

Must and can Switzerland defend itself alone?

by Ralph Bosshard*



Ralph Bosshard.
(Picture mt)

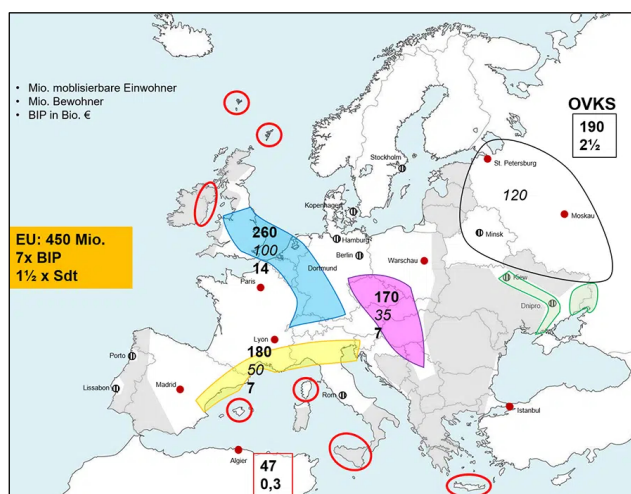
It is in keeping with the tradition of security policy debate in Switzerland that members of the Federal Parliament deal with issues of national defence almost exclusively when decisions on armaments programmes are to be made. What is new, however, is that heads of departments outside this

field now feel they must also intervene in the debate on weapons systems.¹ One would hope that the focus would be on questions regarding the actual military threat, possible scenarios and courses of action for the Swiss Confederation as a whole.

The latest *Security Report by the Federal Intelligence Service (FIS)* states unequivocally that a Russian attack on Europe is unlikely in the coming years, thereby contradicting the prevailing narratives in the press and other media. The report is, however, of mediocre quality, so it is worth giving some independent thought to Russia's capabilities to take military action against Europe and against Switzerland, as well as to Switzerland itself. That would, in fact, be sufficient to establish a framework for Swiss national defence.

Superior resources beyond Russia's reach

The EU and the European NATO allies constitute a bloc which, compared to Russia, possesses seven times the economic power, three times the human resources and 1½ times as many soldiers.² These figures speak for themselves: Rus-



Europe's conurbations today and in the foreseeable future / Population figures for the countries involved, population figures for the regions concerned and the countries' gross domestic product. (Source: Author)⁴

sia cannot attack such a bloc; rather, it must prevent their potential from being deployed against Russia.

Europe's resources are essentially concentrated in three major conurbations and several metropolitan areas surrounded by regions with relatively weak economic structures.³ Whoever has a grip on them controls Europe's power in general and its military power in particular. What an adversary gets up to in the sparsely populated regions of northern Scotland, the interior of France and Spain, or in the economically underdeveloped regions of Eastern Europe is of limited relevance. In Russia, on the other hand, it is the densely populated conurbations around St Petersburg, Moscow and the south-west that matter, and then, far to the east, the cities along the Volga. In between lies ... a lot of countryside.

Occupying Europe's metropolitan areas and the routes leading to them would neutralise Europe's military potential. But merely occupying the metropolitan area in Eastern Europe closest to Russia – roughly the Leipzig–Krakow–Belgrade triangle – would be roughly equivalent to the campaign waged by the Red Army in the spring of 1945. At that time, however, the Red Army had a strength of 11 million men and was fighting against a Germany that was engaged in combat with the USA, the British Empire and France in the west and south.⁵

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The metropolitan areas in north-western Europe and on the northern coast of the Mediterranean are completely out of reach for Russian power projection. This would require not only land forces but also naval forces capable of competing with those of NATO.

Generally speaking, the Russian fleet is only capable of long-range power projection to a very limited extent. It is not a high-seas fleet, nor a so-called “Blue Water Navy”, such as the *US Navy*, the *Royal Navy* or the French *Marine Nationale*. With their aircraft carriers and amphibious strike groups, these navies can fight their way to virtually any coastline in the world and gaining access to foreign countries.⁶

The Russian Navy is a long way from possessing such capabilities, and there are no known indications that it intends to develop them.

