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Security of the Baltic Sea Region Revisited amid the Baltic Centenary

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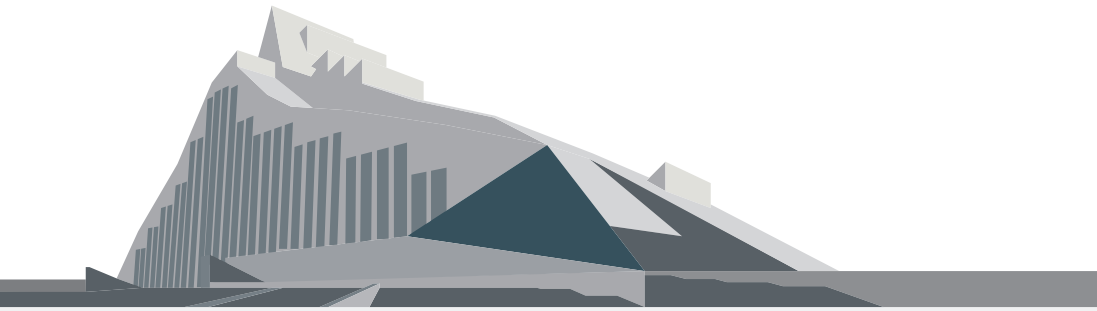

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The Rīga Conference Papers 2018

Security of the Baltic Sea Region Revisited amid the Baltic Centenary

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THE RĪGA CONFERENCE PAPERS 2018

Security of the Baltic Sea Region Revisited amid the Baltic Centenary. The Rīga Conference Papers 2018

The Rīga Conference Papers 2018 offer a collection of articles reflecting on the security of the Baltic Sea region amid the Baltic Centenary. Authors from the region and beyond discuss the transforming regional security policies and realities. Particular attention is devoted to the Transatlantic link, as well as the role of Russia in the regional security constellation. Last but not least, issues beyond the traditional regional security challenges are also addressed.

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Note by the Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs

The Latvian Institute of International Affairs and its partners are pleased to offer you a publication of articles on the security developments in the Baltic Sea region as the Baltic states celebrate their Centenary. Rīga Conference Papers 2018 build on the success of previous annual contributions to the Rīga Conference, endeavour to assess changing realities, and outline the prospects for regional security. An outstanding group of distinguished international experts provide their insights on the transforming regional security policies and realities, the Transatlantic link, the role of Russia, as well as on the issues beyond the traditional security challenges. We acknowledge the generous support provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia and the NATO Public Diplomacy Division. As this publication demonstrates, solidarity and strong partnerships remain instrumental to successfully navigate times of uncertainty and transform regional security landscapes. We hope you enjoy reading this volume!

Andris Sprūds
Director, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

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Address to the Participants of the Rīga Conference 2018

Edgars Rinkēvičs
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

Welcome to Rīga Conference 2018 in our beautiful metropolis of the Baltics – Rīga!

Launched in 2006 at the NATO Summit, the Conference has become a meeting point for all those who have the interest to contribute to prosperity and security of the Baltic Sea region. This year is a long awaited year. Latvia alongside with her closest neighbours Estonia and Lithuania is celebrating the Centenary of the statehood. Whatever lessons we learn from this time of national sovereignty, one is clear – to exercise independence is not easy and this is a never ending task. A hundred years` historical experience and memory has strengthened our resolve to ensure that Latvia today and in the future is a trustworthy and a reliable member of the international community. We live in times when a rules-based and predictable international order is getting more and more paramount for the peace, security, and wellbeing of a small or a medium size country. Latvia's history experience clearly tells that this is a pill against global Hobbesian future.

I should note that the first Rīga conference organised in 2006 under the patronage of President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga was titled "Transforming NATO in a New Global Era". Transformation is still relevant, as are other questions from the previous gatherings in Riga like "Europe at the Crossroads" or "Europe Whole and Free" pulling and sharing our experiences, judgements and thoughts. The main conclusion from debates in previous Conferences is that Europe and its transatlantic partners must spare no effort and explore every avenue to stay united, to protect our common values and shared interests. It is especially important in modern times when we are faced with growing number of pressures brought by current geopolitical change.

By responding to security needs of every NATO ally, the Alliance until now has demonstrated readiness to act and provide its collective defence umbrella irrespective of geography. It has demonstrated that it is guided by a strategic interest to ensure Europe stays whole, free, and at peace and that its doors are open to any nation that is willing and able to contribute to the security of the Euro-Atlantic family. Answering to a changing global geopolitics, NATO allies have started to increase their defence budgets in order to upgrade their military capabilities. Latvia already spends 2% of GDP for her defence needs with a clear emphasis on capability building and permanent readiness to host appropriate size NATO contingents in the Baltic region of NATO. I encourage all Allies to follow our example and increase their defence spending at least to 2% of GDP. This is a way to make the Alliance relevant in years to come and Europe strategically more able.

And last but not least, it is highly commendable that the Riga Conference always tries to detect and zoom out on a whole spectrum of topics that forms and will form a basis for stability and security of the Baltic Sea region. Among those is the outlook for European economic performance as underpinning our security and ability to bring a difference in EU`s immediate neighbourhood and globally. It affects a pattern of relations with neighbours in east and south, relations with Russia and prospects for a European footprint in the wider Middle East.

Let me note that I highly appreciate your dedication and the decision to come to Latvia, Rīga this year in order to make the Rīga Conference more purpose-driven and substantive.

Preface.
Baltic Security at the Centenary: Democracies and Modernities

Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga
President of the Republic of Latvia (1999-2007)
President of the World Leadership Alliance / Club de Madrid

The 2018 Rīga Conference takes place in a year of joyful centenary celebrations for countries on the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. In Riga, it joins a long list of special events celebrating the centenary of the Declaration of Independence of Latvia. But this same year also marks the centenaries of the Declarations of Independence of Estonia and Lithuania, as well as the renewed statehood of Poland as a republic. Finland misses being in the same group by merely a month, having declared its independence in December 1917. All in all, the 12 months between December 1917 and November 1918 changed the geography of this region, giving five nations a right to national independence recognised in international law. Unlike Ukraine, which also achieved statehood, but only for a brief time, the five littoral countries were able to solidify their statehood before the start of World War II.

Those all-too-brief interwar decades were crucial in establishing the *de jure* legitimacy of all five of these nations, allowing them to keep their rights in international law despite military occupations from both the east and the west during World War II. After the end of the Second World War, Finland was the only one of the five to maintain its independence, at the cost of a "Finlandisation" that was certainly worth the price, when compared to the satellite status of Poland or the illegal annexation of the three Baltic states by the Soviet Union. Granted, that life did not stop entirely for the decades under imposed communism, it certainly was not a life of freedom, nor did it allow for the economic prosperity that countries west of the Iron Curtain were able to enjoy.

When I took office as President of Latvia in 1999, I could not believe the number of Western journalists who would come to me with questions about how we were faring as a "former Soviet Republic". There came a point where I had had enough and told one of them bluntly: "Young man, I will ask you to step outside and wash out your mouth with soap if I hear once more this insulting designation. I'd like you to remember that an independent republic of Latvia was born in 1918 and that we are now living in a republic that has *renewed* its independence in 1991, after a long illegal occupation by a foreign power." Words do matter and the wrong words have a pernicious influence on thinking and attitudes.

By now, the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea have enjoyed a longer period of peace and independence than at any time during the past century, and for this we must be grateful. We no longer stand alone, each nation tempting as easy prey for aggressively-minded and rapacious neighbours. We have achieved what our forebears did not have the ability or the foresight to achieve during our first decades of independence. We now stand together as free and willing partners in large, powerful alliances, both continent-wide and transcontinental. As five member-nations of the EU, and four of us also as members of NATO, at last we have a voice, and it is up to us how loud we can manage this voice to be. Having bought our independence dearly 100 years ago, we value that independence today, and are ready to stand firm in its defence.

We have yet to see how the rest of Europe will mark the centenary of the Armistice signed on 11 November 1918, but we can be certain that it will not be forgotten. World War I was meant to be "the war to end all wars", but sadly, it wasn't. The ensuing Treaty of Versailles was meant to create a new stability in Europe but, sadly, it didn't. American president Woodrow Wilson had let the genie out of the bottle when he had included the right of self-determination of nations among the 14 points of his January 8, 1918 speech to Congress. Ten new nations took him at his word, as they did Aristide Briand, even if Woodrow Wilson may have meant something somewhat different when he talked about the 'right to self-determination'. The Wilson declaration and its idealistic vision certainly established the United States as truly a "leader of the

free world", a role that lasted a full century and is only now being put into question.

Historians have not been kind to the other statesmen who laboured to hammer out the Versailles treaty of 1919. They have been likened to sleepwalkers unaware of the consequences of what they were doing, unwittingly preparing the ground for the world conflagration that would flare up less than 20 years later. They have been unfavorably compared to "real statesmen" – brilliant diplomats like Metternich and Talleyrand, representing the great powers of Europe, who were supposed to have ensured 100 years of peace and stability in Europe after the treaty of Vienna. This makes for good narrative but bad political history.

Think back on your high-school history (let us hope it is still being taught in our "competencies-oriented" modern schools) and you will have to agree that Europe was far from living a peaceful fairy-tale after the end of the Napoleonic wars. There were wide-spread uprisings in 1848, there was a vicious war between Germany and France in 1870, there was a fierce war of independence going on in Greece, there were battles for the unification of Italy. The whole continent was a seething cauldron of social inequality and discontent, out of which Europe brought forth two equally poisonous doctrines that promised illusory solutions: first Marxism and its version of socialism and then fascism and national-socialism. While 19th century Europeans saw themselves as the ultimate flower of human evolution and civilization, they paved the way for a 20th century that saw both heights of noble humanism and unprecedented depths of human depravity.

People of my generation still living have shared more years of the past 100 than many of them would like to remember. It has been a turbulent century, filled with bright hopes and bright achievements, but marred by far too much bloodshed, inhumanity, suffering and injustice. There have been years that many of us did not live, but only survived. All of us hope that the next 100 years will be better.

Today we are free men and women, enjoying independence and democracy. Can we look forward to the next century as better than the one before? It will not depend on us alone, but we certainly should do what is in our power to make it so. Are

we justified in our expectations of continued peace, security, ever -growing prosperity and social justice? Those are clear and important goals and there is nothing wrong with setting one's aspirations high. The real question is: will the rest of the world allow us to grow and to develop, even if our own will is strong and our determination firm?

It has become a cliché to remind ourselves that we now live in a world that has become globalised in every possible sense of the word. The cliché is only too true and global interconnectivity is a reality, regardless of whether we believe in it or not. All parts of the planet will be affected if we are unable to control the unrelenting effects of climate change. Armed conflicts in one locality will continue to cause vast waves of consequences in localities far distant from them. Disdain for international agreements will breed mutual distrust and possible retaliation. Disregard for social inequality will sooner or later lead to explosions of civil unrest and chaotic revolutions. All this and more will be in store for future generations, unless the causes are addressed, and the consequences avoided.

Destructive ideas born in any one place will spread like the plague across borders, just like they ever have, except that now they will spread at lightning speed across cyberspace, and virtual reality is going to compete more and more with "real reality" such as we have known it. Serious challenges will face those truths that we had though self-evident at that had taken centuries of painful efforts to develop. There will be a continued need for women and men of good will to come together and continue to talk about all these challenges, to clarify their ideas, and seek new solution to problems, both old and new.

As we think about the next 100 years, the only certainty they promise is uncertainty and constant, accelerating change. No country will be able to rest on its laurels, no matter how gilded they might be. Even the super-rich will not be allowed a free berth on that ship, even the happiest and most prosperous countries will not be spared eternal vigilance, hard work and a continuous reevaluation of their course. The one thing we can expect for sure is the unexpected, hence our best preparation for it is to be strong enough and smart enough to face up to whatever we have to

confront. I am proud of the fact that I was present at the birth of the first Rīga Conference, connected as it was to the 2006 NATO summit in our city. I am pleased that in this, Latvia's centennial year, the World Leadership Alliance / Club de Madrid, of which I am president, has brought a conference of its own to take place in conjunction with this year's Rīga Conference. We need many venues for the world's best minds to come together and I am glad that Riga is one of such places.

The next century will be no kinder to sleep-walkers than any other century before it. So, let us do what we can to remain alert and awake.

Transforming Regional Security Policies and Realities

Regional Security of the Baltic States: Challenges and Solutions

Andis Kudors

For the last four years – since the Kremlin exercised the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 – the public debate on national security unchangingly is keeping its momentum in the Baltic states. The topic of these discussions could be divided into two major themes: 1) raising security in the regional and NATO dimensions; 2) strengthening the Baltic own defence capabilities. There have been lots of achievements in both areas since 2014. While the debate on hybrid threats was prevalent after Crimean annexation, a few years later, the attention was focused on a broader range of issues, including NATO's mobility and readiness to provide an appropriate counterstrike in the event of a conventional war involving not only mobile combat groups but vast armed forces.

The NATO Warsaw Summit decided to deploy four multinational battalion-size battle groups on a rotational basis into Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Those forces are led by the UK, Canada, Germany and the United States, respectively. The aim is to deter Russia and to demonstrate to the potential aggressor the readiness to trigger the 40,000-strong rapid-reaction force and a full-scale NATO counter-assault.[1] Also, the Baltic governments are not sitting idly; since 2018, Latvia and Lithuania followed Estonia with allocating 2% of GDP in their defence spendings. The mechanisation of all three armies continues, as well as frequent military exercises aimed at training both Baltic soldiers and improving cooperation among the forces of Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and the Allies. One of the specific challenges to which the

[1] Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Peter B. Doran. "Securing the Suwałki Corridor, Strategy, Statecraft, Deterrence, and Defence," Washington DC: *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 2018, p. 12.

answers have been sought is the Suwalki Corridor connecting Lithuania and Poland and an essentially important landfill for the arrival of NATO troops in the Baltic states by land. However, we should recall that there are also air and waterways that will be used if necessary.

It is also important to analyse the potential threats and to raise awareness about the processes taking place in Russia, which may affect the Kremlin's foreign policy decisions in one direction or another. The Baltic countries, as the frontline states, have increased analysis of their neighbour, which can also be useful for Western allies in developing an effective foreign policy in relations with Russia. It must be concluded that the West as a whole has failed to find the most appropriate approach in relations with Russia. Attempts of *engagement* and *reset* have not led to the expected result. This, however, does not mean that we should completely abandon the dialogue with Moscow. Rather, it must be understood that the dialogue is not an end in itself but an instrument. In addition, the collective west has to speak out from the positions of power with Vladimir Putin and the Russian elite, because Moscow has a great difficulty to understand any other language.

