation of military expenditures in Europe in response to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, through the lens of the security dilemma. The security dilemma, a fundamental concept in international relations, describes how the defensive actions of one state can provoke perceptions of threat among others, potentially leading to an arms race. By analyzing military spending data from 2019 to 2023 for key European countries including Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Azerbaijan, Russia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of GDP, this study highlights how nations closest to the conflict, such as Poland and the Baltic states (Estonia and Latvia), have significantly increased their defense budgets in reaction to perceived immediate threats. These increases are mirrored, albeit to a lesser extent, by major Western European powers and other countries in the region, reflecting a continent-wide trend in military buildup. The findings suggest that while these increases are primarily defensive in nature, they carry the risk of being misinterpreted as offensive postures by neighboring countries, thereby exacerbating the security dilemma. This paper argues for the necessity of enhanced diplomatic efforts to mitigate these risks. It advocates for the establishment of mechanisms that foster clear dialogue and mutual understanding to ensure that military enhancements contribute positively to regional stability rather than escalating tensions. Through the security dilemma, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how European nations can navigate the complexities of increased military spending and regional security in turbulent times.

Keywords: Security dilemma; military expenditures; Russia-Ukraine conflict; arms race; international relations; Europe; NATO; defense budgets; diplomatic efforts; regional stability.

1. Introduction

The historical contours of European security have been deeply influenced by a multitude of regional conflicts and collective defense strategies (Crouzet, 1964). The post-Cold War era, particularly marked by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, brought hopes of a lasting

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peace and reduced military tensions across Europe (Zubok et al., 2021). However, the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, followed by ongoing conflicts in Eastern Ukraine, abruptly ended this period of relative stability and rekindled fears of large-scale aggression in the region (Rabinovych & Pintsch, 2024). These fears were starkly realized in February 2022 when Russia initiated a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, leading to the most significant military conflict on the continent since World War II (Bera, 2023).

This paper explores one of the most significant repercussions of the conflict: the substantial increase in military spending among European nations over the period from 2019 to 2023. This timeframe is critical as it captures both the buildup to the heightening of the conflict and the immediate responses thereafter. The resurgence of armed conflict on European soil has compelled states to reassess and significantly enhance their military budgets, reflecting a shift from the post-Cold War era's focus on demilitarization and diplomacy to renewed emphasis on defense and deterrence (Sörenson, 2024).

In light of this backdrop, the paper seeks to address three pivotal questions. First, it examines how the Russia-Ukraine conflict has influenced the allocation of defense budgets among key European NATO members, highlighting shifts in spending patterns and priorities. Secondly, it investigates the role of perceived threats from Russia in shaping the military spending decisions of non-NATO European countries, thereby assessing the broader defensive posture across the continent. Lastly, the paper explores the extent to which changes in military spending across Europe have been influenced by domestic political pressures versus external NATO commitments.

By focusing on these dimensions, this study aims to unravel the complex dynamics of military expenditure in Europe in response to external aggression, providing insights into how nations calibrate their security strategies in an increasingly volatile world. This inquiry not only sheds light on the immediate fiscal responses to the crisis but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the strategic recalibrations that define contemporary European security policy (Brattvoll, 2023; Motin, 2022a).

2. Literature review

The concept of the security dilemma, central to the field of international relations, describes how measures taken by states to enhance their own security can inadvertently threaten others,

leading to an arms race or conflict escalation (Glaser, 1997). Kenneth Waltz, a key proponent of neorealism, argued that this dilemma arises from the anarchic nature of the international system, where states, operating in a self-help environment, must depend solely on their own capabilities to ensure security (Toft, 2005; Waltz, 1979). This framework is particularly relevant in understanding Europe's military responses in the face of the Russia-Ukraine conflict (Brattvoll, 2023).

Neorealism posits that the international arena is perpetually competitive, with states vying for power and security (Meibauer, 2023; Motin, 2022). This theoretical perspective helps explain the observed increase in military expenditures among European nations, as they respond to perceived threats from an aggressive neighbor (Waltz, 1979). The balance between offensive and defensive capabilities plays a crucial role in this dynamic; states escalate their military spending when they perceive an imbalance favoring offensive capabilities (Jervis, 1978; Motin, 2020).