The situation is no different with the Russian Air Force. The Russian Air Force is probably capable of carrying out one or two *raids* per day or per night far beyond the territory of Russia or an ally, but certainly not a weeks-long air campaign involving daily air strikes, such as that conducted by NATO in 1999 against the remnants of Yugoslavia or Serbia.⁷

Russia is therefore neither in a position to occupy the metropolitan areas of Eastern Europe, let alone the densely populated and economically highly developed northern coast of the Mediterranean or the industrial regions of north-western Europe and England. The Russians lack the troops, ships, aircraft and bases to do so. Nor does Russia possess the economic or financial resources to build up armed forces capable of doing so.

Missiles aimed at Bern?

Russia cannot conquer Western Europe and Switzerland, but it can deliver strikes – using all manner of stand-off weapons, be they ballistic missiles, cruise missiles or, in future, perhaps even drones carrying nuclear or conventional warheads. However, a whole range of other states around the world also possess such capabilities, first and foremost the USA, as well as the nuclear powers Israel, China, North Korea, France and the United Kingdom.⁸

In general, defence against modern long-range weapons is only possible to a very limited extent – and this is precisely the basis of nuclear deterrence. The missile wars over the past two years between the US and Israel on the one

hand and Iran on the other have highlighted these difficulties. The figures cited by Ukraine in recent months regarding the number of Russian “Kinzhal”, “Oreshnik”, “Iskander” and other stand-off weapons fired are also likely to be greatly exaggerated.⁹

But intercepting missiles is only half the battle. To ensure that interceptor missiles can be deployed in time, an adequate early warning system must be in place. It has now become almost essential to establish a surveillance system capable of detecting missile launches, as the trajectories of ballistic missiles are becoming increasingly difficult to track, and those of cruise missiles even more so.

The simplest solution would be to shoot down ballistic missiles or incoming warheads whilst they are still outside the Earth’s atmosphere; however, defence mechanisms have been developed to counter this too, and, on top of that, there is the fear of the complete militarisation of space. At least in this area, there still appears to be consensus amongst the major powers.

Detecting missile launches requires the surveillance of vast areas on land and at sea, where launch vehicles, ships and submarines carry out patrols. In the case of Russia, these regions specifically include the marginal seas of the Arctic Ocean, the river and canal systems, and the forests in the European part of the country and in Siberia.¹⁰

Such a system can only consist of a network of reconnaissance and communications satellites. At present, only the US possesses such a system, and even this is said to have weaknesses and gaps. Russia itself does not have one, and neither, in all likelihood, does China. The development and operation of such a system are, of course, far beyond the capabilities of medium-sized states such as Switzerland. A Swiss *Star Wars* system is probably an illusion. And if Europe wishes to lure Switzerland into an alliance with the promise of a missile defence shield, then it is pretending to have capabilities that it does not actually possess.

What remains? Like 190 other countries around the world, Switzerland will have to live with the threat of an attack by long-range weapons. It would be surprising if Switzerland, of all countries, were to succeed in protecting itself against a category of weapons to which all other countries in the world are defenceless. Nor would it make much sense for Switzerland to acquire long-range

weapons for the purpose of retaliation, thereby becoming a threat to an entire region.

Not small, not weak

The Swiss like to see their country as a small state. This is only partly true, because from a global perspective, Switzerland is a country with a relatively small area (ranked 136th out of 250 territories), a medium-sized population (ranked 100th out of 194) and significant economic power: In the latter respect, it ranks amongst the top 10 per cent in the world.¹¹ Politically, it is one of the most stable states on earth and is in the neighbourhood of three countries from the G7 group. Only Belgium and Mongolia share a similar neighbourhood. Switzerland is wealthy, relatively small compared with its neighbours, and exposed. This highlights its problem.