This article is designed as an insight into some of the security challenges and solutions in the security of the Baltic states. The article begins with what any security discussion should be started, namely, the threat. Representatives from NATO member states are no longer ashamed to talk of Russia as a possible source of threats. This is followed by two interconnected issues of NATO's agility, mobility and the Suwalki corridor. In conclusion, the practical steps taken by Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to strengthen their defence, including by means of updating the principle of comprehensive national defence, are examined.

Russia's factor in the Baltic (in)security

There is an important question of whether Russia intends to attack the Baltic states in the short or medium term. First of all, observations have already shown that Putin and his elite are more

in need of keeping tension with NATO rather than of a large-scale war in which Russia would lose due to disproportionate forces. Putin needs this tension to justify the necessity and indispensability of the existence of his regime. A message about Russia as a 'besieged fortress' is well suited to address the less educated Russian public, which associates the former KGB officer Putin with a secure and decisive 'national leader' who is the only one able to stop NATO expansion at the borders of Russia.

However, maintaining *status quo* of his kleptocratic regime should be regarded as Putin's main foreign policy motivation enabling the elite to control a large part of the country's resources. Significantly, the Kremlin permits communists and extreme right-wing ideologies to be promoted in Russia, but not the liberal democratic ideas gaining strength. Communism and Russian nationalism, which, unlike Western nationalism, are closely linked to the idea of an empire as a natural form of Russia's existence, does not endanger Putin's great state idea as centrist synthesis of both approaches. On the other hand, liberal democracy (and democracy in general) is being demonised in Russia, because a real political process (rather than a fiction as it is now) would take place under it with the power regularly changing hands. This is in no way acceptable to the Putin's elite – the billionaires who control resources without any competition under oversight of just one arbitrator – Putin himself. Therefore, the influence of the West, which would bring about a democratic change in Russia's neighbouring countries and Russia itself, is being demonised. How to tune Russian public against the West? It would be difficult to explain that, for example, one of the Western values – the rule of law – is evil. It is easier to tell, however, that the West is immoral and NATO will soon attack Russia.

How to prove to the Russian people that NATO is an aggressor? Here is the place for the information warfare – *reflexive control*, which involves actions by one country with predictable reactions from other countries. Russia illegitimately invades Crimea and is waging war in Donbas, thus causing anxiety in the Baltic states with a logical response of improving their defence capabilities. The Kremlin propagandists elide Russia's aggression and begin the narrative with the 'militarisation of the Baltic states'. This is

included in the big message about 'aggressive nature of NATO' and its 'expansion'. This, of course, was not the main motivation of the Kremlin in the annexation of Crimea, but rather is an additional dimension.

This does not mean that the Baltic states were not able to show any reaction or strengthen their defence capabilities. The element of unpredictability stays throughout the course of Russia's history and we have often witnessed rapid changes and catastrophes that may prove dangerous to our neighbours. We cannot be sure that the cult of war and aggression bred in Russia over many years will not spin out of control. If one were to compare the Baltic countries to three houses, they should have well locked and strong wooden or metal doors instead of cardboard or paper doors in any case, even if it is not clear whether a thief would visit them one night. 'Cardboard doors' were our defence in the beginning of the 1990s, when there was a lack of funding for everything, including security. Also, we have a neighbour whose house was plundered – it is Ukraine.

Another Putin's motivation to launch a war in the Baltic states could be linked with his intention to weaken the collective west and the wish to destroy NATO. This would probably happen if after the Russian invasion in the Baltic states the counter-steps taken by other strongest NATO members would not follow. However, this kind of scenario was theoretically possible before 2014, but not now, when an attack on the Baltic states would be immediately received by an immediate military response from the Baltic states and almost automatically trigger the reaction of other NATO member states.

Speed of the NATO reaction

Although the readiness of NATO to defend its member states has been strongly articulated over the last four years, there are still some concerns about the speed and effectiveness of the possible response of NATO forces in the Baltics. Ideally, NATO should by its presence eliminate the possibility of any military invasion. The Alliance troops deployed here have support functions – if

an attack takes place, it should be delayed until additional forces arrive.[2] Since 2014, there have been many speculations in the public sphere on how quickly the numerically and technically superior Russian forces would be able to occupy the capitals of the Baltic states in a potential event of the attack. For example, political observer Edward Lucas of *The Economist* expressed in 2014 the idea that three hours would be enough for Russia to capture the Baltic states.[3] Meanwhile, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the former adviser to the U.S. President Jimmy Carter, speaking in the U.S. Senate Committee of the Armed Forces, said in 2015 that Russian forces could occupy Riga and Tallinn in a course of a single day.[4] It is important, however, to take into account the fact that both experts expressed these ideas at a time when the forces of the United States, Britain, Germany, Canada and other countries were not yet deployed in the Baltic states and Poland. In the case of such allegations, it is also necessary to take into account the purpose for which they are expressed. Both Lucas and Brzezinski spoke about hours and days in order to actualise the security problems of the Baltic states and encourage politicians to make important decisions about security in the Baltic Sea region. For example, Brzezinski emphasised the need to deploy U.S. combat units in the Baltic countries, thus deterring Russia from thinking of an invasion. Russian propagandists, on the other hand, are talking about the same topic in order to intimidate the Balts and to seed the distrust of NATO.

Commander of the Estonian Special Forces Colonel Riho Uhtegi, referring to time frames, states that "They can arrive in Tallinn in two days. But they will die in Tallinn. And they know it... They will receive fire from every corner, at every step."[5] One can agree with

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[2] "NATO samita nezināmais – alianses vienprātība, LV portālam: Māris Cepurītis, LATO valdes loceklis," *LV portāls*, July 10, 2018, https://lvportals.lv/viedokli/297209-nato-samita-nezinamais-alianses-vienpratiba-2018

[3] Edward Lucas. "Against Putin, It's Time to Channel JFK. Obama needs to hark back to Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech," *Politico*, August 22, 2014, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/08/only-obama-can-stop-putin-now-110264

[4] "Bžežinskis: Putins Rīgu un Tallinu var sagrābt vienā dienā," *Delfi.lv*, January 22, 2015, http://www.delfi.lv/news/arzemes/bzezinskis-putins-rigu-un-tallinu-var-sagrabt-viena-diena.d?id=45487322

[5] Molly K. Mckew. "'They Will Die in Tallinn': Estonia Girds for War With Russia," *Politico*, July 10, 2018, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/07/10/they-will-die-in-tallinn-estonia-girds-for-war-with-russia-218965

the Estonian military that in discussions about the vulnerability of the Baltic states, an important factor that is sometimes neglected is the desire of the people to fight and to defend their land.

Not only political decisions, but also road infrastructure in Europe that is not always suitable for transportation of armaments, as well as time-consuming bureaucratic obstacles, determine how quickly troops from other NATO countries can arrive here. For example, in order to get the U.S. units in Germany to Poland or to one of the Baltic states, they must obtain permissions from all countries whose territories need to be crossed.[6] One of the issues that was considered at the NATO July 11-12, 2018 summit in Brussels is military mobility – improving coordination and infrastructure. NATO defence Ministers supported the Alliance's increased preparedness – the so-called 4x30 initiative that will allow the Alliance to mobilise 30 mechanised battalions, or 30,000 men, 30 airborne squadrons, or 300 aircraft and 30 warships or submarines within 30 days. These units will act as support for the existing NATO Response Force.

Suwalki Corridor

The speed and strength of NATO response and the mobility of troops are linked with the issue of the Suwalki Corridor, which the Russian forces could theoretically close during a war between Russia and NATO, thus preventing land communications between the Baltic states and other NATO members. The land segment between the Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus has attracted an increased attention from military personnel and security experts since the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) in a study about Suwalki Corridor points out, that *space, time*, and *scale* are the notions which apply in the context of the corridor.[7] Western

[6] "NATO samita nezināmais – alianses vienprātība, LV portālam: Māris Cepurītis, LATO valdes loceklis," *LV portāls*, July 10, 2018, https://lvportals.lv/viedokli/297209-nato-samita--nezinamais-alianses-vienpratiba-2018

[7] Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Peter B. Doran. "Securing the Suwałki Corridor, Strategy, Statecraft, Deterrence, and Defence," Washington DC: *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 2018, p. 3.

forces need to be deployed close to the Suwalki Corridor and to demonstrate to their potential opponent that any military advance will be properly stopped (*space*). The Polish and Lithuanian forces (including the paramilitary forces), in co-operation with the allied forces, have to keep the corridor open until the arrival of NATO enforcements (*time*). Due to asymmetric and disproportional distribution of NATO-Russia forces, the advantages of Russia in this region are only short-term advantages, because in the case of war, the size of the force with time can change in NATO favour (*scale*).[8]

The militarisation of the Kaliningrad region and Russia's Western Military District continues. According to open sources, the total number of active forces in the Western Military District of Russia is 330,000.[9] CEPA researchers stress that in order to successfully resist a Russian attack, each of the Baltic states needs: "early warning of Moscow's covert subversion of a targeted area that can be thwarted or contained; capable forces that can respond quickly; and adequate infrastructure and prepositioned equipment to allow for the swift deployment of NATO troops."[10] If we can be more or less sure about the first two conditions, then the third one still requires more work. In order to improve its roads, ports and bridges, NATO has to cooperate with the European Union. For the next programming period the EU funds will be available for the first time in the field of defence of the Member States. It is important for Europe to develop military logistics, or 'military Schengen'. Latvia's Minister of Defence Raimonds Bergmanis has indicated that our scientists with the help of their counterparts from other countries will be able to use EU funds in the development of the military industry.[11]

As an authoritarian and centralised state, Russia can make decisions quickly, while NATO is a community of nations and

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[8] Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Peter B. Doran. "Securing the Suwałki Corridor, Strategy, Statecraft, Deterrence, and Defence," Washington DC: *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 2018, p. 3.

[9] Ibid., p.4.

[10] Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Peter B. Doran. "Securing the Suwałki Corridor, Strategy, Statecraft, Deterrence, and Defence," Washington DC: *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 2018.

[11] "Virzāmies uz visaptverošu valsts aizsardzību, LV portālam: Raimonds Bergmanis, aizsardzības ministrs," *LV portāls*, April 03, 2018, https://lvportals.lv/viedokli/294543-virzamies-uz-visaptverosu-valsts-aizsardzibu-2018

taking joint decisions may take more time. However, the Russian side must take into account that in the event of its invasion, the Baltic states will begin resistance without any harmonisation, and also other NATO members such as the United States, Britain, Poland, etc. can carry out its counter-measures against Russia straight away – in the first hours of the conflict, besides that, the strikes can be targeted not only against the invading Russian forces in the Baltic states, but also in Russia's own territory. CEPA researchers also point out that "in the case of the United States, this could mean strikes deep inside Russia against infrastructure and energy facilities, as well as cyber attacks to shut down Russian communications, disrupt economic activity, and provoke societal dysfunction."[12] And even more to that – "the United States may even need to expressly reassert that its extended (nuclear) deterrent is the backbone of its ironclad commitment to Article 5. Any Russian use of nuclear weapons will be met with an overwhelming and devastating NATO nuclear response – thereby undermining Moscow's confidence that it can ever prevent the injection of U.S. and NATO forces into a contested theatre."[13]

Western countries are no longer the same as before Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the pink glasses are off, especially in the defence institutions of the NATO member states. The Kremlin should no longer expect the indecisiveness in the NATO capitals. The activation of Article 5 of the NATO will be almost automatic rather than a result of long negotiations.

"Think global, act local!"

All three Baltic countries as the frontline states in the vicinity of Russia are more sensitive towards the aggressive vibrations beyond their borders than their allies in Western Europe. Although in the course of joining NATO, the Baltic states made the commitment to achieve the level of spending equivalent to 2% of GDP, but in the

[12] Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Peter B. Doran. "Securing the Suwałki Corridor, Strategy, Statecraft, Deterrence, and Defence," Washington DC: *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 2018, p.10.

[13] Ibid.

years of crisis defence was one of the sectors most affected by austerity measures cutting the budget by almost a half in Latvia. The events of 2014 in Ukraine contributed to the acceleration of the financing of this sector. The decisions of the NATO Wales Summit also ensured Latvia's and Lithuania's decision to achieve 2% in 2018. Estonia has devoted 2% of its GDP to defence spending for several years, while according to the *IHS Markit* data, the growth of Latvian and Lithuanian defence budgets has been the highest in the world in recent years.[14] Lithuania's defence spending has risen from 267 million euros in 2013 to 724 million euros in 2017.[15] Estonia plans to allocate 523,6 million euros or 2,14% of GDP to defence in 2018.[16]

Following the NATO Summit in Brussels in July 2018, Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs called to spend 2.5% of GDP for defence. Such a move, which is considered by Lithuania and Estonia too, would provide a reserve for defence. In addition, it should be taken into account that the share of defence spending is calculated for the previous year, so if the economy is growing rapidly, then the estimated amount already calculated may turn out to be, for example, 1.9%. Early warning, air surveillance, anti-air defence, mobility capabilities, land-based combat capabilities and host state support were identified as priorities for the development of the Latvian National Armed Forces. One of the biggest purchases and projects of the Latvian Army is the mechanisation of the Land Force. It includes both the purchase of combat reconnaissance armoured vehicles from the UK and the continued supply of self-propelled howitzers from Austria. In 2018, Latvia will receive Stinger air defence systems from Denmark.

In Estonia, the biggest purchases in 2018 are the replacement of assault rifles, the continuation of the acquisition of the combat vehicles CV90 and the purchase of large-calibre ammunition. In the coming years, Lithuania will receive new armoured vehicles worth EUR 385 million, anti-tank rocket systems for USD 28 million

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[14] Gunta Gleizde. "2% no IKP: Kā mūs aizsargās?' Budžeta kāpums algās, kaujas mašīnās un ekipējumā," *Delfi.lv*, December 12, 2017, www.delfi.lv/bizness/budzets_un_nodokli/2-no-ikp-ka-mus-aizsargas-budzeta-kapums-algas-kaujas-masinas-un-ekipejuma.d?id=49564681

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

and other equipment.[17] In Estonia, the largest military exercises since the restoration of independence in 1991 took place in the first half of May 2018. The manoeuvres were attended by over 13,000 active members of the Estonian Armed Forces, reserve, national guard organisation Kaitseliit (Defence League), and troops from other countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania et. al. The main role in the drill was played by the Estonian national guard organisation Kaitseliit. During the exercise, both the battle preparedness and skills of the units of the armed forces and the cooperation between the Kaitseliit and the the armed forces were tested.

