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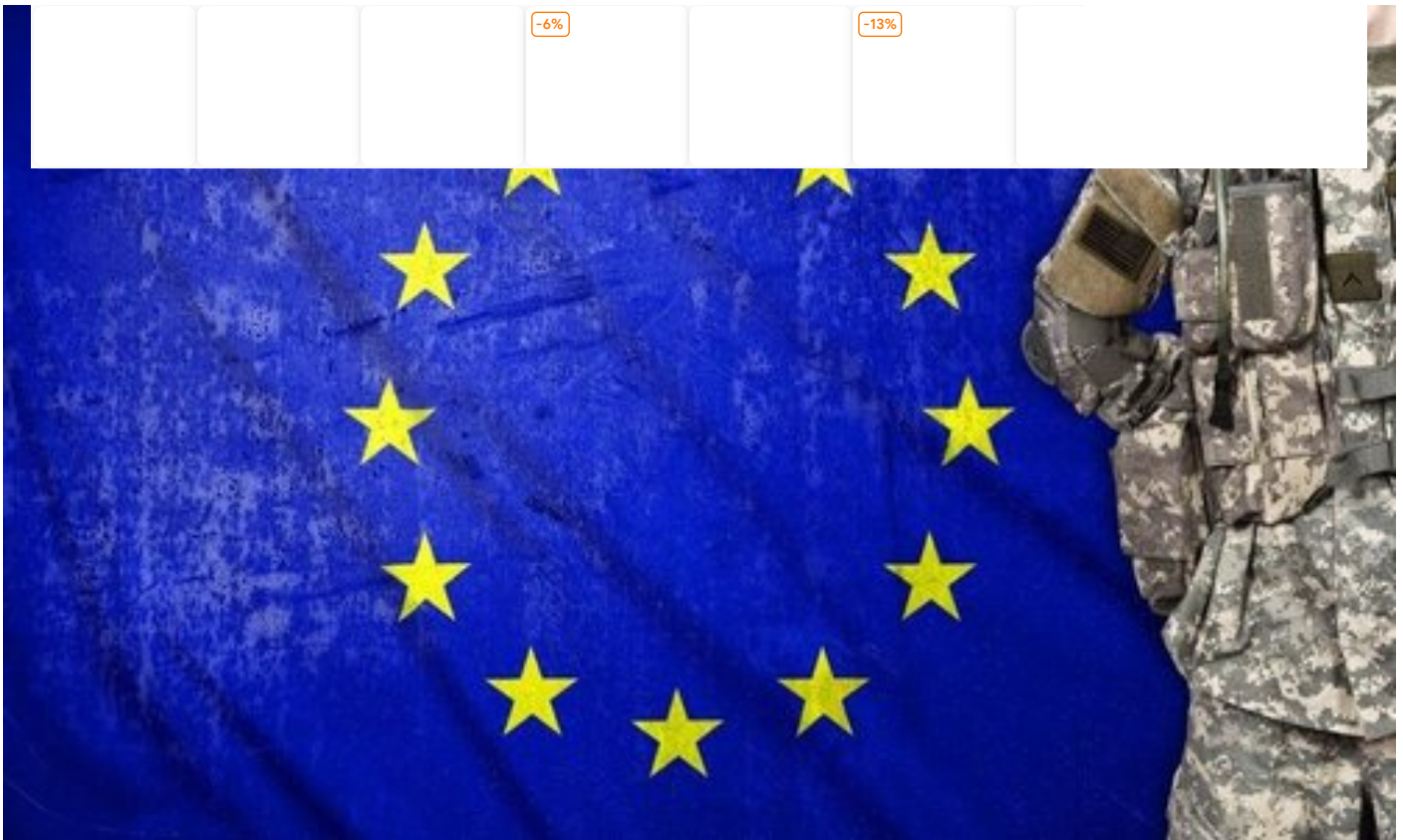
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ARTICLE

Europe Is Preparing for War - And They're No Longer Hiding It





BY PNW STAFF DECEMBER 12, 2025

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Europe is doing something it hasn't done in generations: preparing openly, urgently, and systematically for a major war on the continent. Not a limited skirmish. Not a border dispute. A large-scale, society-shaking conflict reminiscent of the wars our grandparents and great-grandparents endured.