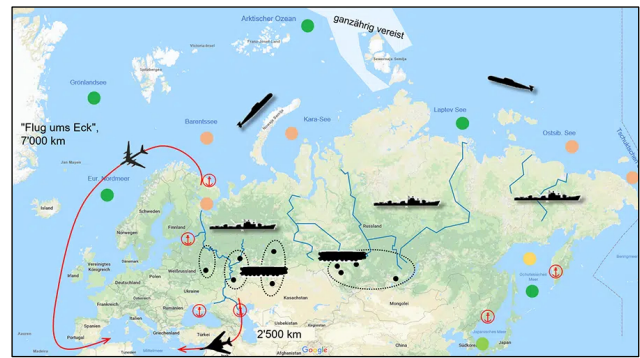
In terms of *soft power* – which considers political values, governance, culture, education, science and similar factors – Switzerland ranks 7th globally. It spends several hundred million Swiss francs annually on its diplomatic network abroad and 2 billion annually on development cooperation.¹² The image of the solitary Alpine nation, which is often perpetuated, is inaccurate. Incidentally, in terms of military power, Switzerland ranks 46th globally – a good ranking for a country that is *de facto* not under military threat.¹³

Good statesmanship would be expressed through a balanced ratio of *soft power* to *hard power*, rather than through scaremongering about the “bad guy” from the taiga.

Build-up is essential

A militia army such as the Swiss Army, in which up to 10 per cent of the population served during the Cold War, gains a certain degree of political clout by virtue of its size, because the soldiers' family members, relatives and friends carry political weight simply by their sheer number.

In a militia or conscription system, it is the electorate that quickly determines where and for what purpose the army is deployed. This distinguishes the militia from professional armies, which currently account for between 2 and 5% of the population in European countries. A professional army quickly becomes the proverbial suitcase without a handle: too heavy to carry in the long run, too valuable to discard. The half-hearted attempts to reintroduce conscription in several European countries clearly show that



Europe's conurbations today and in the foreseeable future / Population figures for the countries involved, population figures for the regions concerned and the countries' gross domestic product. (Source: Author)

Europe does not want conscript armies, which are unsuitable for the exercise of global power, but rather professional armies, which are unsuitable for national defence.

Maintaining a combat-ready army on a permanent basis is possible only at an excessively high cost, for reasons relating to personnel, finances and infrastructure. There are good reasons to believe that training, from the completion of basic training to combat readiness, takes the same amount of time as, or up to twice as long as, basic training itself.¹⁴

Keeping 10 per cent of the population in military service for months on end would ruin the Swiss economy and, likely, that of every other European country. Combat readiness is also costly in material terms: experience from other countries shows that the demand for supplies during high-intensity combat operations can increase by a factor of 30 compared with peacetime operations.¹⁵

It would likely be a challenge for Switzerland simply to store such large quantities of ammunition properly. It is probable that ammunition depots would first have to be built. It is also reasonable to assume that mission-specific training prior to a defence operation would consume ten times as much ammunition as basic training. It remains to be clarified whether the Swiss Army possesses the number of firing ranges that would be required to carry out mission-specific training with the entire army.

Consequence: There will be no getting round the much-maligned “build-up” – a term that centre-right politicians have never been fond of.

Self-defence is feasible

Given that Europe's NATO allies have 2 million soldiers and Russia has 1½ million, the 600,000

soldiers that Switzerland could mobilise, if necessary, would be a very significant deterrent.¹⁶

As part of the two most economically developed regions in Europe, Switzerland also has good prospects of obtaining, even in times of war, all the supplies it needs for its defence from or via neighbouring countries. Once a war is underway in Central Europe, Switzerland's neighbours would certainly have every interest in ensuring that it is able to defend itself. All that is needed now is a forward-looking defence policy which ensures that the Swiss Army receives what it needs and has in stock what it is unlikely to be able to obtain in the event of a crisis in Europe.

These are the considerations that need to be made at the level of the federal government, and they would be more helpful than the whingeing about "capability gaps" and the grandstanding about drones, tanks and "cooperation partners".

The scepticism regarding the concept of "force build-up" – which is only justified at first glance – can be quickly dispelled. Anyone who sets out to determine defence force requirements based on credible scenarios will arrive at figures that a militia army could certainly mobilise.

This would allow the objective of force build-up to be defined, which would lend the concept itself a little more credibility. But does that mean that the units should be established, equipped and trained today? No, because that would incur operating costs for decades, which politicians are certainly not prepared to pay. But the conditions should be put in place so that the necessary number of units can be established within a few years.