Similarly to Estonia, the voluntary National Guard has also become a significant defence structure in Latvia. Since the illegal annexation of Crimea and Russia's aggression in the east of Ukraine in 2014, the number of national guards has increased substantially in Latvia. This indicates the readiness of many Latvians to defend their country. In 2014, the number of recruited guards has almost doubled compared to the previous year, and in 2015, the increase was almost 50%.[18] An informative report on the development of economic incentives for companies employing national guards and reserve soldiers to motivate their regular participation in the training, prepared by the Ministry of Defence, was adopted at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia on December 19, 2017.

Comprehensive defence system

The development of the National Guard will go hand in hand with increasing of the awareness of the Baltic states over the past years about significance of comprehensive national defence in which the military and civilian spheres are intertwined. In 2018, the Amendments to the National Security Law are being drafted

[17] Gunta Gleizde. "2% no IKP: Kā mūs aizsargās?' Budžeta kāpums algās, kaujas mašīnās un ekipējumā," *Delfi.lv*, December 12, 2017, www.delfi.lv/bizness/budzets_un_nodokli/2-no-ikp-ka-mus-aizsargas-budzeta-kapums-algas-kaujas-masinas-un-ekipejuma.d?id=49564681

[18] Dace Skreija. "Krimas faktors stimulē Latvijas Zemessardzi, būtiski audzis uzņemto zemessargu skaits," *Delfi.lv*, July 07, 2018, www.delfi.lv/bizness/budzets_un_nodokli/krimas-faktors-stimule-latvijas-zemessardzi-butiski-audzis-uznemto-zemessargu-skaits.d?id=50220071

in Latvia, which defines the principles of comprehensive national defence and specifies the cases when the Cabinet of Ministers has the right to decide on the mobilisation of national guards and reserve soldiers.[19] An effective mechanism can be achieved through military mobilisation to overcome the threat before the declaration of a state of emergency or the state of war. Changes to the law were necessary, because until now, a large mobilisation is foreseen only during a state of emergency, causing a possible delay. Today's military threat is dynamic, i.e., it can develop without initial necessity for a state of emergency based on indicators for such declaration.

By introducing the new provision, which lay down general principles for the defence of state, the law is supplemented by an article describing the duties and rights of citizens in the event of a military incursion. Among other things, they are urged not to cooperate with illegal administrative authorities and armed units of the aggressor.[20] It is also stipulated that citizens can "exercise civic disobedience by opposing illegal government institutions and armed units of the aggressor; demonstrate armed resistance to such armed units; provide all types of support for civil disobedience and armed resistance actors, as well as for units of the armed forces of NATO or EU member states that implement the military defence of the country, in support of the National Armed Forces and their tasks."[21] Such principles are related both to the specifics of contemporary warfare and the bitter historical experience of Latvia during the Soviet occupation of 1940. The prevailing social mood in Latvia is associated with the desire to never allow the events of 1940 to be repeated.

These changes to the law are a logical continuation of the 2016 amendments to the National Security Law of Latvia, which already extended the definition of war at that time, imposed immediate defence measures in the event of a threat without waiting for a separate decision, as well as a ban on the prohibition of armed resistance. This means that in the event of disrupted command chain, the soldiers of the battalions have the authority to exercise

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[19] Linda Balode. "Nacionālās drošības likumā plāno izmaiņas, par kurām jāzina katram," *LV portāls*, June 19, 2018, https://lvportals.lv/skaidrojumi/296652-nacionalas-drosibas-likuma-plano-izmainas-par-kuram-jazina-katram-2018

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

armed resistance. Estonian military doctrine provides for active resistance to the aggression without delay and a special order from above. This order, known as the Order No.1. was issued by Alexander Einseln, the first Commander of Estonian defence Forces after country's independence.

The description of such mechanisms in the legislation acts is working in three ways: 1) the strengthening of defence capabilities with a clear mechanism of action that makes it impossible not to resist the enemy; 2) raising patriotism of the citizens and informing about their responsibilities and rights during the war; 3) signalling to the potential enemy that the attack on Latvia will become very costly.

Conclusion

Assurance of defence capabilities will not only grow with the messages of NATO representatives about the readiness to defend the member states, but also with real improvements in the speed and mobility of the reaction in Europe. To improve the mobility of NATO forces, the work on the interconnectivity of Germany, Poland, the Baltic states, and the Black Sea region should be continued for the rapid deployment of forces in the case of necessity. Rapid border crossing is critical.

Speed of NATO response depends also on threat identification and decision-making in NATO structures. For a rapid identification of threats, it is necessary to continue and improve communication between NATO security services. Such a rapid exchange of information was evident during the *Zapad-2017* training; it has to continue further. In addition, it must also apply to NATO partners in the region – Finland, Sweden, and Ukraine. In terms of mobility, not only the mobility of NATO forces in general and the ability to quickly arrive in the Baltic states, but also the Baltic forces themselves and already deployed forces of other NATO countries in the Baltic states, are under discussion. The Russian leadership should expect that the surprise actions may not be just their tool.

Apart from purely military issues, one must also consider the vulnerability of the media space and the dependence of the Baltic

states on the energy sector in Russia. Military activity requires good supply of energy resources, fuel, etc. Cyberspace has already been successfully recognised as a war zone, and Russia must expect that the time may come when the West not only protects its own systems, but can also give a painful strike, if necessary.

The Suwalki Corridor from a challenge can turn into a NATO advantage if effective planning and appropriate deployment of forces in the region will continue. The Baltic states have taken fundamentally important steps in improving their defence capabilities, including increasing defence spending to 2%, and considering an even greater increase. The mechanisation of the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian forces will continue, until it reaches the level of a modern European army. In the context of a comprehensive national defence update, potential invaders should expect that not only armoured personnel carriers, but soldiers and even civilians with a high level of motivation for freedom and a spirit of resistance will counter them on the *Day X*.

Unfortunately, many politicians in the West continue to pursue a 'better not to seek trouble' position vis-a-vis Russia, and try to appease a country that has shown itself to be an aggressor in Ukraine. Every now and then the question arises – will NATO with military consolidation in the Baltic states not provoke the Kremlin to any military step? The answer is negative, since Putin may rather be provoked by the weakness of the neighbouring countries, as it was partly in the case of the Crimean annexation. A firm stance and self-confidence of NATO will not provoke Putin – in contrary, it would provide a stabilising effect.

NATO's Conventional Deterrence Posture in the Baltics: Strengths and Weaknesses

Nora Vanaga

The tree NATO Summits after Russia's annexation of Crimea demonstrated Alliance's ability to adapt and reassure its allies (Wales Summit 2014), bring back deterrence concept on its agenda (Warsaw Summit 2016), and to make steps to strengthen its conventional deterrence posture (Brussels Summit 2018). Still, challenges lay ahead in the ways of providing the credibility of the posture. The core question to be addressed is how to overcome the superiority of Russia's conventional forces in the Baltic region which give it a military tactical and operational advantage.

NATO is able to provide both extended deterrence and deterrence by punishment, through the most powerful NATO countries, but mainly via the United States of America. However, unlike the Cold War, the Alliance is not willing to conduct deterrence by punishment, communicating to Russia its deep strike capabilities and not to mention – nuclear capabilities. The corner stone of NATO's deterrence posture during the Cold War was nuclear deterrence with conventional deterrence as a supporting element, but the circumstances have changed. The alliance back then was much more daring as it had a two-layered strategy – deterrence by punishment embracing nuclear and deep strike capabilities, which was actively communicated to the Soviet Union, and extended deterrence provided by conventional forces in Europe.

In the post-2014 geopolitical constellation, NATO's deterrence strategy is purely defensive by its character, which is a fundamental difference from the past. NATO limits itself to extended deterrence,

placing the conventional dimension at the centre of its deterrence posture. The most commonly assessed shortcomings of the alliance's extended deterrence are its political commitment and its reaction. As to the political commitment, the critical voices that questioned the unity of NATO have been silenced, mainly because of the numerous practical steps that member states have carried out in the Baltic region demonstrating political solidarity. Regarding the core of the conventional posture – military dimension – the issues of alliance's reaction and the slowness of its follow-on forces are still unresolved.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the alliance's conventional deterrence posture. Taking the Wales, Warsaw and Brussels NATO summits as milestones, the evolution of NATO's conventional posture will be portrayed, indicating the strong and weak points.

Strengths of NATO deterrence posture

The Alliance has demonstrated unexpected pace and political will in formation of its conventional deterrence posture in the Baltic region. The first common practical steps were taken by the alliance at the Wales Summit a couple of months after the Russian annexation of Crimea and the following invasion of other parts of Eastern Ukraine in early 2014. Because of the short notice, tangible results were hard to be delivered, therefore, the focus was on reassuring Eastern allies and the alliance itself that NATO is able to respond and adapt. In the context of these assurance measures, public attention focused initially on the expansion and intensification of military exercises in eastern member states, as well as the essentially symbolic, temporarily deployment of military units. Allied Airborne Warning & Control System aircraft were conducting an increased number of surveillance flights over NATO's eastern territory, and naval units are temporarily showing presence in the Baltic and the Black Sea.[1] The number of aircraft conducting air policing over the Baltic States also was instantly

[1] Reiner L. Glatz, Martin Zapfe. "NATO Defence Planning Between Wales and Warsaw. Politico-Military Challenges of a Credible Assurance against Russia," *SWP-Comments*, No. 5, January 2016.

increased. Lastly, the establishment of NATO Force Integration Units in the three Baltic states and Poland (also in Romania and Bulgaria) made an important contribution to the Baltic defence because all three NFIU in the Baltic states are plugged into one chain of command and control, being subordinated to the Multinational Corps Northeast at Szczecin, Poland. That gives NATO a better overview of the Baltic operational theatre and coordination of any host nation support activities, especially those planning the deployment of any kind of reaction forces.[2]

But probably the most important addition to the alliance's conventional deterrence posture after Wales were the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and the enhanced NATO Response Force (eNRF). Both form the prime and only formally NATO-assigned instruments to react to crises in the East. The advance units of the VJTF are to be ready to move within two to five days of being alerted. The main follow-on forces are to be ready for deployment within five to seven days. In the absence of forward-stationed combat units, the core function as a "mobile tripwire" fundamentally requires a rapid and assured deployment of the VJTF.[3] Their strengths and weaknesses determine the credibility of NATO's conventional deterrence to a large degree.[4]

Additionally, the USA decided to launch the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) announced by President Barack Obama in June 2014. The resources provided for the ERI enabled the USA to both maintain a continual rotational unit presence, mainly in Poland and the Baltic states, and to increase the number of bilateral exercises. The USA's fighter aircraft were deployed to the region on a rotational basis. In parallel, and in response to an increase in flights by Russian bombers, the USA Air Force conducted a small number of strategic bomber sorties from bases in Great Britain. As the ERI was ultimately aimed at exploring the possibilities for the forward stationing of equipment, it did not come

[2] Toms Rostoks, Nora Vanaga. "Latvia's security and defence post-2014," *Journal on Baltic Security,* Vol.2, No.2, 2016.

[3] Martin Zapfe. "NATO's "Spearhead Force"," *CSS Analyses in Security Policy,* May 2015, http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse174-EN.pdf

[4] Jeffrey A. Larsen. "NATO's responses to Russian belligerence. An Overview," In: Karsten Friis. *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century. An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit,* Routledge Focus, 2017.

as a surprise that, during his European trip in June 2015 the USA defence secretary Aston Carter announced the pre-positioning of approximately 250 armoured vehicles in Central and Eastern Europe. In total, this materiel of the so-called European Activity Set will serve to equip a Heavy Brigade Combat Team of up to 5,000 soldiers, both for exercises in the context of the rotating presence and for deployments in the region.[5] With the ERI having evolved into the European Deterrence Initiative, signalling a shift from symbolism to real capabilities, the USA plans to spend up to 6.5 billion USD dollars on unilateral measures in Europe in Fiscal Year 2019.[6] Other NATO allies, such as Denmark, the UK, Poland, and even non-NATO member states like Sweden also have been active in supporting reassurance measure of Alliance.

Nevertheless, the steps made at Wales Summit were very much limited to the reassurance measure package. Only at Warsaw the concept of deterrence made its way back into NATO's agenda. At first glance the deterrence posture was supposed to consist of an appropriate combination of conventional, nuclear and missile defence capabilities.[7] That would incline one to think that NATO, in addition to the extended deterrence efforts, is also prepared to conduct deterrence by punishment provided by nuclear and deep strike capabilities. Yet, the alliance's public communication and policies launched after the summit revealed that the focus of NATO remains on strengthening of the conventional deterrence posture, addressing the shortcomings of an extended deterrence. In order to be able to claim a credible conventional deterrence posture, the Alliance needed to have a presence of troops in the Baltics.

The main hurdle for policy-makers before the Warsaw summit was how to provide forward deployment and not break the existing arms control architecture of Europe. Alliance's commitment to the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 foresaw not to station a

[5] "US Army Europe to increase presence across Eastern Europe," *US Army Europe,* November 4, 2016, https://www.army.mil/article/177819/us_army_europe_to_increase_presence_across_eastern_europe

[6] "European Deterrence Initiative. Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year 2019," *Department of Defense*, February 2018, http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2019/fy2019_EDI_JBook.pdf

[7] "Deterrence and defence," *NATO*, July 12, 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics_133127.htm

'substantial combat force' in the East. The compromise that NATO came up with was military weak but politically strong – to move away from the rotational deployment of units for exercises and signalling to the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) to nominal combat units, which would be stationed on persistent presence based on rotational deployments. The four battalion-sized battlegroups are built around a single lead nation for each of the three Baltic states, plus Poland – the UK is responsible for Estonia, Canada sends troops to Latvia, and Germany covers Lithuania. The USA battalion is based in Poland. These four nations provide the core of the battalions while the exact multinational composition, and the mechanism for force generation differs between the framework nations. This decision and the progress of its implementation silenced the critical voices that were sceptical about the political unity of Alliance. Yet, from a military point of view the pillars of NATO's conventional deterrence posture, such as rapid reaction and follow-on forces, as well as eFP, face numerous shortcomings.

Challenges of NATO's conventional deterrence posture

The rapid deployability of VJTF faces political and logistical hurdles. Politically, NATO states would first have to consent to activation of the VJTF, which is anything but definite. Even after a potential decision by the NATO Council on the deployment of the VJTF and early activation by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, the alliance would quickly face logistical hurdles. It would struggle to field the necessary strategic transport aircraft vital for any such deployment. Fundamentally, NATO would be dependent on U.S. support and capabilities.[8] The deployment of the VJTF alone and by air would require 450 flights by C-17 heavy strategic transport aircraft. As for overland transport, exercises have shown that the infrastructural, regulatory and planning prerequisites for strategic troop movements, often taken for granted during the

[8] Daniel Fiott. "Modernising NATO's Defence Infrastructure with EU Funds," *Survival*, vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 77-94, 2016.

