



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 16, 2012

Swiss Military Preparing for EU Meltdown Scenario

As the growing economic crisis continues to wreak havoc throughout the European Union, the armed forces of tiny Switzerland are preparing to deal with a potential EU disaster that could see refugees flood across the borders amid widespread unrest and chaos. Top Swiss officials have warned that if escalating turmoil were to spill across the border, Switzerland, which is not a member of the EU, will be ready to tackle it.



Among the now widely cited preparations was a two-week military training exercise conducted in mid-September dubbed "[Stabilo Due](#)." The drill, which saw thousands of Swiss troops, including air force and special operations forces, deployed throughout the Alpine nation, was aimed at ensuring military readiness to deal with growing EU instability and surging violence in several European countries.

Various Swiss media outlets [reported](#) that the exercise dealt with the potential threat of warring factions and internal unrest within Switzerland sparked by the ongoing financial crisis in the EU, which could easily spread. Also part of the plan were preparations to handle a mass influx of refugees from crisis-plagued nations like Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain, and even France.

"The exercise concept of STABILO DUE is based on a scenario that supposes the instability of a geographic area in Europe specifically defined for the occasion," the Swiss federal government [explained](#) on its website. "Switzerland also knows disorder, attacks and acts of violence. This extraordinary situation scenario aims to check the support provided to the cantons in subsidiary undertakings as well as the conduct and engagement of the operational reserve of the army."

Separately, defense officials were reportedly drawing up plans to ready as many as four battalions of military police at strategic points throughout Switzerland including airports, key facilities, and Geneva-based international organizations, according to news reports. Those efforts could include more than 1,500 troops if the proposal, set to be submitted before the end of the year, is approved.

Switzerland, of course, is famous for its neutrality, stability, and wealth. Even during the ongoing crisis swamping the EU and especially eurozone countries that use the single currency, the Swiss economy has performed remarkably well. While average unemployment in the EU is well above 10 percent, for example, in Switzerland, it is under three percent. As the EU economy contracts and member governments drown in debt, the Swiss government has a budget surplus and the economy is still growing. Its GDP per capita is about double the EU average.

However, Switzerland is surrounded on all sides by the imploding EU, and the Swiss economy depends heavily on trade with Europe and its massive banking sector. So no matter how well Swiss policy makers and voters handle the country's internal affairs, the tiny nation of less than 8 million will never be able to completely insulate itself from the escalating chaos in the region.

Swiss defense officials recognize that. "I can't exclude that in the coming years we may need the army," Defense Minister Ueli Maurer told a military-focused magazine in Switzerland, warning about the increasing amount of violence throughout Europe. Maurer has also been sounding the alarm because



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most European governments have been left in vulnerable positions thanks to plummeting military spending in recent decades, he said, making them potential targets for “blackmail.”

“It’s not excluded that the consequences of the financial crisis in Switzerland can lead to protests and violence,” a spokesperson for the Swiss defense ministry [told](#) CNBC. “The army must be ready when the police in such cases requests for subsidiary help.”

Some advocates of Swiss disarmament claimed that the preparations were essentially a devious scheme to keep the militia relevant in a country that has not been at war for centuries. Switzerland requires that every able-bodied male of military age be armed and trained, meaning it has one of the largest armies in the world relative to the size of its population. It can quickly mobilize hundreds of thousands of troops if needed.

Analysts and historians say the practice has helped to keep tiny Switzerland free and independent for centuries, even contributing to the fact that it was able to avoid the two devastating world wars that raged all around it. Anti-militia activists, however, have been waging war on the time-tested system for years in an effort to disarm citizens and disband the traditional citizen army.

Despite the claims of such groups, experts say that the unrest plaguing much of Europe is very real and has the potential to get much worse in an instant. Plus, even if there is only a relatively small chance of serious unrest spreading into Switzerland, analysts said it was better to be ready for whatever problems may come along than to be caught off guard.

“The Swiss are famous for preparing for everything and having an absolutely huge army, relative to their population, to deal with any eventuality,” [observed](#) U.S. Naval War College national security affairs Professor John Schindler, adding that Switzerland was “clearly on to something” as evidenced by its history. “The Swiss have stayed out of the EU — one more thing the very prosperous Swiss are gloating about these days — and they certainly don’t want EU problems spilling over into their peaceful little country.”

According to Schindler, Swiss defense chief Maurer was on “firm ground” when he expressed concerns about the negative implications of Europe’s declining militaries. The security expert warned that the potential for civil unrest and even riots on the continent based on religion or ethnicity was, while largely unacknowledged publicly, well-known among the establishment.

“It’s commonly held by European security insiders that if the next [mass-murdering Norwegian terrorist] Anders Breivik were to target Muslims, not fellow Europeans, things could get unimaginably ugly very quickly,” Schindler added. “It is difficult to see how Europe’s much smaller militaries could cope with massive civil disturbances.”

Meanwhile, as the Swiss prepare to deal with the fallout of the EU’s half-baked policies, European officials are busy [trying to bully Switzerland into raising taxes](#) and accepting the [emerging super-state’s](#) laws automatically. Critics say that aside from being a terrible idea — as evidenced by the ongoing economic implosion currently laying waste to European capitals — such schemes would violate Swiss sovereignty as well as the nation’s long tradition of letting voters have the final say.

Despite being selected for the Nobel Peace Prize in what analysts [said was a cheap attempt to give the embattled entity a public relations boost](#), the EU is currently dealing with massive levels of unrest. From Madrid and Lisbon to Athens and Brussels, riots and violent protests continue to grow, potentially spiraling out of control given the right circumstances.



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Experts say the situation will keep deteriorating as long as the budding supranational regime in Brussels charges ahead while failing to address the root causes of the EU's problems. Instead of adopting honest money and free markets, the super-state's efforts have been [described even by European leaders as a scheme to smash national sovereignty and self-government](#). Respected politicians — even in the European Parliament — have [warned that more violence will eventually be the result](#).

Whether chaos sparked by the crumbling EU will require the deployment of Swiss troops to defend the nation at some point remains unclear — though it is certainly not outside the realm of possibility. Observers and commentators largely agree, however, that preparing for the worst to keep Switzerland free, stable, and independent is a very wise move considering the circumstances.

Photo of Swiss soldiers: AP Images

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