The timeframe for re-establishment would be foreseeable, as would the trigger criteria for the build-up. What a pity that there is no mention of this in the annual reports of Switzerland's intelligence services! Neither conservative die-hards nor pacifist dreamers are of any help when it comes to preparing for the build-up.

Ivan in the Federal Palace?

There is currently no acute threat to Switzerland, nor will there be for years to come – not even from Russia. Today, Switzerland can act from a comfortable position of security. What is needed today, rather than an alarmist assessment, is a realistic assessment of the situation based on genuine facts, rather than on fear of a

Russian invasion, for which Russia simply lacks the capacity.

This realism must be combined with an acceptance of technological vulnerability, for there is no foolproof protection against modern long-range weapons.

Switzerland should learn to live with this risk, rather than pouring resources into prohibitively expensive defence systems whose effectiveness is dubious anyway.

Overall, the question arises as to whether it is NATO's protection that affords Switzerland its comfortable position in Europe – as zealous trans Atlanticists like to claim – or rather Russia's limited military capabilities.

Discussing the right issues!

In the run-up to the referendum on the initiative to "safeguard Swiss neutrality" – and afterwards too – the key will be to discuss the right issues at the right "level".

The current debate centres on cooperation with NATO and, where applicable, with the EU, which, through Article 42 of the *Treaty of Lisbon*, has enshrined a far stronger obligation to provide mutual assistance than the much-cited Article 5 of the *North Atlantic Treaty*.¹⁷ The former, in particular, calls for a move away from blind alliance euphoria: Co-operation with neighbours makes sense in an emergency, but must remain strictly limited even in the preparatory phase so that Switzerland is not exploited for projects that do not serve its security.

One aspect of co-operation today is armaments, in which economic considerations sometimes take precedence over military ones. A forward-looking armaments policy should focus less on the technical and tactical characteristics of weapon systems – even if these are the favourite topic of aircraft and tank enthusiasts – and more on issues of availability, training and maintenance under wartime conditions: better to have the second-best equipment in use than the best in the workshop.

Even if the "free riding" imperialists in Switzerland's neighbourhood want nothing to do with conscription, Switzerland should continue to capitalise on the advantages of its militia army and retain its militia system, as this enables it to mobilise enormous manpower in an emergency, even if only for a short period.

However, it makes no economic sense to keep a huge army permanently ready for war. The cor-

rect conclusion is simply to create the structures and conditions today so that, in the event of a crisis, the army can be rapidly brought up to the required strength within a few years.

Ultimately, the Federal Government should also bear in mind that security is not achieved through weapons alone. Switzerland must make targeted use of its enormous economic strength, its diplomatic clout, its stability and its soft power as strategic security instruments. The allocation of resources to soft and hard power is the issue the Federal Government should be discussing, rather than individual weapons systems.

Source: <https://dieschweiz-online.ch/muss-und-kann-sich-die-schweiz-allein-verteidigen>, 31 July 2026

(This text is the written version of the presentation given by Ralph Bosshard on 25 July during the "2026 Summer Conference" organised by "Swiss Standpoint" on the topic "What kind of neutrality for Switzerland?")

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ See also "Deshalb glaubt Jans' Departement, die Schweiz brauche keine Panzer mehr", by Watson, 24 July 2026, online at <https://www.watson.ch/schweiz/armee/532908987-armee-jans-departement-glaubt-die-schweiz-brauche-keine-panzer-mehr>.

² See "Flächendaten aller Länder der Erde", by Lexas Laender Daten, online at <https://www.laenderdaten.de/geographie/flaeche.aspx>. "Länder der Welt nach Bevölkerung (2026)" by worldometer, online at <https://www.worldometers.info/de/weltbevoelkerung/bevoelkerung-pro-land/>. "BIP nach Ländern (2026) – IWF" by worldometer, online at <https://www.worldometers.info/de/bip/bip-pro-land/>.