Cold War, are practically non-existent.[9] These logistical obstacles will only grow in the years when a southern European NATO partner will be in command of the VJTF, as distances will increase accordingly. Thus, scepticism regarding NATO's ambitious plans seems entirely appropriate. One of the solutions to overcoming the logistical challenges that is still being discussed (both within NATO and the European Union) without any tangible practical steps, is the establishment of a "military Schengen" in Europe which would at least relieve the legal side of the deployment of troops and equipment both during peace and war time.[10]

These considerations with regard to the VJTF also highlight the limits on the potential use of the whole eNRF, which is supposed to be a sufficiently robust corps-strength force of up to 40,000 soldiers. Both the VJTF and the eNRF are deeply intertwined. In effect, the eNRF's ground element consists of 3 "VJTFs": the VJTF of any given year would be the first to react; that of the preceding year, now in the stand-down phase, and that of the following year, then being stood-up, would provide the additional brigades. What ails the VJTF ails the eNRF, too, rendering its classification as a "high-readiness force" questionable.[11] Yet, whereas the VJTF would be primarily effective through its symbolic "tripwire" function, for the eNRF, as NATO's "second wave" in case of conflict, real-world combat effectiveness would be of the utmost importance. Here, too, NATO is faced with a major challenge. In the last decades, the level of the corps, once the backbone of NATO's military planning, has either become operationally irrelevant or even entirely disbanded. Merely increasing the staff of the corps headquarters by itself does not automatically lead to higher operational readiness of the entire corps. To reach that aim, the alliance has to answer important questions about the assigned combat divisions and brigades, the permanent corps troops (that is, integral support units directly attached to the

[9] Reiner L. Glatz, Martin Zapfe. "NATO Defence Planning Between Wales and Warsaw. Politico-Military Challenges of a Credible Assurance against Russia," *SWP-Comments*, No. 5, January 2016.

[10] European Defence Agency. "European Defence: From Vision To Action," *European Defence Matters*, 2, 2017.

[11] Jens Ringsmose, Sten Rynning. "Can NATO's new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force deter?" *NUPI Policy Brief,* Vol. 15, 2016.

corps headquarters), as well as the peacetime deployment and exercises of its subordinate units. Additionally, even an NRF at the strength of a corps, with doubtful operational readiness, might not suffice in the medium term.[12]

Another level of complexity is related to the decision to establish the VJTF on the basis of annually rotating national units. This type of composition for the VJTF effectively forces NATO to organise an annual rotation of different units from various NATO nations for identical operational areas, including, most critically, the pre-positioning of necessarily differing equipment and materiel. This is difficult to sustain in the long term. Ultimately, the plan to have member states supplying troops to the VJTF and the NRF on an annual and rotational basis, combined with the costly pre-positioning of materiel, is highly problematic.[13] Thus, the issues that NATO rapid reaction forces face are logistical, force generation and organisational hurdles. A lack of credible reaction and follow-on forces concepts undermines the whole alliance's conventional deterrence posture and questions the extended deterrence as such.

When it comes to eFP, that is supposed to increase the credibility of NATO's conventional deterrence posture in the Baltics, it also faces political and pure practical military shortcomings. In the absence of prepared and agreed-upon contingency plans, backed up by credible and ready forces with sufficient authority pre-delegated to operational and tactical commanders, any engagement by NATO's eFP would trigger political symbolism first, with at least one or more allied members choosing to act outside of NATO's framework. Currently, the tripwire effectively constitutes "deterrence by reputation": the Alliance puts its good name at stake. While most debates beyond the mere establishment of the eFP focus on the recommended size, NATO will be dependent on assured access to the Baltics in any conceivable scenario, irrespective of the eFP's exact size. In a

[12] Martin Zapfe. "NATO's "Spearhead Force"," *CSS Analyses in Security Policy,* May 2015, http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse174-EN.pdf

[13] Reiner L. Glatz, Martin Zapfe. "NATO Defence Planning Between Wales and Warsaw. Politico-Military Challenges of a Credible Assurance against Russia," *SWP-Comments*, No. 5, January 2016.

case where a small force (like a multinational battalion) is present on the ground, it would be vitally reliant on reinforcements. And even if NATO decided to deploy a large, heavy, multinational force designed to credibly defend the Baltics against a Russian attack, assuming that such a deployment itself would be logistically feasible, which is doubtful, it would still have a logistical tether and would depend on joint and combined support from air and naval forces outside the immediate theatre.[14]

Beside the issue of the size, the multinational character of eFP questions its effectiveness to act in case of crisis and especially in unclear hybrid scenarios. Differing rules of engagement of participating nations in the battlegroups severely undermines their ability to respond. After all, there is a big difference if a participating country labels its contribution as a combat or training mission. The unclear command structure also raises many unanswered questions. Hence, the eFP necessarily falls short of addressing the military challenge as a whole. Military presence on the ground is a necessary condition in all of the plausible scenarios, but sufficient in only very few of them, and always dependent on assured access.

Summing up, the assessment of NATO's formulated deterrence posture during the Warsaw summit gives a contradictory picture. The strength of the posture is in the strong gesture of political solidarity through deploying a multi-national forward presence, where the majority of the alliance's member states are represented. This gives a strong signal of NATO's political cohesion. The existing posture cannot seriously be considered as provocative to Russia either. The weak point of the deterrence posture lies in the very fact that this posture is not provocative enough because of its minimal military weight. On the contrary, in some scenarios it could even become a useful instrument in the hands of Russia's information warfare against NATO's political unity.

[14] Martin Zapfe. "Deterrence from the Ground Up: Understanding NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence," *Survival*, Vol. 59, No.3, pp. 147-160, 2017.

Increasing credibility of conventional deterrence posture

2018 NATO Summit in Brussels did not change the deterrence posture of the Alliance, keeping the main focus on the conventional element, though it addressed numerous shortcomings that the existing posture was facing. It launched reforms concerning NATO's Command Structure (NCS), making it more regional and tackling the burning issues of logistics. The NCS has, in fact, experienced near continual reform since the end of the Cold War. The 2011 re-organisation, aimed at cutting headquarters at all levels and reducing the assigned personnel from 13,000 to around 8,800, was driven by a tighter budgetary environment and explicitly based on the assumption that the alliance's level of ambition would stay the same.[15] The new NCS foresees to have a Joint Force Command Norfolk headquarters in the USA that would be "protecting the transatlantic lines of communication", to establish Joint Support and Enabling Command in Germany that would provide "freedom of operation and sustainment in the rear area in support of the rapid movement of troops and equipment into, across, and from Europe"[16], and additionally to that – to form two multi-corps capable Land Component Commands. Also a clear commitment to provide military staff for these structures is lined out in the implementation plan. Regarding eFP, it is under NATO command through the Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin, Poland, but will be coordinated and supervised for training and preparation activities by Multinational division Northeast Headquarters in Elblag, becoming fully operational by the end of 2018.[17]

In order to tackle two most important shortcomings of VJTF – pool of forces and mobility, at Brussels the Alliance agreed to launch a NATO Readiness Initiative that embraces a commitment of member states for overall pool forces, providing "additional 30 major naval combatants, 30 heavy or medium manoeuvre

[15] Jens Ringsmose, Sten Rynning. "Can NATO's new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force deter?" *NUPI Policy Brief,* Vol. 15, 2016.
[16] "Brussels Summit Declaration," *NATO*, July 11 2018, paragraph 29.
[17] "Brussels Summit Declaration," *NATO*, July 11 2018, paragraph 25.

battalions, and 30 kinetic air squadrons, with enabling forces, at 30 days' readiness or less".[18] Military mobility was among priority issues to be addressed. NATO set a plan to increase its mobility by land, air and sea not later than 2024, emphasizing the necessity to have a "whole-of-government approach, including through national plans, with cross-government cooperation of civil and military actors, in peacetime, in crisis, and in conflict"[19] and formulating a concrete to-do-list with accountability mechanisms. In addition to that the cooperation with EU on military mobility is stressed, especially in the realm of administrative and legal procedures.

Another important step was to strengthen NATO's air and naval dimensions of the deterrence posture. Often when the Alliance's ability to react in case of crisis is discussed, the focus is usually on the land element of VJTF and eNRF, without seriously taking into account the high importance of air and maritime elements. Therefore, concrete steps to improve overall maritime situational awareness at the Baltic and Black Seas and a list of maritime warfighting capabilities to exercise were formulated, including "anti-submarine warfare, amphibious operations, and protection of sea lines of communications"[20]. Regarding the air domain, the Alliance approved a Joint Air Power Strategy that addresses adjustment of NATO's Air Policing and Ballistic Missile Defence missions. This decision is of vital importance, especially for the Baltic states that struggle with lack of mid- and long-range air defence capabilities.

Thus, during the Brussels summit NATO indeed addressed the most tangible issues of command structure, pool of forces, military mobility and strengthening of air and naval domains. These decisions and the approval of special package on South indicate that the processes of more regionalised Alliance have started to take place. Traditionally discussions about regionalisation have been perceived as "toxic" because of their potential to politically disunite the Alliance. But experts have been arguing about the necessity to think of more regionalised NATO in military categories. While the alliance has adopted a "360 degree approach" and

[18] Ibid., para 14.
[19] Ibid., para 17.
[20] Ibid., para 19.

goes to great lengths to stress that it will not look at the Russian challenge only, this will be hard to operationalise in the context of conventional deterrence without at least informal regionalisation. Because, dealing with the progressively diverse strategic focus of NATO, through increased regionalisation members risk weakening the very cohesive forces that hold NATO together in times of crises.[21] If NATO manages to coordinate and steer this regionalisation, there will be tangible advantages. There is considerable potential for a distinct east-south specialisation, a split that, in reality, is already relevant. On the upside, such a strategy could sharpen the operational and regional focus of the alliance, increase military efficiency and efficacy for relevant contingencies, and allow for better force planning and harmonisation of capabilities. As Ruiz Palmer concludes, in order to tackle issues of overburden of allies when it comes to the force generation and command and control, discussions of further reforms are unavoidable.[22] Already by now the overstretch of personnel and financial resources by smaller allies can be witnessed. It is very unlikely that the pressure from the USA president Donald Trump to spend even more than 2% from gross domestic product for defence[23] could make things better. It would only put governing political elites under extreme national pressure and, therefore, could result in internal political destabilisation.

Conclusion

Since the very first day after the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, NATO through its summits has been seeking conventional solutions for how to deter Russia on its eastern front. The initial response was to organise as many military exercises as possible,

[21] Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, Martin Michelot, Martin Quencez. (eds.). "Southern Challenges and the Regionalization of the Transatlantic Security Partnership," No.1, *The German Marshall Fund of the United States*, 2017.

[22] Diego A. Ruiz Palmer. "The Framework Nations' Concept and NATO: Game-Changer for a New Strategic Era or Missed Opportunity?" *NATO Defense College Research Paper,* No. 132, July 2016.

[23] "Trump tells NATO leaders to increase defense spend to 4 percent," *Reuters*, July 11, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-summit-trump-spending/trump-tells-nato-leaders-to-increase-defense-spend-to-4-percent-idUSKBN1K12BW

provide short-stay allied troops on Baltic territory, and significantly increase the host nation support element by institutionalizing it and reforming the alliance's rapid reaction forces. These measures were taken for the purposes of assurance and demonstrative steps to prove the adaptability of NATO and were not related to deterrence at first. The realisation that the thinking had to, once again, be about categories of deterrence, went hand in hand with the continuing aggressiveness of Russia's foreign policy and its increasing military presence in the Baltic region.

The Warsaw summit was pivotal in this sense and deterrence became the new mindset of the alliance. NATO's formulated extended deterrence strategy consists of three main elements, being conventional, nuclear and missile capabilities. Despite the formal multi-layered character of the deterrence posture, a heavy emphasis on the conventional dimension remains. The deployment of four multinational battalion-sized battlegroups was an important gesture of political solidarity and addressed critique about the Alliance's possible disunity. Yet, thus far, military input is missing, as there is a lack of clarity in the command and control structure and the rules of engagement in case of conflict. As to the reaction and follow-on forces, there are still hurdles in providing efficient speed, organisation, and structure.

The ongoing reform of NATO force structures is regarded as a way forward for adjusting the alliance's structures to operational realities and many of issues have been addressed during the Brussels summit. Discussions about a more regionalised NATO have been gradually starting to materialise. Insecurity about the fact that discussions on regionalisation could cause political disunity within the Alliance has decreased because of the obvious political, military and economic benefits that this process would bring.

A Need for Greater Air Defence in the Baltic Region

Heather Conley, Matthew Melino, Holly Geffs

The post-Cold War era ushered in a benign security environment in Northern Europe for almost 25 years. During this period, bilateral and multilateral security relationships developed between Baltic Sea states. Sweden and Finland joined the European Union and became close partners with NATO. The three Baltic states solidified Euro-Atlantic institutional arrangements by the early 2000s, joining NATO and the European Union in 2004. When Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia joined NATO, they were unable to ensure air sovereignty. Thus, NATO established a Baltic Air Policing mission, a peacetime collective defence mission which protects and ensures the integrity of NATO airspace on its northeastern flank.

Two inflection points for European security – Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia and 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and intervention in Eastern Ukraine – ended this benign period and exposed the atrophy of territorial and regional defence capacities particularly related to air defence. Russian military aircraft have increasingly tested Northern Europe's airspace with the most dramatic incident occurring in 2013, when Russian aircraft crossed the Gulf of Finland and carried out a mock nuclear attack against Sweden; Swedish aircraft were unprepared. Without activated transponders, Russian aircraft have flown perilously close to civilian aircraft and U.S. military aircraft over the Baltic Sea, which required NATO to urge an initiative where Russian and NATO aircraft turn on their transponders.[1] Despite attempts to avoid accidents, Russia has continued to violate Baltic states' airspace on multiple occasions including a recent Russian military cargo plane violating Estonian air space in June.

[1] Robin Emmott. "Russia offers to fly warplanes more safely over Baltics," *Reuters*, July 13, 2016, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-russia-idUSKCN0ZT2KB.

It is clear that NATO's Baltic air policing mission must transition to an integrated air and missile defence posture as an unpredictable and aggressive Russia probes the region's air sovereignty and tests air defence capabilities.