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has heightened these dynamics, as European states struggle to distinguish between offensive and defensive postures in a rapidly evolving security environment (Bahinskyi & Zaiets, 2023; Glaser, 1997). The inability to clearly differentiate these postures exacerbates the security dilemma, prompting nations to bolster their military capabilities as a deterrent against potential aggression. Furthermore, the security dilemma extends beyond military aspects to encompass territorial disputes, resource scarcity, and geopolitical tensions, all of which are salient issues in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war (Emamifar et al., 2023; Leandro & Oberoi, 2023). The war has not only led to a direct military confrontation but also stirred broader security concerns across Europe, influencing national defense strategies and spending as a form of deterrence as well as power projection which can be seen in conflicted regions (Ali & Lee, 2022; Bibi & Lee, 2023; Lee & Bibi Ms, 2023; Liadze et al., 2023).

The concept of the security dilemma becomes particularly pertinent in understanding Europe's response to the escalating conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Waltz, 1979). The security dilemma emerges from the uncertainty of states about the intentions of others, where defensive measures by one state may be perceived as threatening by others, thus propelling a cycle of military escalation (Mitzen, 2006; Šrol & Čavojová, 2024). This dynamic has been vividly illustrated by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, identified as a profound security threat to

European stability, compelling neighboring nations to reassess and significantly increase their military expenditures (Fawn & Drobysh, 2024; S. M. Khan et al., 2022).

The implications of this conflict extend well beyond immediate military concerns, impacting economic stability and supply chains crucial to Europe's defense logistics (Bednarski et al., 2023; Mukhtar, 2023). The disruption of global markets, notably in energy and food sectors due to the war, underscores the interconnected nature of modern security threats, which in turn influences national security strategies and defense budget allocations (Khan et al., 2023; Lazaro & Soares, 2024; Liefert, 2024).

Additionally, the conflict has broader geopolitical and humanitarian impacts, exacerbating the security dilemma for European nations as they navigate the increased risks and uncertainties within the international system (Cifuentes-Faura, 2024). The fluctuations in the cryptocurrency market and the dampening of international entrepreneurship further demonstrate the wide-ranging effects of the war, influencing economic conditions and strategic decision-making in Europe (Appiah-Otoo, 2023; Cumming, 2022).

Historical memory and existential nationalism also play a role in the security calculations of states, as competing narratives and existential threats drive military strategies and alliances, shaping the regional security architecture (Knott, 2023; Yefremenko, 2022). This underscores the complex relationship between historical perceptions and contemporary security needs, informing defense spending decisions (Béraud-Sudreau & Schmitt, 2024; Mälksoo, 2024). Therefore, the Russia-Ukraine war has underscored the centrality of the security dilemma in shaping Europe's military strategies (Konrad, 2024). The heightened perception of threat and the accompanying uncertainty have driven a marked increase in defense spending, reflecting a broader trend of securitization in response to geopolitical instability (Gricius & Fakhoury, 2024).

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a comparative case study approach, utilizing quantitative data sourced from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) to analyze changes in military spending across selected European countries from 2019 to 2023 (SIPRI, 2024). This timeframe is strategically chosen to encompass the period before, during, and after the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022. The selection of cases includes a diverse range of European NATO and non-NATO members, focusing on factors such as

geographical proximity to Ukraine, strategic importance within NATO, and levels of exposure to the Russian threat. This enables a comprehensive analysis of different security environments and defense responses, from frontline states like Poland and the Baltic states to major Western European powers like Germany and France.

The analytical framework is structured in three main phases: starting with a descriptive statistical analysis to map out general spending trends, followed by a comparative analysis that delves into the specifics of military expenditure changes within each selected country. A contextual analysis further situates these financial adjustments within the broader geopolitical and historical settings of the respective countries, providing deeper insights into each state's strategic motivations.

To link the empirical data with the theoretical framework of the security dilemma, this study examines whether the increases in military spending are indicative of an arms race, a response to perceived threats, or a shift towards more militarized security policies in reaction to perceived Russian aggression.

