



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on March 31, 2026

Iran War Silver Lining: NATO's Death Knell?

In a rare silver-lining moment, the war against Iran is causing U.S. leaders to rethink America's relationship with NATO.

If a recent message from President Donald Trump to European leaders is to be taken seriously, the collective defense pact central to NATO membership is already nullified. Trump [said](#) Tuesday morning in a Truth Social message to European leaders, "You'll have to start learning how to fight for yourself, the U.S.A. won't be there to help you anymore, just like you weren't there for us." The president's preceding sentences indicate his frustration was triggered by Europe's refusal to help secure the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has effectively shut down. Trump:



AP Images
Marco Rubio

All of those countries that can't get jet fuel because of the Strait of Hormuz, like the United Kingdom, which refused to get involved in the decapitation of Iran, I have a suggestion for you: Number 1, buy from the U.S., we have plenty, and Number 2, build up some delayed courage, go to the Strait, and just TAKE IT.

This isn't the first time Trump has gotten angry with Europe for refusing to help fight the war in Iran.

Access Denied

U.S. officials are also upset at NATO member nations that denied American military access to their bases during the war. Those nations include Spain, Italy, the U.K. (which initially blocked American access before opening up for "defensive" or "collective self-defense" missions), and France, which restricts access to its bases except for U.S. aircraft that aren't involved in the war.

Trump called out France on Tuesday. "The Country of France wouldn't let planes headed to Israel, loaded up with military supplies, fly over French territory," he [said](#) on Truth Social. "France has been VERY UNHELPFUL with respect to the 'Butcher of Iran,' who has been successfully eliminated! The U.S.A. will REMEMBER!!!"

In Germany, where more American soldiers are stationed than in any other European nation, the ascending Alternative for Germany (AfD) party called for the United States to pull out all its troops. "AfD co-leader, Tino Chrupalla, told a party gathering in east Germany on Saturday that the country should chase an 'independent' foreign policy, starting with the removal of American soldiers," [according](#) to reports.

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth also made comments on Tuesday indicating growing American disillusionment with NATO. "You don't have much of an alliance if you have countries that are not willing to stand with you when you need them," he [said](#). "A lot has been laid bare.... When we ask for



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additional assistance ... we get questions, or roadblocks, or hesitation.”

Rubio’s Remarks

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who’s been a NATO cheerleader his entire political career, issued more measured yet equally critical comments. “If NATO is just about us defending Europe if they’re attacked but then denying us basing rights when we need them, that’s not a very good arrangement,” Rubio [said](#). “That’s a hard one to stay engaged in and say this is good for the United States. So all that’s going to have to be reexamined. All of it’s going to have to be reexamined.”

A reporter suggested to Rubio that that the general view in Europe is that the United States was already in the process of abandoning the alliance. The reporter [said](#):

I recently has spent some time in Europe, and basically what they say is that it’s the U.S. which is sending confusing messages to us, it’s the U.S. which is planning to disengage from Europe, it’s the U.S. which doesn’t seem to be really willing to team up with NATO when it comes to moving forward in Europe, and this explains the reason why we are being very cautious dealing with the Americans when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz in particular.

Rubio didn’t buy it. He said they’re lying. Rubio:

Well, if that’s what someone in Europe told you, that person is very disingenuous because the United States has tens of thousands of troops stationed throughout that region, billions of dollars of weaponry staged throughout Europe — all of it there to defend Europe. Not to defend America. To defend Europe from attack. All over it. The United States is — without the United States, there is no NATO. I mean, everyone recognizes that, including NATO. If we decided tomorrow that we were going to remove our troops from Europe, that would be the end of NATO. So they know that. And that commitment — we haven’t moved troops out of NATO. So anyone who said that is not being honest, is not — I think they’re playing games.

Rubio finished by echoing Hegseth’s sentiments. “At the end of the day it’s very simple,” he said. “NATO is an alliance, and an alliance means it has to be mutually beneficial. It cannot be a one-way street. Let’s hope we can fix it. We’ll have time to address it after. Right now we’re focused on this operation.”

To the Europeans, it may indeed look like the Trump administration already abandoned the alliance. As soon as he got back into office, Trump began applying immense pressure on Europe to boost defense spending. And it has worked. Several nations, including Germany, Poland, and a collection of Scandinavian countries, have significantly increased defense spending and training. And they’ve become better equipped to protect themselves as a result.

What’s in It for the U.S.?

During his talk with reporters, Rubio also raised an important question. “What is in it for the United States?”

The answer: nothing.

NATO was never designed to benefit Americans. That’s why it hasn’t. As we’ve [reported](#) before, the



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agenda behind NATO has always been to grow it into a global military arm of the United Nations, and do so while conveniently draining America of money and power. A U.S. exit from NATO would not only bring American troops and resources back home, but it would all but assuredly end NATO in its current form, given that the United States still accounts for 62 percent of the alliance's total military spending.

Severing ties with NATO would also align with the wise advice of Founding Fathers such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who prescribed "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none." NATO is the very definition of an entangling alliance.

Will the American people be fortunate enough to get a present as great as a NATO exit out the debacle that is this war in Iran? One could only hope, but given this administration's record of saying the right things but failing to follow through, the American people should not hold their breath. But they should certainly call their elected officials and tell them to start putting America first by pulling out of international entangling alliances such as NATO. You can learn more [here](#).



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