³ There are numerous models of Europe's economic-spatial organisation and population structure. On the one hand, they contain abstract statements about real-world conditions; on the other, they include statements about spatial-based changes that are politically desired or expected. The spatial organisation presented here reflects the author's assumptions, based on the expectation of further urbanisation in Europe, whilst at the same time endeavouring to avoid the formation of "mega-cities" in Europe. See Mirko Ellrich, Maxie Pape: Infoblatt Wirtschaftsräume in Europa – Die Blaue Banane, by TERRASSE online, online at https://static.klett.de/assets/terrasse/Wirtschaftsraum_Die_Blaue_Banane.pdf. Axel Mayer: Blaue Banane: Traum, Albtraum, Flächenverbrauch & Kritik an der Megapolis, dem zentraleuropäischen Verdichtungsraum, bei Mitwelt Stiftung Oberrhein, 19 July 2026, online at <https://www.mitwelt.org/blau-banane-europaeischer-verdichtungsraum-megapolis>. "Europa – Wirtschaftliche Raummodelle", by Diercke, online at <https://diercke.de/content/europa-wirtschaftliche-raummodelle-978-3-14-100800-5-99-2-1>. Ina Schmidt: *The European Blue Banana*, by European Partner Solutions, 06 October 2014, online at http://www.eu-partner.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9:the-blue-banana&catid=1:news-&Itemid=16. Stefanie Dühr, Hans Gebhardt: Geodesign für Europa, in: Hans Gebhardt, Rüdiger Glaser, Sebastian

Lentz (Edit.): *Europa – eine Geographie*, Berlin/Heidelberg 2013, P. 221–224, restricted preview at <https://books.google.de/books?id=8QkJAgAAQBAJ&pg=PA222#v=onepage&q&f=false>. Gert-Jan Hospers: *Beyond the Blue Banana? Structural Change in Europe's Geo-Economy*, edited on the occasion of the 42nd European Congress of the Regional Science Association, Young Scientist Session, August 27–31, 2002 – Dortmund, Germany, online at <http://www.sre.wu-wien.ac.at/ersa/ersa-confs/ersa02/cd-rom/papers/210.pdf>. Cf. Lexikon der Geographie: Blaue Banane, by Spektrum,de, online at <https://www.spektrum.de/lexikon/geographie/blau-banane/1072>. "Wirtschaftsräume in Europa", by Dictactmedia, 2012, online at <https://www.didactmedia.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Kommentartext.pdf>. Jutta Hofmann: *Die Costas del Sol: der "Sunbelt" Europas?* Universität Trier, Fachbereich VI – Geographie / Geowissenschaften, Seminar: Landschaftsökologische Probleme europäischer Grosslandschaften – Iberische Halbinsel – WS 2011/2012 2012, online at https://www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb6/prof/PHY/PDF-Dateien/Publikationen/Die_Costas_del_Sol_Jutta_Hofmann.pdf.

⁴ Cf. Maps on population density in Europe, like e.g. those at <https://fr.pinterest.com/pin/559853797417163463/>.

⁵ See "Armeestärken im Zweiten Weltkrieg nach Ländern in den Jahren 1939 bis 1945" by statista.de, online at <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/252298/umfrage/armeestaerken-im-zweiten-weltkrieg-nach-laendern/>.

⁶ Cf. "Die Grenzen der Kanonenboot-Diplomatie – keine Angst vor Flugzeugträgern!", by Global Bridge, 28 November 2023, online at <https://globalbridge.ch/die-grenzen-der-kanonenboot-diplomatie-keine-angst-vor-flugzeugtraegern/>.

⁷ Chosen from numerous descriptions of this campaign, which contravenes international law: Benjamin S. Lambeth: 9by RAND Corporation, Santa Monica 2001, online at https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1365.html.

⁸ See Hans M. Kristensen, Matt Korda, Eliana Johns, Mackenzie Knight-Boyle: *Chinese nuclear weapons*, 2026, by *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 08 July 2026, online at <https://thebulletin.org/premium/2026-07/chinese-nuclear-weapons-2026/>. "Russia Slates Sarmat ICBM Deployment for Late 2026", by *The Moscow Times*, 12 May 2026, online at <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/05/12/russia-slates-sarmat-icbm-deployment-for-late-2026-a92739>. Gaurav Tiwari: *Agni Missile Series: India's Strategic Ballistic Missile Family from Agni-I to Agni-V and MIRV*, by Anantam IAS, 17 July 2026, online at <https://anantamias.com/agni-missile-series/>. "Missiles of Israel", by *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, August 2021, online at <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/israel/>. Kelsey Davenport, Daryl G. Kimball: *U.S. Says Pakistan Developing Long-Range Missiles*, by *Arms Control Association*, *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2025, online at <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2025-01/news/us-says-pakistan-developing-long-range-missiles>. "Missiles of Pakistan", by *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 30 June 2022, online at <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/pakistan/>. "Missiles of Iran", by *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 17 June 2026, online at <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/iran/>. "Missiles of North Korea", by *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 15 January