Methodological triangulation enhances the robustness of the findings by comparing results across different data sources and analytical methods, though without employing interviews. This approach allows for the validation of interpretations solely through peer-reviewed sources and existing literature. Recognizing potential limitations, the study notes the challenges related to the availability of comprehensive and up-to-date data and the difficulty in isolating the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict from other variables influencing military expenditures. This comprehensive methodological approach aims to provide a detailed understanding of how European countries have adjusted their military budgets in response to the evolving security landscape instigated by the conflict.

4. Results

Analyzing the military expenditure data across various European countries from 2019 to 2023 reveals a marked escalation in defense spending, particularly among NATO members, which aligns with the theoretical framework of the security dilemma in the context of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict (Glaser, 1997; Jervis, 1978; Waltz, 1979)

Table 1. Military expenditure by country, in millions of US\$ at current prices and exchange rates, 2019-2023

Country	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Europe					
Central Europe					
Estonia	637.0	718.1	748.6	818.3	1189.5
Latvia	691.9	742.0	823.1	856.1	1045.3
Poland	11786.2	13718.3	15295.5	15341.3	31649.9
Eastern Europe					
Azerbaijan	1854.2	2237.8	2703.2	2991.0	3561.7
Russia	65201.3	61712.5	65907.7	102366.6	109454.4
Western Europe					
Finland	3635.2	3868.7	3831.6	4446.4	7348.0
France	50118.9	52747.1	56647.0	53638.7	61301.3
Germany	49079.4	53318.7	56513.1	56153.1	66826.6
Italy	26380.7	32929.1	36232.7	34691.9	35528.9
United Kingdom	56567.6	58332.4	65136.2	64081.6	74942.8

Source: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

In the frontline states, such as Estonia, Latvia, and Poland, there is a clear trend of significantly increasing military budgets in response to direct threats from Russia. Notably, Poland's defense spending nearly doubled from \$15.34 billion in 2022 to \$31.65 billion in 2023, reflecting a sharp increase in response to heightened security concerns. Similarly, Estonia's military expenditure rose from \$0.82 billion in 2022 to \$1.19 billion in 2023, and Latvia saw an increase from \$0.86 billion in 2022 to \$1.05 billion in 2023.

In Western Europe, major NATO countries such as Germany, France, and the United Kingdom have also significantly upped their defense budgets. Germany's expenditure increased from \$56.15 billion in 2022 to \$66.83 billion in 2023, demonstrating a strong commitment to bolstering its military capabilities amid growing regional tensions. France's military spending followed a rising trajectory from \$53.64 billion in 2022 to \$61.30 billion in 2023, while the United Kingdom increased its budget from \$64.08 billion in 2022 to \$74.94

billion in 2023. These increments underscore the broader NATO strategy of reinforcing collective defense mechanisms and preparedness in light of the perceived Russian threat.

Non-NATO member Azerbaijan, which faces its own regional security challenges, showed an increase in military spending from \$2.99 billion in 2022 to \$3.56 billion in 2023. While primarily driven by its regional conflicts, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, the general atmosphere of heightened insecurity likely influenced its defense spending decisions (Aytekin & Okur, 2024; Gricius & Fakhoury, 2024). This increase can be seen as part of a broader regional response to an unstable security environment.

Furthermore, Russia, the primary antagonist in the Ukraine conflict, significantly ramped up its military budget from \$65.91 billion in 2021 to \$109.45 billion in 2023. This substantial growth in military spending by Russia not only demonstrates its aggressive military stance but also serves as a catalyst for the increased defense budgets across Europe. The dramatic escalation of Russian military expenditure underscores the severity of the threat perceived by its neighbors and NATO members alike, intensifying the security dilemma where each state's defensive enhancement leads to increased insecurity for others.

These trends across different European regions indicate that the allocation of defense budgets has been heavily influenced by the perceived threats emanating from Russia, coupled with the collective security measures undertaken by NATO. The substantial increases in military spending reflect a combination of domestic political pressures to ensure national security and the external commitments to NATO's strategic objectives (Mälksoo, 2024). This dynamic environment illustrates how states, driven by the security dilemma, are compelled to significantly adjust their defense postures in response to evolving geopolitical threats and uncertainties, highlighting the complex interplay between national security needs and international military alliances which supports Waltz arguments (Ali & Lee, 2022; Waltz, 1979).