The Russian threat

It is important to understand Russia's military focus on achieving air superiority. Historically, Russian armed forces were designed to fight lengthy, large-scale conventional conflicts against other land powers which emphasised ground forces, air defence systems, and powerful ballistic missiles. While the core of Russian thinking on the nature of warfare remains the same, its strategy has shifted one of greater emphasis on developing armed forces capable of shorter and more limited operations. These "New Look" forces are leaner, more effective, and more deployable in limited conflicts.

Ground Forces

Russian artillery forces remain a pillar of its warfighting strategy. Russian military doctrine has long emphasised the importance of massed artillery, and it is the keystone of its ground forces today.[2] Paired with modern technologies such as tactical UAVs, Russian ground forces have employed their artillery with devastating effect during combat in eastern Ukraine. In addition, Russia operates many conventional tube artillery systems. The backbone of the Russian artillery force is the Msta 152 mm artillery system. Russia also plans to introduce the Koalitsiya self-propelled howitzer, which will be the longest-range conventional artillery system in the world.

Air Superiority

Russian air superiority capabilities have greatly improved over the past decade. However, the Russian Air Force operates only a limited number of frontline combat aircraft – approximately 300 – made up of a mixture of modern variants of the MIG-29 and Su-

[2] Jonathan Marcus. "Should Russia's New Armata T-14 Tanks worry NATO?" *BBC News*, May 30, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40083641.

27, along with more modern MIG-35s and Su-35s. Although these aircraft are late development fourth-generation fighter aircraft, they are considered inferior to the latest fifth-generation U.S. and NATO fighters. Russia is in the process of developing its own fifth-generation fighter – the Su-57 – which it hopes will compete with the U.S. F-22 Raptor, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and the Chinese J-20. Costs and technological challenges has substantially slowed the development of the Su-57.[3] Russian air forces however do retain several advantages such as strong capabilities for air-to-air combat within visual range (WVR) and its integration of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting (ISRT) capabilities, helmet-mounted cueing, and an U.S. short-range air-to-air missile (AAM), the R-73. These capabilities give Russia an advantage in close air-to-air combat against even the latest generation of U.S. fighter aircraft.

Russia has excellent medium-to long-range air-to-air missiles in the R-77, but its aircraft would face a significant challenge detecting and engaging adversary stealth fighters such as the F-22 or F-35. This capability gap will only widen as more Western nations gain access to the F-35. Another weakness is a lack of radar platforms such as the E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) which provide U.S. and NATO air forces with significant airspace awareness. Russia hopes to develop such capabilities, but it is lagging behind the US.[4]

Precision Strike

Recognising the value of NATO's conventional long-range precision strike capabilities such as the Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missile, Russia is developing its own precision strike capabilities. Recent Russian combat operations in Syria reveal considerable advancements. Examples include air- and sea-launched cruise missiles such as the Kh-555, Kh-101, and 3M14 Kalibr, the 9M273 Iskander-K, and the 9M723 Iskander-M. Russia is further developing

[3] Pavel Baev. "Russian Air Power Is Too Brittle for Brinkmanship," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* No. 398, November 2015, http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/russian-air-power-too-brittle-brinksmanship

[4] Geoff Brown. "Turkey Shootdown: Russia Air Power Has chinks, but Campaign Has Been Decisive," *Lowy Institute*, November 25, 2015, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/turkey-shootdown-russian-air-power-has-chinks-campaign-has-been-decisive

a long-range land-based cruise missile, the SSC-8/9M729, which U.S. officials have determined to be in violation of range limitations under the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.[5] The new Russian precision strike arsenal provides it with the capability to strike targets in much of northern and northeastern Europe using naval assets in the Norwegian, White, Black, and eastern Mediterranean Seas. The Kh-555 and Kh-101 could target almost anywhere in Europe from aircraft flying within Russian airspace.[6] While Russia's cruise missiles are conventionally armed, they are also believed to be dual-use or capable of carry nuclear weapons. Today, these evolving precision strike capabilities provide Russia with a nonnuclear strategic deterrence capacity which they had previously lacked. However, these advancements should be viewed with some caution. While Russian precision strike assets have impressive ranges, Russia lacks the ability to reliably strike dynamic targets such as mobile forces, and thus, is developing a reconnaissance strike complex comparable to that of the US.

Integrated Air and Missile Defence

Surface-to-air missiles have long been an area of military strength for Russia. Soviet forces relied heavily on an abundance of static and mobile anti-air missile systems during the Cold War. Russia's focus on air and missile defences has increased in response to developments in U.S. and NATO airpower and long-range precision strike. The U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty in 2001, the emergence of the Conventional Prompt Global Strike concept in the mid- to late-2000s, and the deployment of the U.S. AEGIS Ashore systems in central and eastern Europe further motivates these advancements.[7] Russia's Integrated Air and Missile Defence is divided across two services within the armed forces. The Russian Aerospace Forces operate strategic air and

[5] Michael R. Gordon. "Russia Has Deployed Missile Barred by Treaty, U.S. General tells Congress," *New York Times,* March 8, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/08/us/politics/russia-inf-missile-treaty.html?_r=0.

[6] CSIS Missile Defense Project, "Missile Threat: KH-55," August 10, 2016, https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/kh-55/

[7] "Russia Says US Missile System Breaches Nuclear INF Treaty," *BBC News*, May 11, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36269734

missile defence capabilities including S-400/S-300 regiments and the A-135 antiballistic missile system. The Russian Ground Forces possess mobile air and missile defence capabilities such as the S-300V, Buk, and Tor. Both Forces operate short-range air defence systems, including the modern Pantsyr-S1 system, which has been utilised successfully in Syria.

Maritime Forces

The core tenets of Russian maritime strategy have not changed since the Cold War. Instead of attempting to match American naval strength, the Soviet Navy adopted a strategy of sea denial to counter NATO's ambition to control the sea lanes of communication to reinforce European forces and conduct strikes on the Soviet periphery. This strategy led to the development of surface combatants with comparatively heavy anti-ship cruise missiles and an exceptionally large submarine fleet.[8] The Russian Navy, and especially its submarine force, is arguably the most advanced, competent, and well-trained component of the entire Russian military. The modern Russian Navy is built on the foundation of modernised naval combatants from the Soviet era. Their use in Syria exposed a new element of Russian naval power-land-attack cruise missiles. Russia's smaller surface combatants, such as its new corvettes, are impressive vessels capable of carrying large numbers of cruise missiles.

Russia possesses a core of excellent nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) which nearly equal U.S. vessels in terms of performance and can carry a large payload of land-attack cruise missiles.[9] All the new *Kilo*-class diesel submarines (SSKs), mainly based in the Black Sea, can mount these weapons. However, the *Severodvinsk*-class vessels have been delayed. Russia has achieved considerable success with the updated *Kilo*-class but has failed to develop a next-generation SSK equipped with air independent propulsion. Russia also operates the largest fleet of special mission submarines in the world. However, little is known

[8] Norman Polmar, Kenneth J. Moore. "Cold War Submarines: The Design and Construction of U.S. and Soviet Submarines," Washington, DC: *Brassey's*, 2004.

[9] Kathleen H. Hicks, Andrew Metric, Lisa Sawyer Samp, Kathleen Weinberger. "Undersea Warfare in Northern Europe," Washington, DC: *CSIS*, July 2016, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160721_Hicks_UnderseaWarfare_Web.pdf

about these vessels except that Russia has developed nuclear-powered special mission submarines able to dive to tremendous depths. These vessels could be used to embrace seabed sensors or to interfere with undersea cable infrastructure. Such activities fit well into overall Russian concept of operation. Finally, while Russian amphibious capabilities do not match those of the U.S., they do provide considerable capability in restricted seas such as the Black and Baltic Seas. Specific to the Baltic Sea, unmanned platforms can improve Russia's ability to operate in shallow, crowded waters such as the Swedish archipelago.[10]

Russia's naval activities in the Baltic Sea have included efforts to monitor NATO naval activity, conduct targeted provocations and intimidation, complicate allied contingency planning and preserve Russia's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, deter NATO military activity near its border, disrupt the sea lines of communications of NATO allies and partners, and ensure Russia's territorial defence. Given Russia's access to the Baltic Sea through Kaliningrad and the number of resources in the immediate vicinity, enhancing maritime security in the region requires improvements in the Alliance's ability to monitor Russian maritime activity and respond in a timely manner.

Information and Electronic Warfare

Over the past two decades, Russia has demonstrated significant interest – and success – in a wide range of information, electronic, and cyberspace operations. Disinformation operations can be broadly defined as the distribution of false or misleading information through a variety of media platforms. There efforts are designed either to support Russian narratives or to undermine narratives that are counter to Russian interests. The most prominent examples include "fake news" stories promoted during the 2016 U.S. and 2017 French presidential elections through Facebook and Twitter, with support from Kremlin-endorsed media organisations RT and Sputnik News. These operations are concerning because they strike at the core of Western democracies and the ideal

[10] Franz-Stefan Gady. "How the West Underestimated Russia's Military Power," *The Diplomat*, October 17, 2015, https://thediplomat.com/2015/10/how-the-west-underestimated-russias-military-power

of open exchange of information.[11] Powerful Russian electronic jamming capabilities were tested in its Ukraine operations and were exercised during the recent Zapad exercise in 2017. Russian operations in the cyber and information domains blur the line between military and nonmilitary activities. NATO forces have become unaccustomed to operating in a contested information environment, and they lack the capacity to respond in kind.

Nuclear Forces

Russian nuclear strategy is designed to constrain an adversary's decision capacity at the onset of and during a conflict. Formally, Russia's 2014 military doctrine sets a high threshold for nuclear employment. The primary use of nuclear weapons is to prevent the outbreak of warfare, however, a secondary use of nuclear weapons is to prevent ongoing conflicts from escalating. Russia possesses a large nuclear arsenal that is treaty limited at parity levels with the U.S. nuclear force. Under the New START Treaty, both nations are limited to 800 deployed ICBMs and SLBMs and 1,550 total warheads. The treaty does not address the 1,800 to 2,000 Russian tactical nuclear weapons.[12] Russia is currently undertaking a comprehensive modernisation of its delivery systems. Russia appears to be reemphasising multiple independent reentry vehicles in its nuclear force structure and developing new heavy ICBMs and an upgraded version of the RS-12M1 Topol-M road-mobile ICBM, the RS-24 Yars. These changes are likely in response to Russian concerns over the expansion of U.S. ballistic missile defence. Russia further appears to be developing a light ICBM, the RS-26 Rubezh, which may violate the 1987 INF Treaty.[13] Given the centrality of nuclear weapons in Russian security strategy and the substantial capital investments in these capabilities, Russia will continue to rely heavily on nuclear arms to achieve its objectives.

[11] Kharis I. Saifetdinov."Informational rivalry in the military sphere," ["Informatsionnoe protivoborstvo v voennoi sfere,"] *Voennaia mysl,* 8, 2014: 38-41

[12] Dave Majumdar. "Everything You Need to Know: Russia's 'Tactical' Nuclear Weapons," *National Interest*, October 6, 2018, http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/everything-you-need-know-russias-tactical-nuclear-weapons

[13] Mark B. Schneider. "The Nuclear Posture Review and the Future of the INF Treaty," *RealClear Defense*, August 9, 2017, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/08/08/the_nuclear_posture_review_and_the_future_of_the_inf_treaty_111994.html

An enhanced focus on integrated air defence capabilities

NATO's lack of robust air defence is a vulnerability on its eastern flank. An additional complication is that there is limited sharing of air situation data between NATO and non-NATO members Sweden and Finland, but even this information is partial and incomplete.[14] The lack of a common air picture among countries in the region is a critical gap although there have been attempts to close this gap to the benefit of the entire Baltic Sea region. The NORDEFCO Memorandum of Understanding on Nordic Cooperation for Air Surveillance Information Exchange represents a start for the five Nordic countries but is not connected to existing NATO structures.[15] Although the NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP) and its Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII) provide a framework for such discsions with NATO on the basis of existing standards for integrating data from a variety of national sensors, establishing full sharing of all air surveillance data is politically sensitive in Finland and Sweden. Steps taken will be short of full integration and would likely be taken only during a crisis situation. However, Northern European countries have gained valuable practical experience through training, exercises, and operations, in national and NATO contexts, creating a high degree of interoperability.[16]

Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) architecture is also improving. The Baltic states have publicly lobbied for deployment of U.S. Patriot missiles, and while the Trump administration is considering such a proposal, there is no timeline on a decision.

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[14] Mats Bergquest, François Heisbourg, René Nyberg, Teija Tiilikainen. "The Effects of Finland's Possible NATO Membership: An Assessment," Helsinki: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland*, April 29, 2016; Anya Loukianova. "Clouds of Suspicion: Airspace Arrangements, Escalation, and Discord in U.S./NATO-Russian Relations," *Center for International and Security Studies*, University of Maryland, May 2016 http://www.cissm.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Loukianova_CISSM_brief_060316.pdf

[15] "Nordic States Step Up Defense Cooperation Because of Russia Worries," *Reuters*, November 6, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nordic-defence/nordic-states-step-up-defense-cooperation-because-of-russia-worries-idUSKBN1D629T

[16] Heather A. Conley, Jeffrey Rathke, Matthew Melino. "Enhanced Deterrence in the North: A 21st Century European Engagement Strategy," Washington, DC: *CSIS*, February 2018, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180119_Conley_EnhancedDeterrenceNorth_Web.pdf?uIa_1usRa2.PdrR4pnJvjLKFPN3tFDYQ

The United States has a USD 4.75 billion deal in place with Poland to procure the missile defence system in 2022. Sweden has also recently agreed to buy the Patriot system. The deployment of NATO-interoperable systems will be advanced by Lithuania's purchase of two Norwegian advanced surface-to-air missile systems in 2020 as part of Vilnius's midrange air defence programme.[17]

The Baltic countries continue to discuss the possibility of joint development of a medium-range air defence system, but the prospects for agreement remain unclear due to different national priorities and the likely cost of the system relative to their defence budgets.[18]

What the future holds

Air capabilities in the region are evolving rapidly: Norway and Denmark are acquiring fifth-generation Lockheed F-35 fighters, Sweden has ordered an updated "E" version of the Saab Gripen,[19] and Finland in the coming years will decide on a replacement for its Boeing F/A-18 jets, which will reach the end of their service life beginning in 2025.[20] These upgrades should result in greater integrated air defence capabilities that include the role of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and a transition from air policing to air defence.