- 2026, online at <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/d-prk/>. John Mecklin: North Korea's Hwasong-14, at a glance, by *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 10 August 2017, online at <https://thebulletin.org/multimedia/north-koreas-hwasong-14-at-a-glance/>. Sinan Ciddi: Turkey's Missile Ambitions Should Alarm Europe and the United States, by *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, 16 May 2026, online at <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2026/05/16/turkeys-missile-ambitions-should-alarm-europe-and-the-united-states/>. "Flamingo – a new Ukrainian long-range missile", by *milmag.pl.*, 18 August 2025, online at <https://milmag.pl/en/flamingo-a-new-ukrainian-long-range-missile/>. Bohdan Miroshnychenko: Ukrainian Flamingo missile with 3,000-km range appears in new video, by *Ukrainska Pravda*, 18 August 2025, online at <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2025/08/18/7526741/>. «Missiles of France», by *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 03 March 2021, online at <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/france/>. Javier Guerrero: Trident II D-5 (UGM-133A), bei *Nuclear-companion.com*, 28 April 2025, online at <https://nuclear-companion.com/data/trident-ii-d-5-missile/>.
- ⁹ See Theodore Postol: *Evidence of Patriot PAC-3's Near-Zero Interception Rate*, by Glenn Diesen Substack.com 12 July 2026, online at https://glennDiesen.substack.com/p/theodore-postol-evidence-of-patriot?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=2670149&post_id=206718647&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFree-mail=true&r=197k7c&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email
- ¹⁰ Off the marginal seas of the Arctic Ocean, the Barents Sea, the Kara Sea, the White Sea and the East Siberian Sea are only of limited suitability as patrol areas for submarines armed with ballistic missiles, as large parts of these seas do not allow for the maximum operating depths of such submarines. In the White Sea, only the Kandalaksha Trench, and in the Barents Sea, the waters around Bear Island, have such depths. Russia has equipped numerous warships with *Kalibr 3M14* cruise missiles (Western designation SS-N-30) for engaging stationary land targets, which can achieve a range of up to 2,500 km. Of these vessels, the Buyan-M-class corvettes (Project 21631) may be capable of navigating Russia's River and canal system and thus be transferred from one sea to another. See "Комплекс 3К-14 / C-14 Калибр, ракеты 3М-54 / 3М-14 – SS-N-27 / SS-N-30 Sizzler", in: *militaryrussia.ru*, 21 January 2023, online at <http://militaryrussia.ru/blog/topic-818.html>, in Russ. language. See Tomasz Grotnik: *Russia launches Final Buyan-M-class Corvette Fitted with Kalibr cruise missiles*, by *Naval News*, 13 June 2024, online at <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2024/06/russia-launches-final-buyan-m-class-corvette-fitted-with-kalibr-cruise-missiles/>. An overview: "Russian strategic nuclear forces", by *Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces*, online at <https://russianforces.org/>. "Strategic Missile Forces", by *Fandom*, online at https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Strategic_Missile_Forces.
- ¹¹ Cf. "Flächendaten aller Länder der Erde", by *Lexas Laender Daten*, online at <https://www.laenderdaten.de/geographie/flaeche.aspx>. "Länder der Welt nach Bevölkerung (2026)" by *worldometer*, online at <https://www.worldometers.info/de/weltbevoelkerung/bevoelkerung-pro-land/>. "BIP nach Ländern (2026) – IWF" bei *worldometer*, online <https://www.worldometers.info/de/bip/bip-pro-land/>. About Soft Power, a term coined by the American political scientist Joseph S. Nye, see Joseph S. Nye: *Soft Power*, in: *Foreign Policy* 1990, 80 (3), P. 153–171, online available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1148580>. Joseph S. Nye: *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York 1990, online at <https://www.kropfpolisci.com/exceptionalism.nye.pdf>. Joseph S. Nye: *Soft Power. The means to success in world politics*. New York 2004, online at https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/pantheon_files/files/publication/joe_nye_wielding_soft_power.pdf.