That warning didn't come from some fringe alarmist. It came directly from the head of NATO, who recently cautioned that the alliance must adopt a "wartime mindset" and be ready for a conflict comparable to the world wars of the 20th century. When the top official responsible for Europe's collective defense uses that kind of language, it's not a slip of the tongue. It's a signal.

And across Europe, governments are acting as though they agree.



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The Largest Military Buildup Since the Cold War

Europe is experiencing the most aggressive military expansion in more than 30 years. Policymakers aren't simply adding a few extra battalions or refreshing aging equipment -- they are rebuilding the continent's defense posture from the ground up, reversing decades of demobilization and budget cuts.

Consider just a few of the dramatic shifts underway:



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Germany is pouring billions of euros into new weapons systems, advanced defense technologies, and logistical capacity. Next year's defense procurement budget is projected to reach record-breaking levels.

Other nations are following suit:

Denmark extended conscription to women and lengthened the required service time.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania maintain universal or lottery-based conscription, preparing new waves of soldiers annually.

Croatia has reinstated a draft it abandoned nearly two decades ago.

Poland is developing plans to conduct mass-scale military training for adult males, hoping to double the size of its army.

Norway has begun reopening Cold War-era bomb shelters and expanding its "total defense" system, preparing civilians and infrastructure for the possibility of large-scale conflict with Russia.

Sweden is upgrading its vast network of 64,000 wartime shelters and revitalizing national civil-defense planning, signaling that it too is bracing for the kind of crisis Europe hoped it would never face again.

These moves aren't sporadic. They're coordinated. Sudden. Simultaneous.

When half a continent shifts into military-industrial gear, it's not coincidence. It's preparation.



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Hospitals Preparing for Tens of Thousands of Casualties

Perhaps even more unsettling is what's happening outside the barracks.

In France, hospitals have been instructed to prepare for a massive armed conflict by early 2026. Planning documents outline scenarios where 10,000 to 50,000 wounded soldiers could require treatment within a few months. Hospitals are being told to expand trauma care capacity, ready supply chains, and coordinate with regional emergency centers in anticipation of wartime conditions.

This isn't routine civil-defense planning. It's not a COVID-style contingency. This is explicit preparation for large-scale military casualties.

Germany is undertaking similar efforts, quietly updating civil-defense frameworks and hospital networks to handle mass injuries in the event of war on European soil.

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The NATO chief's warning that Europe must prepare for conflicts on the scale of the world wars was not a metaphor. Those wars were total conflicts involving entire societies -- not just armies. Factories, hospitals, railways, politics, and culture were drawn into the struggle.

When he said Europe must return to a "wartime mindset," he meant preparing for exactly that kind of comprehensive challenge:

Fully mobilized economies

Expansive militaries

Hardened infrastructure

Civilian readiness

Rapid wartime production

National survival as a strategic objective

Across the continent, leaders are speaking more bluntly about Russia's intentions. Many now believe Moscow is preparing for a long confrontation with the West -- not just a limited conflict in Ukraine, but a broader strategic challenge that could eventually reach NATO territory.

European officials are no longer asking whether Russia might become a threat. They're acting as if that moment is inevitable unless the continent vastly strengthens its defenses.

Why Now? Why All at Once?

Europe cut defense budgets for 30 years, assuming permanent peace. That era is over. The combined factors driving the buildup include:

Russia proving it is willing to launch large-scale invasions.

Uncertainty about long-term U.S. commitment to European defense.

A munitions and manpower gap that could leave Europe dangerously exposed.

A realization that the post-Cold War order is collapsing.

Europe has awakened to the reality that if conflict comes, it may not be small, containable, or short-lived. It may require mobilizing entire societies -- not just professional armies.

The Unspoken Conclusion



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If peace with Russia is around the corner, none of this makes sense.
If war with Russia is coming, everything suddenly does.

Europe is no longer behaving like a region drifting toward conflict.
It is behaving like a region bracing for it.

And when NATO leaders warn us to prepare for a war reminiscent of the world wars, we would be wise to take them at their word.

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