There should be greater consideration of the role of UAS, armed or unarmed. UAS should also factor into defence planning and complement NATO's Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS)

[17] "Lithuania Signed a Technical Agreement with Norway on Procurement of Components and Missiles of Mid-Range Norwegian Advanced Surface to Air Missile System," *Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania,* October 21, 2017, http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/release/3/178215/lithuania-signs-nasams-agreement-with-norway.html

[18] "Baltic States Push US on Patriot Missile Defense Deployment," *DefenseNews*, May 26, 2017, https://www.defensenews.com/land/2017/05/26/baltic-states-push-us-on-patriot-missile-defense-deployment/

[19] James Drew, "Saab Upbet about New Sales," *Aviation Week*, June 18, 2017, http://aviationweek.com/paris-air-show-2017/saab-upbeat-about-new-sales

[20] Reuters Staff, "Finland invites bids to supply 64 fighter jets," *Reuters*, April 27, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-finland-jets/finland-invites-bids-to-supply-64-fighter-jets-idUSKBN1HY27V

system, which will represent a new NATO capability and will be in high demand across NATO missions. Specifically, UAS could be used as an aerial sensor to track cruise missiles that can hide in terrain.[21] Their use would also help overcome the inherent range limitations of ground-based radars. Russia has used UAS to help guide targeting for artillery in Ukraine and could potentially do the same with missiles. Greater integration of UAS would reinforce the region's current air defence network.[22]

There have been some encouraging steps taken regionally to allow for greater peacetime air basing access in the Baltic Sea region, as a 2016 bilateral agreement between Sweden and Denmark underscores.[23] These measures provide greater strategic depth in northern Europe across non-NATO/NATO boundaries. In May, Finland, Sweden and the U.S. signed an agreement pledging to increase security relations including greater coordination to deepen interoperability and increased interoperability.[24] Finland and Sweden have conducted training and exercises with deployed NATO air defence aircraft in the Baltic states and in Iceland, which NATO should seek to expand and facilitate, building greater capacity for cooperation in a crisis.[25] During the recently completed BALTOPS 2018 exercise, more than 60 aircraft were involved, highlighting the increasing integration of aircraft and maritime vessels to improve the common operational picture.[26]

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[21] Heather A. Conley, Jeffrey Rathke, Matthew Melino, *Enhanced Deterrence in the North: A 21st Century European Engagement Strategy* (Washington, DC: CSIS), February 2018. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180119_Conley_EnhancedDeterrenceNorth_Web.pdf?uIa_1usRa2.PdrR4pnJvjLKFPN3tFDYQ

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid; "Sweden and Denmark Reach Bilateral Defense Agreement," *DefenseNews*, January 21, 2016, https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2016/01/21/sweden-and-denmark-reach-bilateral-defense-agreement/

[24] Aaron Mehta, "Finland, Sweden and U.S. sign trilateral agreement, with eye on increased exercises," *DefenseNews*, May 9, 2018, https://www.defensenews.com/training-sim/2018/05/09/finland-sweden-and-us-sign-trilateral-agreement-with-eye-on-increased-exercises/

[25] Heather A. Conley, Jeffrey Rathke, Matthew Melino. "Enhanced Deterrence in the North: A 21st Century European Engagement Strategy" Washington, DC: *CSIS*, February 2018, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180119_Conley_EnhancedDeterrenceNorth_Web.pdf?uIa_1usRa2.PdrR4pnJvjLKFPN3tFDYQ

[26] Megan Eckstein. "BALTOPS 2018 Continues Emphasis on Air-Sea integration, Complex Free-Play Phase," *USNI News,* June 5, 2018, https://news.usni.org/2018/06/05/baltops-2018-continues-emphasis-air-sea-integration-complex-free-play-phase

There is also a renewed focus on acquiring more short- and medium-range air defence systems and related sensors in the region. Sweden has decided to upgrade its air defence with the Patriot system which creates opportunities for regional integration of sensor data to maximise coverage and effectiveness, creating a more effective counter to Russia's A2/AD capabilities.[27] Precedent for such a sensor data sharing arrangement within NATO exists and has been practiced during the At Sea Demonstration in 2015 and the more recent Formidable Shield exercises in the fall of 2017.[28] Norway and Finland have also ordered the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS) and its upgraded version, NASAMS II, which could provide a cheaper short-range option better suited for smaller defence budgets.[29]

An enhanced U.S. focus

The European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) is the signature U.S. effort to strengthen NATO deterrence measures on the Alliance's eastern flank. The initiative has evolved since 2014 and represents a long-term U.S. commitment to transatlantic collective defence. The budget for EDI is slated to be USD 6.3 billion in 2019, which is USD 1.7 billion more than budgeted for the last fiscal year. Importantly, USD 3.3 million has been allocated for the Army's Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD), which provides increased ballistic/cruise missile and unmanned aircraft surveillance capabilities for U.S. and NATO facilities in Europe.[30] An additional USD 11.6 million is allocated for the naval exercise Formidable Shield, a biennial live fire maritime IAMD exercise which will focus on the maritime component supporting NATO Air Command and

[27] Jen Judson. "Swedish government greenlights Patriot deal," *DefenseNews*, August 2, 2018, https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/smd/2018/08/02/swedish-government-greenlights-patriot-deal/

[28] Heather A. Conley, Jeffrey Rathke, Matthew Melino. "Enhanced Deterrence in the North: A 21st Century European Engagement Strategy" Washington, DC: *CSIS*, February 2018, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180119_Conley_EnhancedDeterrenceNorth_Web.pdf?ula_1usRa2.PdrR4pnJvjLKFPN3tFDYQ

[29] Ibid.

[30] "European Deterrence Initiative," Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Department of Defense*, February 2018, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2019/fy2019_EDI_JBook.pdf

NATO Ballistic Missile Defence mission. A further USD 2 million is allocated towards IAMD Enhancements as part of the Enhanced Prepositioning effort.[31]

The recently signed U.S. National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA) for the fiscal year 2019 also strengthens U.S. force presence on Europe's eastern flank and includes additional air-, sea-, and land-based support in the Baltic Sea region. Reflecting the view that enhanced air defence needs are not being adequately met today, the bill states that steps will be taken to "explore transitioning the Baltic air policing mission of NATO to a Baltic air defence mission that would be fully integrated with the Integrated Air and Missile Defence of NATO and other regional short- and medium-range air defence systems."[32] Moreover, in response to increased Russian submarine activity in the North Atlantic and Baltic Sea, the NDAA also contains language endorsing increased regional maritime domain awareness. This includes the integration of subsurface sensors and anti-submarine warfare platforms for both NATO members and NATO partners such as Sweden and Finland.[33]

New NATO investments will be thoroughly tested over the course of the coming months through a series of important NATO exercises. Beginning with multiple exercises planned under Ramstein Guard (two in September and three in October), these exercises are part of the NATO Electronic Warfare Force Integration Programme which tests the regional elements of NATO's IAMD system. Exercise Ramstein Dust, scheduled for late October through early November, will be hosted by Norway and will focus on control air missions including SAM-control and Air Traffic Management and Air Traffic Control to provide area air surveillance and the production of a Recognised Air Picture (RAP).[34] The largest and most significant NATO exercise will

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[31] "European Deterrence Initiative," Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Department of Defense*, February 2018, https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2019/fy2019_EDI_JBook.pdf

[32] "Text – H.R.5515 – 115th Congress (2017-2018): John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019." *Congress.gov*, July 26, 2018, www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5515/text

[33] Ibid.

[34] "NATO Exercises," *Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe*, June 26, 2018, https://shape.nato.int/nato-exercises

be Trident Juncture, scheduled for the end of October through the beginning of November in Norway. This exercise will be the largest NATO exercise since 2002 and will include air, land, maritime, special operation forces and amphibious forces, and approximately 130 aircraft, 70 vessels, up to 10,000 vehicles, and more than 40,000 participants from some 30 NATO and partner countries.[35] The exercise will reinforce the alliance's deterrence and collective defence capabilities and will be a key indicator of the alliance's future readiness and logistical capabilities, particularly its air component.

Conclusion

Russia's military modernisation, its emphasis on air superiority, and its repeated willingness to use military force to achieve its political objectives all drive NATO's requirement to improve its air, land, and maritime capabilities along its eastern flank. As NATO deterrence and collective defence capabilities strengthen, it will be vital for NATO's Baltic air policing mission to shift to an integrated air and missile defence posture with a fully integrated common operating picture for the Baltic Sea region. To maximise regional deterrence it is critical to conduct frequent exercises, continue regional air base access, and seamlessly integrate upgraded weapon systems.

[35] "Trident Juncture 18," *Norwegian Armed Forces*, updated August 1, 2018, https://forsvaret.no/exercise

Giving CSDP a Chance: a Position of "Pragmatic Scepticism" in Lithuania

Margarita Šešelgytė

Lithuanian position vis-a-vis European Union (EU) Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) for a number of years might have been defined as cautious and quite sceptical. It was shaped by sever key factors. First of all, the traditional security concept that prevails in Lithuanian defence policy emphasises the predominance of military defence from external military threats to Lithuanian territorial integrity and sovereignty.[1] Second, there is an underlying belief in NATO and the U.S. primacy in security matters.[2] The EU is also considered a security partner but mostly in a form of additional security guarantees of "soft" security nature. Lithuanian National security strategy commits Lithuania to be an active and responsible member of the EU[3] which Lithuania does by participating in the CSDP institutions, initiatives and operations. The White Paper on Defence Policy states that Lithuania supports reinforcement of CSDP, which provides additional security measures, encourages the EU initiatives contributing to the development of European capabilities and is committed to the promotion of solidarity among the EU member states in the field of security and defence. Main directions of Lithuanian CSDP policy are strengthening the EU ability to rapidly respond to hybrid threats, cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries, development of the EU crisis response capabilities (in particular through participation in battle

[1] Kestutis Paulauskas. "Demokratinė civilinė ginkluotojų pajėgų kontrolė Lietuvoje," *Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga,* Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga 2002. Vilnius, 2003

[2] "Lietuvos Respublikos Karine strategija," *Krašto apsaugos ministerija*

[3] "Lietuvos Respublikos Nacionalinio saugumo strategija," *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas*, Nutarimo Nr. XIII -202 redakcija, 2017

groups), as well enhancement of NATO–EU cooperation.[4] Similar notions are echoed in the Lithuanian Military Strategy which underlines Lithuanian contribution to the creation of "effective and value adding EU foreign, security and defence policy" and "European civilian and military capabilities".[5] It might be argued that although the dominance of the traditional security concept in Lithuanian defence policy grants priority to NATO and the U.S. in the security matters, CSDP is as well considered as an important pillar of it, but mostly as a framework to develop crisis response capabilities and strengthen the EU ability to respond to hybrid threats.

Since the re-establishment of independence, Lithuanian armed forces have been very actively participating in international military operations.[6] Its major deployments involved 2931 servicemen deployed under NATO ISAF in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2014 and 878 – in U.S. led military operation in Iraq from 2003 to 2008.[7] Yet the contributions of Lithuania to the EU-led operations are fairly nominal, in most cases it is limited to one or a few staff officers. The choices of Lithuanian decision makers regarding the deployments of armed forces are related to the traditional security concept and NATO/US primacy, but as well might be affected by the geography of the EU operations which frequently does not fall within the scope of strategic interests of Lithuania. Being a small state with limited capabilities, Lithuania has to be selective while prioritising its military deployments.

Deterioration of security environment in the region where Russia on one hand is considered as a potential conventional threat but even more so as a masterful exploiter of hybrid techniques is reinforced by Brexit and an increasingly unpredictable behaviour of current U.S. President. These challenges affect security considerations of many European countries, but in particular are significant for small states which are geographically close to Russia

[4] "Lietuvos gynybos politikos Baltoji knyga," *Lietuvos Respublikos Krašto apsaugos ministerija*, 2017

[5] "Lietuvos Respublikos Karine strategija," *Krašto apsaugos ministerija*

[6] Margarita Šešelgytė. "A Midget Warrior: Security Choices of Lithuania," *Defence and Security for the Small: Perspectives from the Baltic States,* University of Iceland, 2013

[7] "Tarptautinės operacijos ir misijos," *Lietuvos Respublikos Krašto apsaugos ministerija*, June 27, 2018, https://kam.lt/lt/tarptautinis_bendradarbiavimas/tarptautines_operacijos.html

and extremely dependent on the sustainability of the transatlantic link. Reacting to the changing environment, Lithuania is reviewing its security and defence policy, and, although the fundaments of it do not change, there is an opportunity to revise certain aspects. On one hand, there is an observable more positive attitude towards European defence initiatives, on the other, Lithuania is currently strengthening its bilateral and multilateral defence co-operations. Lithuania has joined a UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and is considering to take part in a French-led European Intervention Initiative (EII).

CSDP – a capability driven approach

External challenges and internal tests paved the way for the development of the new EU Global strategy, which in its turn has reinforced the subsequent developments in the field of defence: such as approval of a European Defence Action Plan (EDAP), establishment of Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), creation of European Defence Fund (EDF), and revitalisation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Most of the experts in the field agree that progress made in European defence cooperation during the past two years surpasses the efforts of a previous decade and give the CSDP a new chance. Positive developments within CSDP as well as the changes in the security environment created new opportunities for Lithuania to review its position vis-à-vis European defence cooperation. It might be argued that while an earlier position might have been defined as that of "cautious scepticism", the new one is that of "pragmatic scepticism." This approach, on one hand, allows being aware of the flaws that project entails, but, on the other hand, it is also willing to give a chance to those enterprises which might work and create value added.

One of the major challenges for the transatlantic link and the European defence is a serious imbalance of military capabilities and defence spending within NATO, whereas European member states deliver only one third of overall defence budget of NATO (in 2018 U.S. defence expenditures consisted of 706 billion USD,

UK – 61.5 billion, France 52 billion, Germany 51 billion).[8] Moreover, U.S. spends up to 3,5% of GDP on defence, whereas many of the European member states do not even reach the 2% required by NATO. U.S. President Donald Trump on numerous occasions has urged European allies to pay for their defence, threatening to pull out from the Alliance if these requirements are not met. These statements have caused a lot of uneasiness among all the allies, but in particular made sensitive those small states whose security exceptionally depends on a strong transatlantic link.

CSDP for number of years has been criticised as a challenge for NATO and a threat to transatlantic unity, however with the new developments it in fact might prove contrary. Two innovations within European defence policy deserve particular attention. First of all it is an opportunity for CSDP to benefit from the EU financial instruments, which since 1992 when the CSDP has emerged was considered a taboo. The EDF instruments might create additional incentives for the EU member states to invest in the capability development and cooperation projects. Another important novelty is the binding nature of the commitments inscribed in the Annex II of the Notification on PESCO[9] (a gradual increase of defence spending among them) which is perceived as an important encouragement for a step-by-step improvement of the European military capabilities and by extension NATO capabilities as well.