- ¹² See "Ausgaben der DEZA" website of the Federal Administration, 05 May 2026, online at <https://www.deza.eda.admin.ch/de/ausgaben-der-deza>. "Statistiken der Entwicklungsfinanzierung", *ibid.* online at <https://www.deza.eda.admin.ch/de/statistiken-der-entwicklungsfinanzierung>. See also "Staatsrechnung 2024, Volume 2: Das EDA, edit. by the Federal Finance Administration, online at <https://www.efv.admin.ch/dam/de/sd-web/eM-FB4ed-wEDq/Staatsrechnung-2024%20E2%80%9320Band%20II%20E2%80%9320Dep-2%20EDA%20DE.pdf>. A comment on this by Balz Rigendinger: *Die Schweiz spart im Aussennetz – aber wo?* By *SWI swissinfo.ch*, 04 July 2023, online at <https://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/wirtschaft/schweiz-sparen-botschaften/48640382>. On the ranking of Soft Power see "Brand Finance's Global Soft Power Index", online at <https://static.brandirectory.com/reports/brand-finance-soft-power-index-2026-digital.pdf> and Konrad Jagodzinski: *Global Soft Power Index 2026: A global mood shift*, by *Brand Finance*, 20 January 2026, online at <https://brandfinance.com/insights/global-soft-power-index-2026-executive-summary>.
- ¹³ See ranking of 145 states according to their military power by *Global Firepower Countries Index*, online at <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries.php>.
- ¹⁴ Based on the assumption that basic training at the introductory stage takes approx. 150 hours, followed by a further 150 hours at the consolidation stage, it is realistic to expect that completing general basic training will take no less than three months. Added to this are examinations, inspections, physical training, marches and the like, as well as exercises at the squad/vehicle crew and platoon levels.
- ¹⁵ This is in line with the empirical data used by the Russian General Staff.
- ¹⁶ See "The size of NATO and non-NATO military forces in Europe", by *The New Union Post*, 17 April 2026, online at <https://newunionpost.eu/2026/04/17/size-nato-armies-europe-infographic/>. Alexandra Knappe: *Die mächtigsten Armeen Europas und weltweit 2025*, by *manager magazin*, 04 March 2025, online at <https://www.manager-magazin.de/politik/bundeswehr-die-maechtigsten-armeen-europas-und-weltweit-2025-a-a379f4dd-15e2-448b-bbd2-c9d12a63e4e7>.
- ¹⁷ See "Bündnisfall: Was ist eigentlich Art. 42 Abs. 7 EU-Vertrag?" by *Jura Forum.de*, 15 May 2026, online at https://www.juraforum.de/news/buendnisfall-was-ist-eigentlich-art-42-abs-7-eu-vertrag_247741. It is telling that, following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, the free-riding imperialists from Paris called on the EU member states to provide support, invoking the "Assistance and support" clause enshrined in the Treaties, which had never previously been invoked. See "Beistandsklausel (Article 42 paragraph 7 EUV), European Parliament resolution from 21 January 2016

on the application of the mutual assistance clause (Article 42 paragraph 7 EUV) (2015/3034(RSP)) (2018/C 011/09)", in the Official Journal of the European Union, 2 January 2016, online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016IP0019>. "The current concept of Europe; collective assistance within the EU pursuant to Article 42 paragraph 7 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the

Bundestag's rights of participation", online at <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/396620/Kollektiver-Beistand-in-der-EU.pdf>. "EU-Bündnisfall: Rechtliche Grundlagen und praktische Auswirkungen" on the website of the German Bundestag, 20 January 2016, online at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/de/article/20160119STO10518/eu-bundnisfall-rechtliche-grundlagen-und-praktische-auswirkungen>.