Incorporating both sets of data—absolute spending figures and percentages of GDP—from the previous tables provides a more nuanced understanding of the changes in military expenditure in response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict across European countries. The analysis of these figures illuminates the multifaceted impact of the security dilemma on European defense policies.

Table 2. Military expenditure by country as percentage of gross domestic product, 2019-2023

Country	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Europe					
Central Europe					
Estonia	2.04%	2.30%	2.03%	2.16%	2.87%
Latvia	2.02%	2.16%	2.09%	2.09%	2.27%
Poland	1.98%	2.29%	2.24%	2.23%	3.83%
Eastern Europe					
Azerbaijan	3.85%	5.24%	4.93%	3.80%	4.60%
Russia	3.86%	4.17%	3.61%	4.69%	5.86%
Western Europe					
Finland	1.35%	1.43%	1.29%	1.57%	2.42%
France	1.84%	2.00%	1.91%	1.93%	2.06%
Germany	1.26%	1.37%	1.32%	1.38%	1.52%
Italy	1.31%	1.74%	1.68%	1.69%	1.61%
United Kingdom	1.99%	2.16%	2.07%	2.07%	2.26%

Source: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

The dramatic rise in Poland's defense spending, nearly doubling from \$15.34 billion in 2022 to \$31.65 billion in 2023, is further underscored when considering its increase as a percentage of GDP from 2.23% to 3.83% over the same period. This significant escalation not only reflects Poland's response to the direct threat from Russia but also demonstrates its commitment to bolstering national defense beyond mere incremental growth, indicating a shift towards a more militarized stance within the NATO framework.

Similarly, the Baltic states, such as Estonia and Latvia, exhibit notable increases in both absolute spending and as a percentage of GDP. Estonia's budget rose from \$818.3 million to \$1.189 billion, with its GDP percentage increasing from 2.16% to 2.87%. Latvia's spending grew from \$856.1 million to \$1.045 billion, with a GDP percentage increase from 2.09% to 2.27%. These rises reflect a robust response to the perceived imminent threat from Russia,

aligning with NATO's eastern defense strategy which seeks to deter further aggression through a visible increase in military capabilities (Sörenson, 2024).

In Western Europe, countries like Germany, France, and the United Kingdom also increased their spending, both in absolute terms and relative to their GDPs. Germany's expenditure grew significantly, from \$56.15 billion to \$66.83 billion, accompanied by a GDP percentage increase from 1.38% to 1.52% (Demeure & Lee, 2023b). The UK saw its spending rise from \$64.08 billion to \$74.94 billion, with a rise in GDP percentage from 2.07% to 2.26%. These changes, although more modest in percentage terms compared to Eastern Europe, still signify a strategic recalibration towards enhanced military readiness amid rising European tensions (Brattvoll, 2023).

Non-NATO member Azerbaijan showed an increase from \$2.99 billion in 2022 to \$3.56 billion in 2023, alongside a GDP percentage growth from 3.80% to 4.60%. This suggests that even countries not directly under the NATO security umbrella are feeling the ripple effects of regional instability, leading to increased military expenditures.

The varied responses across different European regions—more pronounced in countries closer to the Russian threat and more measured in Western Europe—highlight how both domestic factors and external alliances shape defense spending. Countries directly threatened by Russia have responded with significant increases in their military budgets, driven by a direct need to enhance defensive capabilities rapidly. In contrast, Western European nations have responded in a more measured but still significant manner, influenced by broader NATO strategies and domestic political dynamics (Mälksoo, 2024).

This comprehensive analysis of military spending in terms of both absolute dollars and GDP percentages provides a clear picture of how European nations are navigating the complex security landscape posed by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, emphasizing the pervasive influence of the security dilemma in shaping national and regional defense strategies.