A strong emphasis on capability development in a German vision on PESCO was one of the reasons why Lithuania has supported it as opposed to the exclusive operation-driven approach proposed by France. This vision prevails also in the Notification on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security. Lithuanian decision makers in particular support binding commitments set in PESCO viewing them as an opportunity to enhance European military capabilities. However, these commitments are not seen as the guidelines for national

[8] "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011-2018)," COMMUNIQUE PR/CP(2018), *NATO*, 09, July 10, 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_07/20180709_180710-pr2018-91-en.pdf

[9] "Notification on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to the Council and the High Representative of Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy," *European Council*, November 13, 2017, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31511/171113-pesco-notification.pdf

defence development, as after the annexation of Crimea a lot of improvements of Lithuanian defence policy have already been made and in a number of areas specified by PESCO commitments Lithuania already stands above average in the EU. In 2018, assignations for the Ministry of National Defence consisted of 873 million euros, which makes up 2.01% of GDP.[10] Lithuania thereby becomes one of the few countries that reach the necessary threshold of 2%. An increase of defence budget allows reviewing allocations for the defence equipment as well. In 2017 Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence has spent more than 30% of defence budget for the acquisitions[11] which is already above NATO 20% requirement. Moreover, Lithuania for years has been quite actively participating in international military operations. Therefore, for Lithuania PESCO foremost represents an opportunity to strengthen European military capabilities and possibly to contribute to the re-invigoration of the transatlantic link. The emphasis is made on better EU and NATO cooperation and smooth coordination of the capability development processes conducted in the EU and NATO. It is particularly important for Lithuania, as being a small state it does not have inexhaustible financial and administrative resources to spare.

Not ready for "producing" or "buying" European

PESCO could as well provide solution to another inherent problem of European defence – ineffectiveness of European defence investments and spending. ICDS Report claims that annual costs of non-cooperation in the defence field of Europeans make up 26 billion euros. A big variety of the defence systems and equipment across Europe produces duplication, reduces interoperability and thereby impairs relative power and competitiveness of the EU.[12]

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[10] "Budget Statement: Appropriations for National Defence," Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania, April 17, 2018, https://kam.lt/en/budget_1065.html

[11] "Lietuvos gynybos politikos Baltoji knyga," *Lietuvos Respublikos Krašto apsaugos ministerija*, 2017

[12] Tony Lawrence, Henrik Praks, Pauli Järvenpää. "Building Capacity for the EU Global Strategy," *ICDS*, June 2017, https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/ICDS_Policy_Paper_Building_Capacity_for_the_EU_Global_Strategy.pdf

These challenges might be cured by "Europeanisation" of the EU defence industry and defence procurements that are as well foreseen in PESCO. Although in general this pillar of PESCO has not received a negative reaction from Lithuania, its participation might be hindered due to the particularities of Lithuanian defence industry and procurement. First of all, with the exclusion of one defence company (AB Giraitė) Lithuania does not have a state owned defence industry. Lithuanian defence industry is mostly composed of small and niche-oriented private enterprises. The production of those companies is mainly exported, however due to a variety of reasons (lack of knowledge and experience, high administrative costs, relatively small overall profits due to small size, protectionism of big states' defence industries) these companies very seldom participate in the EU tenders. So it might be argued that Lithuania due to a small, private and niche-oriented defence industry is not very much interested to participate in "producing European" projects.

Another challenge for the "Europeanisation" of defence efforts could result from the particularities of Lithuanian defence procurement. For a number of years defence procurement was limited by a very small defence budget with most of the money being spent on personnel. One of the major factors affecting the procurement choices was the price of the product. Some of the equipment was bought with the help of foreign aid. Political decisions aimed at establishing better contacts with the partners also were influencing defence procurement choices. Although an increasing defence budget allows reconsidering defence procurement policy, Lithuania remains a small state, therefore its defence procurement calculations will still be influenced by the price factor and political rationalisations. Thus, unless the price of the EU defence production is much lower than the one of for instance American or Israeli analogues, Lithuanians will not be ready to "buy European" products either.

PESCO projects – capabilities to answer hybrid threats

Lithuanian government, too, has welcomed the initiative of PESCO projects, viewing them as an opportunity to enhance European ability to protect its citizens against hybrid threats by developing necessary capabilities. Cyber, information and energy are increasingly becoming the key domains confronted by hybrid activities. New modern tools and combinations of them are being used to inflict damage on the European societies. Capabilities to respond to those offences are insufficient, especially in small states. NATO, which is focusing on traditional threats, does not have these capabilities either. With the opportunity to use the European financial instruments and benefit from European science and defence industries, PESCO could become a good platform to develop these crucially important capabilities.

Demonstrating its commitment to PESCO projects, Lithuania has proposed to the Council a project in the area of cyber security. Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security PESCO project, which is led by Lithuania, covers research of various legal procedures in the domain of cyber security within the EU, organisation of table-top exercises and development of cyber defence tools. The nature of proposed project, on one hand, reflects Lithuanian vision of what kind of capabilities are necessary for the EU, on the other hand, it also fits national security priorities. 9 countries have already joined the project (Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Poland), 4 states have observer status (Belgium, Germany, Greece and Slovenia). Lithuania also participates in Military Mobility PESCO project, which is led by the Netherlands, and has an observer status in other three projects – Cyber Threats and Incidents Response Information Sharing Platform (led by Greece), European Medical Command and Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe, and Support for Operations (both led by Germany). It might be argued that despite the relatively small size and long-time scepticism vis-à-vis CSDP, Lithuania is quite active in the PESCO projects. It might indicate its slightly changing position on European defence cooperation, it could

also be the approach to improve capabilities essential for the national security.

Conclusion

Lithuanian position vis-à-vis CSDP over a past couple of years has changed from "scepticism with caution" to "pragmatic scepticism". It is not a major shift in the position, but one which allows for a more flexible and pragmatic participation in the European defence cooperation. Main reasons behind this adjustment were the changes in the security environment, but also the concerns about the strength of the transatlantic link. Not surprisingly, European defence capability development is among the major priorities of the Lithuanian CSDP policy. It is too early to argue, though, if this policy shift will endure or will be again replaced by a more sceptical view. First of all, it will depend on the progress of new European defence initiatives. Although defence capability development is a long-term process, a strong commitment on the part of member states to gradually meet the PESCO requirements could send a positive message regarding the future of European defence. Second, growing tensions between the EU and U.S. might also increase European solidarity in the field of defence, especially in the face of potential trade confrontation. New taxes introduced on the U.S. defence production might as well reduce its attractiveness for the European market. However, it should also be admitted that the security environment in the region is likely to remain tense in the coming years, Russia will continue to pose a threat for Baltic states in both conventional and hybrid forms. Therefore, NATO and U.S. presence in the region will remain fundamental pillars of Lithuanian security policy. Finally, distrust and disagreements stemming from different threat assessment might become a key factor stalling the progress in European defence achieved over past two years. Recent disputes over implementation of Nordstream II or the presence of the Russian President at the wedding of the Austrian Foreign Minister demonstrate that it will not be easy to build European solidarity necessary for better cooperation in defence.

Germany, the Sleeping Giant of European Defence

Elisabeth Braw

"The stronger we are, the more unlikely war is," Otto von Bismarck told the Reichstag in January 1887.[1] The Chancellor of the German empire, Europe's arguably most successful statesman at the time, was articulating to Germany's parliamentarians a seemingly self-evident truth. As every home-owner knows, strong locks deter thieves. But in von Bismarck's home country, the past couple of decades have seen truth give way to decimated military capabilities. Now the Bundeswehr is finally getting a bit more money – but a lot more has to happen before Germany is so strong that it can help make war in Europe unlikely. And that's really what the situation is about today: a militarily strong Germany can help make war in Europe less likely. Though some German politicians may feel uncomfortable thinking about it, today's Europe needs a strong Germany.

Post World War II-Germany has occupied a most unusual role in Europe's security architecture – but one accepted by all concerned: that of the permanent sidekick. For an entire decade following World War II, West Germany had no armed forces – because both the war's victors and the West German population considered a re-armed West Germany a bad idea. But on 12 November 1955, West Germany created a miniscule, embryonic army.[2] The occupation of West Germany had ended the year before, and Western allies' concern about a German military resurgence had been replaced

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[1] Jack S. Levy, John A. Vasquez (eds.) *The Outbreak of the First World War: Structure, Politics, and Decision-Making,* Cambridge University Press 2014, p. 127

[2] Marco Dames, Frank Bötel. "Armee im Kalten Krieg," *Bundeswehr*, February 05, 2015, https://www.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/bwde/start/streitkraefte/grundlagen/geschichte/anfaenge/!ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfljo8zinSx8QnyMLI2MTM0sDAw8DUMCPDy9TI0MDAz0wwkpiAJKG-AAjgb6wSmp-pFAM8xxm2GqH6wfpR-VlVi-WWKFXkF9UkpNaopeYDHKhfmRGYI5KTmpAfrIjRKAgN6LcoNxREQCKF9HU/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/#Z7_B8LTL292256800I1TPHIJ52005

by palpable worry about the growing military might of the Soviet Union and its allies – including that of its neighbour East Germany. Already in 1952, the German Democratic Republic (as East Germany was officially known) had created the "Barracked People's Police", a well-equipped de facto military comprising more than 100,000 soldiers equipped with tanks, aeroplanes and naval vessels.[3]

But how to get enough recruits from among a war-weary West German population? Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's Christian Democrats saw through the introduction of conscription, which brought the additional benefit of linking the new armed forces to the general population. No more militarism: West Germany's soldiers were to be "citizens in uniform", a motto that has remained. On 1 April, 1957, the first conscripts reported for duty. Five years later, the armed forces – now known as the Bundeswehr – comprised 390,000 troops.[4] In the same year, East Germany's National People's Army (Nationale Volksarmee, NVA) introduced conscription, reaching a strength of 170,000 troops.[5]

Both the Bundeswehr and the NVA were, in other words, large organisations – and as the Cold War intensified on the territory of the two Germanies, the two countries' armed forces assumed key roles in their respective blocs. When NATO and the Warsaw Pact squared off at the inner-German border, the Bundeswehr and the NVA provided a large part of the bulk.

But they did not play the starring role. In West Germany, there were American, British, French, Dutch and Belgian divisions, with the Americans as the undisputed leader. In East Germany, there was no doubt that the Red Army – which had between

[3] Rüdiger Wenzke. "Die Nationale Volksarmee der DDR," *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, March 31, 2016, https://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/deutsche-verteidigungspolitik/223787/militaer-der-ddr

[4] Marco Dames, Frank Bötel. "Armee im Kalten Krieg," *Bundeswehr*, February 05, 2015, https://www.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/bwde/start/streitkraefte/grundlagen/geschichte/anfaenge/!ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfIjo8zinSx8QnyMLI2MTM0sDAw8DUMCPDy9TI0MDAz0wwkpiAJKG-AAjgb6wSmp-pFAM8xxm2GqH6wfpR-VIVi-WWKFXkF9UkpNaopeYDHKhfmRGYl5KTmpAfrIjRKAgN6LcoNxREQCKF9HU/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/#Z7_B8LTL292256800I1TPHIJ52005

[5] "Nationale Volksarmee der DDR," *DDR Museum Mühltroff e.V.*, https://www.ddr-museum-muehltroff.de/nationale-volksarmee-der-ddr.html

350,000 and 500,000 troops in the country – was in charge.[6] West German and East German leaders alike were content to play a supporting role in the defence of their countries and alliances, and those alliances were happy for them to do so.

That history helps explain today's situation when it comes to German defence policy. It is news to no one that Germany is President Donald Trump's favourite subject of anger, and that his anger focuses on Germany's insufficient defence spending. "You know, Angela...we are protecting you and it means a lot more to you...because I don't know how much protection we get by protecting you," he said at a rally in Montana this summer, addressing German Chancellor Angela Merkel.[7] The reality is this: European security benefits American prosperity. During the Cold War, West Germany spent more on defence than it does today – in 1988, 2.8% of GDP[8] – despite not being solely in charge of its defence. The arrangement, which suited everyone, saw the United States play the leading role, with France and Britain also playing significant roles outside their countries, while West German troops served on their home territory as well as on the occasional peace-keeping mission.

That is why the debate about defence spending has caused such confusion in Germany: having to play a leading role in European security, including its own, is simply a new concept. A leading German role is, of course, a new concept to Germany's allies as well. Until very recently, some politicians in both Germany and other European countries have voiced concerns over a growing military role for Germany – and a small number of German politicians still voice such concerns. But in reality, Europe has moved on: it is ready for a larger German military role. In fact, it needs it. France does have large and capable armed forces, but they are already heavily engaged elsewhere, including in

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[6] "Alltag der Sowjetsoldaten in der DDR," *MDR Zeitreise*, February 20, 2018, https://www.mdr.de/zeitreise/artikel94768.html , quoted from: Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, Stefan Wolle. *Roter Stern über Deutschland*, Ch. Links Verlag, Berlin, 2010

[7] "German Officials, Trump Exchange Criticism Ahead Of NATO Summit," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,* July 07, 2018, https://www.rferl.org/a/german-officials-trump-exchange-criticisms-ahead-of-nato-summit/29348288.html

[8] Data from: *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 2017, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/3_Data%20for%20all%20countries%20from%201988%E2%80%932017%20as%20a%20share%20of%20GDP.pdf

West Africa. Britain's armed forces are likewise capable, but have undergone successive cuts and are likewise heavily engaged. At 179,000 troops, the Bundeswehr has the personnel strength to play a significant role in Europe.[9]

But that would require a change in thinking about the Bundeswehr, especially in Germany itself. When Donald Trump blasts Chancellor Angela Merkel and her government for not doing enough to defend Europe, he forgets that post-war Germany has simply never played that starring role. It has, of course, had a large standing army – as at 179,000 it still does, now with fully professional soldiers, a result of conscription having been suspended in 2011[10] – but it has continuously played a supporting role. The Bundeswehr's first turn leading a mission is, however, underway. A Bundeswehr officer commands NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup in Lithuania, which currently comprises 799 Bundeswehr soldiers along with soldiers from France, the Netherlands, Croatia and Norway.[11] That is a hugely important step for the Bundeswehr, albeit a largely symbolic one.