5. Discussion

5.1. Escalation and Misinterpretation: The Risks of an Arms Race in Europe

The military expenditure trends observed across Europe from 2019 to 2023, particularly in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, provide a compelling illustration of the security

dilemma in action (Glaser, 1997). This dilemma, central to international relations theory, posits that efforts by one state to enhance its security can lead other states to perceive these measures as potential threats, prompting them to also increase their military capabilities in response (Jervis, 1978). Such dynamics can inadvertently escalate into an arms race, complicating regional security and potentially leading to conflict, even if the initial intentions were purely defensive.

The data showing a substantial increase in military expenditures, particularly among European countries close to Russia and Ukraine, highlights an ongoing and intensifying security dilemma. For example, Poland's military expenditure nearly doubled in just one year, from \$15.34 billion in 2022 to \$31.65 billion in 2023, with its spending as a percentage of GDP surging from 2.23% to 3.83%. This increase, though arguably a defensive response to immediate threats, could be perceived by other nations as a preparation for offensive capabilities. Similarly, the Baltic states, such as Estonia and Latvia, have significantly increased their defense budgets, which, while intended for self-defense, could be misinterpreted by others, including Russia, as aggressive posturing.

As these nations bolster their military resources, the possibility that other states might misinterpret these accumulations of arms as offensive rather than defensive poses a significant risk (Konrad, 2024). This is particularly problematic in an environment lacking robust communication and trust between states. The increases in military spending by Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, though less dramatic, still contribute to the overall narrative of militarization within Europe. Germany's increase from 1.38% to 1.52% of GDP in military spending, and similar modest increases by other Western European powers, could still be viewed as part of a collective gearing up among NATO members (Mälksoo, 2024). Furthermore, the decision of Sweden joining NATO after 200 years of neutrality further complicates the geopolitical situation in the region (Thorhallsson & Vidal, 2024). This is due to Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine which worries many citizens and policy makers in Sweden which potentially gave them the motivation to break away from their long-standing tradition of neutrality in order to strengthen their security in the region in fear of potential escalation by Russia.

The resultant environment is ripe for a classic security dilemma scenario, where one state's defensive preparations lead others to ramp up their own military programs in a cycle that can lead to an arms race (Glaser, 1997; Waltz, 1979). Such an arms race in Europe could not only

divert resources from crucial areas like economic development and social programs but could also heighten tensions to a level where the risk of miscalculation or accidental conflict increases substantially.

The ongoing military escalations, if left unchecked, might therefore not only perpetuate the existing tensions but could also potentially lead to a situation where the increased military capabilities are wrongly perceived as offensive preparations. This misperception could stoke fears and increase the likelihood of preemptive actions, thereby escalating the very conflict these expenditures seek to deter. Thus, while the intentions behind these increases in military spending might be to enhance security and deter aggression, they inadvertently contribute to a heightened state of insecurity across the region, underscoring the paradoxical nature of the security dilemma (Waltz, 1979).

5.2. Recommendations

To mitigate the risks associated with the security dilemma and curb the potential escalation of an arms race in Europe, several strategic recommendations can be considered. These are centered around enhancing diplomatic efforts, fostering economic interdependence, and promoting open discourse, drawing inspiration from successful international cooperation models such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the collaborative efforts of BRICS nations as well as the global gateway project which would encourage domestic as well as international development (Karjalainen, 2023; Lee & Sims, 2024; Ouyang et al., 2022; Sims et al., 2023).

Firstly, establishing a European Security Dialogue Platform would be instrumental as a method of open dialogue is important similar to the QUAD dialogue or any form of multilateral dialogue (Stavrianakis & Stern, 2018; Yuan & Lee, 2023c). This platform would serve as a dedicated forum where European countries, Russia, and other stakeholders could engage in continuous and transparent dialogue about security concerns and defense strategies. This initiative would mirror the regular dialogues held among BRICS countries, aimed at promoting mutual understanding and reducing misperceptions and since Russia is a part of BRICS a BRICS-NATO or a BRICS-European Union dialogue would be feasible. Conflict management programs such as the ones from ASEAN as well as asking a third party to promote discourse is also important (Yuan & Lee, 2023a, 2023b).

Secondly, promoting economic interdependence through joint economic projects and partnerships, akin to BRI's approach to infrastructure development and economic integration, is crucial (Braun et al., 2024). By deepening economic ties, countries are less likely to escalate conflicts that could jeopardize shared economic interests. Further, facilitating open discourse and implementing confidence-building measures is essential. Regular exchange programs, workshops, and seminars involving military and civilian representatives from the involved countries would help build trust, clarify military doctrines, and clearly delineate defensive postures to minimize the risk of misinterpreting military activities (Lee et al., 2024).

Additionally, strengthening multilateral defense and security agreements within Europe to include clear mechanisms for conflict resolution and crisis management would provide a structured approach to addressing security issues, similar to how BRICS nations collectively tackle security challenges (Waslekar, 2023). Investing in regional development and integration to support stability and economic growth across Europe, including in Russia and Ukraine, would also be beneficial. This would involve targeting investments in underdeveloped regions to reduce economic disparities that often underpin regional tensions.

Encouraging third-party mediation by engaging neutral countries or international organizations to facilitate negotiations would bring an unbiased perspective to conflict resolution efforts, which has proven effective in various international disputes. Dialogues such as the ones during Covid-19 proved useful as well and should be studied (Demeure & Lee, 2023a; Lee et al., 2023). Developing comprehensive security treaties that encompass economic, environmental, and military dimensions that includes Russia would reflect the holistic approach seen in NATO, BRI and BRICS agreements, promoting broad-spectrum cooperation.

Lastly, enhancing transparency in military expenditures and armaments through standardized reporting mechanisms and independent monitoring by international bodies would help reduce fears and suspicions among countries. By implementing these recommendations, Europe could significantly address the underlying issues posed by the security dilemma, fostering a more stable and cooperative regional security environment (Waltz, 1979). These strategies focus not only on preventing the escalation of military tensions but also on building a sustainable foundation for long-term peace and prosperity across the continent as states are able to focus on peaceful development, social development, economic development as well as

open dialogue for future cooperation (Braun et al., 2024; Karjalainen, 2023; Khoo & Lee, 2024; Lee et al., 2024; Lee & Sims, 2023).

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has explored the complex dynamics of the security dilemma in Europe, exacerbated by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which has significantly influenced military spending across the continent. The security dilemma, where defensive actions by one state are perceived as potential threats by others, has clearly manifested in the increased military budgets of European countries, both in absolute figures and as a percentage of GDP from 2019 to 2023. These increases are particularly pronounced among nations closest to the conflict, such as Poland and the Baltic states, which have seen their defense spending escalate sharply in response to immediate security threats.

The findings of this study reveal that even as these nations strive to bolster their security, their actions may unintentionally escalate tensions, creating a cycle of armament that could lead to an arms race. This situation is indicative of the classic security dilemma, where the measures taken to secure one state end up decreasing the overall security of the region. For example, substantial increases in military expenditures, like those seen in Poland, which nearly doubled its spending in one year, might be viewed by Russia or other neighboring countries as preparations for offensive capabilities rather than purely defensive measures.

Moreover, the paper has highlighted that the responses from Western European nations, though more modest, are still significant and contribute to the overall military buildup in Europe. These increases, while aimed at enhancing national and collective security, can also be misinterpreted by others as aggressive postures, further fueling the security dilemma. This underscores the delicate balance that European nations must navigate in enhancing their military capabilities without inadvertently contributing to regional instability.

The study suggests that the ongoing security dilemma in Europe requires careful management to prevent an escalation into open conflict. To mitigate these risks, enhanced diplomatic efforts, clearer communication, and greater transparency in military intentions and expenditures are essential. European states must work collaboratively to establish mechanisms that not only address their security needs but also build confidence among all

regional actors. This involves not just a strengthening of military alliances but also a commitment to diplomatic channels that can alleviate tensions and clarify defensive postures.

Ultimately, the security dilemma presents a paradox that European countries must address as they navigate the precarious landscape of contemporary international relations. By fostering a security environment that prioritizes open dialogue and mutual understanding over unilateral military enhancements, Europe can move towards a more stable and secure future. This approach will require concerted efforts and commitment from all European nations to transcend the traditional dynamics of the security dilemma, ensuring that defensive measures genuinely contribute to collective security without precipitating further tensions.

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