Here is the dilemma: most Germans do currently not perceive any major threats to their national security. While countries such as the Baltic states, Poland, Sweden and Finland are concerned about Russian military aggression, a poll by the German daily Die Welt this spring showed 58% of Germans to be in favour of closer relations with Russia.[12] (26% advocated a stricter stance towards Russia, and 14% supported maintaining the current policy.) And contrary to Trump's allegations, Germany has been increasing defence spending. Five years ago, it spent EUR 32.8 billion; last

[9] "Stärke: Militärisches Personal der Bundeswehr," *Bundeswehr.de,* July 2018, https://www.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/bwde/start/streitkraefte/grundlagen/staerke/!ut/p/z1/hY7NCsIwEISfxUOv2Zji7y1VEKVCxaJtLhJrTCtpUtLY-vhGPAmKc9vZb4YBBhkw-zbtKclcZzZW_czY-RdM4jcmMkDRZLPF6G0bRcEfI6jCE4z-A-Tf-IYphfxGQ-47Jr4505y-FgwG684w_UGOuUcIgXr4WQl1xfIEhMQd_GBphU5vyeTvU5nEpgVlyFFRbdrb-dL55p2HuAA932PpDFSCVSYOsDfIqVpHWSfJDR11uNwpLqYDp6g0kpt/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/#Z7_B8LTL2922TPCD0IM3BB1Q22TQ0

[10] "Wehrpflicht in Deutschland," *Wissen.De*, https://www.wissen.de/wehrpflicht-deutschland

[11] "NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence", *NATO Factsheet*, February 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_02/20180213_1802-factsheet-efp.pdf

[12] "Laut Umfrage: Mehrheit möchte Annäherung an Russland," HNA, March 17, 2018, https://www.hna.de/politik/umfrage-zufolge-wuenscht-sich-mehrheit-deutschen-annaeherung-an-russland-zr-9703489.html

year the figure was up to EUR 36.9 billion, about 1.2% of GDP[13], and for next year it is on track to spend EUR 42.9 billion, 1.31% of GDP.[14] Across NATO, too, defence spending has been increasing since Russia's annexation of Crimea – a wake-up call for most of Europe. To be sure, Germans remain more pacifist than other Europeans. In a 2016 Pew Research Center survey, 64% of Germans supported the statement that "relying too much on military force creates hatred that leads to more terrorism."[15] Only the Dutch are more opposed to military interventions against terrorists.

But the vast majority of Germans also support a strong and well-equipped Bundeswehr. Every year, the Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr (the Bundeswehr Centre for Military History and Social Sciences, based in Potsdam) conducts a nationwide survey of attitudes towards defence and the Bundeswehr. In the most recent survey, released at the end of last year, an impressive 91% of Germans said they want the Bundeswehr to protect Germany against attacks, with only 5% opposing it. 87% supported the Bundeswehr responding to natural disasters, and 72% were in favour of deploying the Bundeswehr in case of an attack on an allied country. Combat deployments to "conflict regions", constantly unstable parts of the world outside Europe, were the only Bundeswehr activity not supported by a majority of the population.[16] Crucially, the Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften's survey showed that 47% of Germans support increased military spending, with only 9% supporting cuts. 49% want more soldiers, while only 7% advocate reducing the Bundeswehr.

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[13] Elisabeth Braw. "Trump Is Right About Germany's Low-Energy Military," *Foreign Policy*, July 09, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/09/spare-a-thought-for-the-bundeswehr-germany-generals/

[14] "Merkel steht zu deutlich steigenden Verteidigungsausgaben," *General-Anzeiger*, July 07, 2018, http://www.general-anzeiger-bonn.de/news/politik/deutschland/Merkel-steht-zu-deutlich-steigenden-Verteidigungsausgaben-article3895605.html

[15] Dorothy Manevich. "Europeans back anti-ISIS campaign but have doubts about use of force in fighting terror," *Pew Research Center,* August 22, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/22/europeans-back-anti-isis-campaign-but-have-doubts-about-use-of-force-in-fighting-terror/

[16] Markus Steinbrecher, Heiko Biehl, Chariklia Rothbart. "Sicherheits- und verteidigungspolitisches Meinungsbild in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr*, Potsdam: October 24, 2017, http://zmsbw.de/html/einsatzunterstuetzung/downloads/1_171220kurzberichtbevoelkerungsumfragezmsbw2017aktualisiertneu.pdf

Trump may well have the best intentions for the security of Europe. But when it comes to strengthening the Bundeswehr's capabilities, his extremely forceful demands for German defence spending of 2% of GDP are making matters worse, not better. A survey by the pollster YouGov, released on the first day of this year's NATO summit, showed that 60% of Germans oppose defence spending above the 1.5% of GDP already promised by Merkel[17] – and by pushing for higher defence spending, Trump is making extremely difficult to do so. No politician in Germany or elsewhere wants to be seen as Trump's lackey. A survey this spring showed that Germans consider Trump a larger threat to world peace than Vladimir Putin or Kim Jong Un.[18]

Defence versus education and healthcare is an age-old political dilemma. And because the benefit of education is so obvious to every single citizen, no political leader would ever dare to suggest that it should be cut in favour of defence. In reality, increased defence spending does not need to result in cuts in education, but that is how the debate is framed. When Merkel announced increase defence spending in May this year, the venerable news magazine Der Spiegel reported the news with the headline *Millions for tanks rather than nurseries*.[19]

All of this leaves Germany in a tricky spot. An overwhelming majority of Germans clearly want the Bundeswehr to be able to defend their country, and the rest of Europe, and nearly half of them want better funding for the Bundeswehr. Given the constant stream of news about the Bundeswehr's faulty or non-deployable equipment, it is heartening that the population does support improving matters. Indeed, the Bundeswehr's leadership has for years been pleading with the Ministry of Defence for increased spending. Now defence spending is finally growing, but not very quickly, and Trump's bullying of Germany is likely to be

[17] "Klare Mehrheit gegen weitere Militär-Zusagen an Trump," *Focus Online*, July 11, 2018, https://www.focus.de/finanzen/boerse/wirtschaftsticker/umfrage-klare-mehrheit-gegen-weitere-militaer-zusagen-an-trump_id_9238491.html

[18] "Jeder zweite Deutsche hält Trump für gefährlicher als Kim," *WirtschaftsWoche*, April 27, 2018, https://www.wiwo.de/politik/deutschland/umfrage-jeder-zweite-deutsche-haelt-trump-fuer-gefaehrlicher-als-kim/21221284.html

[19] Matthias Gebauer. "Milliarden für Panzer statt für Kitas," *Spiegel Online*, May 14, 2018, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/verteidigungsausgaben-milliarden-fuer-panzer-statt-fuer-kitas-a-1207702.html

counterproductive, especially since the SPD is at any rate a very reluctant defence spender.

Indeed, Trump's campaign against Merkel has rather paradoxically helped Merkel's coalition partners the social democratic SPD, who are reluctant to spend more on defence. "In Germany we have other concerns than senseless armament," Ralf Stegner, an SPD deputy leader, said earlier this year.[20] Last summer, then-Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel called Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen's proposal that Germany spend 2% of GDP on defence by 2024 a "pretty crazy idea".[21] What was needed, he argued, was for European countries to manage their defence budgets more efficiently. Germany, Gabriel added, should instead spend more on education. Finance minister Olaf Scholz of the SPD has refused to entertain the idea of 2% German defence spending, pointing out in a recent interview that "the stability of NATO can't be measured in an accounting manner".[22]

Of course, even with an increase to 1.5%, Germany would reach EUR 52 billion, roughly the same amount France and the UK spend on defence – and they have nuclear arsenals.[23] With 1.5% defence spending, the Bundeswehr would be able to repair its faulty equipment and make significant new investments.

But let us assume that Germany did obey Trump's demands – which are, in fact, a misrepresentation of the NATO Wales summit declaration, where leaders agreed to "aim to move towards the 2% guideline within a decade".[24] (They did not promise to spend two per cent by 2024.) That would allow the Bundeswehr to buy

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[20] Silvia Stöber. "Zwei-Prozent-Ziel – wer hat's erfunden?" tagesschau.de, January 07, 2018, https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/verteidigungsausgaben-103.html

[21] "Von der Leyen und Gabriel streiten über Militärausgaben," *Shz.de*, August 07, 2017, https://www.shz.de/deutschland-welt/politik/von-der-leyen-und-gabriel-streiten-ueber-militaerausgaben-id17500156.html

[22] "Olaf Scholz macht Union verantwortlich für maroden Zustand," *Stuttgarter-Zeitung,* July 14, 2018, https://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/inhalt.bundeswehr-olaf-scholz-macht-union-verantwortlich-fuer-maroden-zustand.237c185f-543f-40e9-941d-58cb88e00273.html

[23] Data from: *Stocholm International Peace Research Institute*, 2017, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2_Data%20for%20all%20countries%20from%201988%E2%80%932017%20in%20local%20currency.pdf

[24] "Wales Summit Declaration," *NATO*, September 05, 2014, https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

very many pieces of equipment, and it would even be possible to further increase the number of troops, though recruitment would present a problem.

But the more significant question is what such a large and well-equipped Bundeswehr would be able to do for Europe. It would, to be certain, provide a reliable bulk of troops. But large defence spending does not equal a large role. To be sure, the command of the Enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup in Lithuania is a major step for Germany and the Bundeswehr, but it is a far cry from a leading role in guaranteeing the defence of Europe. Such a role requires not just a certain level of defence spending but also a certain political and military culture. That certain political and military culture, of course, involves a willingness to deploy forces to a range of international conflicts, to take casualties and to command major operations. Some German politicians may argue that Germany's neighbours do not want Germany to play such a role, but the reality is that most Europeans living today see little connection between the modest Bundeswehr and the Nazis' Wehrmacht.

So how does a country create the political and military culture required for a leading role? Doing so is far more challenging, and takes far more time, than spending large amounts of money. In Afghanistan the United States has, to date, had 2,512 fatalities, more than five times more than any other country.[25] The UK has had 455 fatalities, France – 86, and Germany – 54. If Germany is to play a leading role in European defence, German voters will have to get acquainted with the idea that Bundeswehr soldiers will serve on dangerous assignments and that there will be more than 54 fatalities. [26]

German legislators would also have to consider the role of the Bundeswehr and that of their own organ. Currently any foreign deployment by the Bundeswehr has to be approved by the Bundestag[27], which means Germany belongs to a minority of NATO member states requiring parliamentary approval for an

[25] "U.S. Fatalities in and around Afghanistan," *ICasualties.org*, http://icasualties.org/oef/
[26] "Fatalities By Country", *Icasualties.org,* http://icasualties.org/oef/
[27] "Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr," *Budestag*, https://www.bundestag.de/ausschuesse/ausschuesse18/a12/auslandseinsaetze/auslandseinsaetze/200026

allied deployment. That is not a bad rule in itself, but it does make the Bundeswehr less suited for a leading role than the US, UK and French armed forces.

The Bundeswehr mandate is, of course, rooted in the fact that the then-West Germany desperately wanted to prevent German military revanchism. German parliamentarians proudly refer to the Bundeswehr as a parliamentary army.[28] If Donald Trump understood that what is required to change the setup of European defence is not just more defence spending but a change in laws and culture, he might pressure Berlin to make such changes. That would be a bad idea. German legislators might be willing to part with some of their authority – but rather unsurprisingly not as a result of outside pressure. But the legislators can make the decision on their own – and chances are they will. Even though the U.S. military presence in Europe has increased rather than decreased under the Trump administration, it has become indisputably clear that we Europeans cannot count on the United States to play that long-rehearsed leading role in our security.

And here is some good news: even though Germany is unlikely to significantly increase defence spending, what matters most is at any rate a change in attitude regarding Germany's role in European defence. That change is already happening, with the eFP battlegroup command presenting Germany's proverbial dipping of the toe in the water. Now, on the back of that rather modest leadership role, the Bundeswehr can take on larger leadership tasks. The Bundeswehr's officers and soldiers enjoy an international reputation as highly competent professionals, and its top generals would, if given the chance, perform well in a situation where they and the Bundeswehr were not the sidekick. That, then, is an outcome Germans and other Europeans alike can hope for – because Otto von Bismarck was right. The stronger we are, the more unlikely war is.

[28] "Die Parlamentsarmee," *Bundesministerium der Verteidigung*, https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/verteidigung/die-parlamentsarmee

Transatlantic Link and the Baltic Sea Region

Transatlantic Security and Trade Relations: Implications for the Baltic Sea Region

Ramūnas Vilpišauskas

Dismantling of the rules based U.S.-led international system?

Small states which make up the majority of countries in the Baltic Sea region have been the main beneficiaries of the international rules based system and cooperative structures which aim at managing mutual interdependences in the spheres of security and economic exchange. Usually, small countries are more exposed to the outside world and this asymmetry of interdependence implies that they benefit relatively more from international exchange but at the same time are also relatively more exposed to potential risks such as disruptions of trade, flows of capital and people from the outside. More concretely, from the point of view of the Baltic states, economic dynamism of their main trade partners, mostly Baltic Sea region states, as well as the credibility of NATO alliance, in particular the US, with geopolitical risks from the East in the background, is vital for their prosperity and protection of sovereignty.

Therefore, it is not surprising that recent developments in the transatlantic relations, especially G7 and NATO summits in summer of 2018 as well as the exchanges of threats to impose trade protection measures by the U.S. administration vis-à-vis imports from the EU on the national security grounds have received so much attention. One could simply refer to the European trip of President D. Trump in July 2018, during which he criticised NATO allies, called EU “a foe” in trade relations, taught Prime Minister of

the UK a lesson on how to conduct Brexit negotiations, and had "a great" meeting with President V. Putin in Helsinki to make the point.

However, even though some scholars argue that "the U.S. has never seen a President like Donald Trump"[1], it would be incorrect to focus only on the personality of President D. Trump and inaccuracies of his statements. Although his behaviour and policy statements might be strongly influenced by his personal characteristics, his enduring popularity in the U.S. and growth of nationalistic movements with similar mercantilist ideas and distrust of non-majoritarian (expert) institutions in other democracies of transatlantic community point to deeper risks both within liberal democracies and on the international arena. The two are now linked not only by traditional "two-level games" of domestic politics interacting and restricting international negotiations, as illustrated by Brexit negotiations, but also by cyber interventions, propaganda and other forms of hybrid aggression by authoritarian regimes into elections and other democratic processes in Western countries to foster mistrust of voters in their democratic institutions and cooperative policies. This might eventually lead to the break-down of cooperative practices and turn towards bilateralism and unilateralism, which favour the powerful, i.e. those less dependent on others, and the unpredictable rather than those that follow the rules. This is a strategic concern for small liberal democracies which rely on open international economy, cooperative practices and dispute resolution through bargaining rather than coercion.

In search for a balance between alarmism and complacency

Amid all the predictions of the dismantling of the US-led postwar era of rules-based world order it is important not to lose the sense of proportion in assessing current policy shifts both within the U.S. and other liberal democracies as well as on the level of

[1] Joseph S. Nye. "White House of lies," *Project Syndicate*, August 7, 2018, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/trump-record-number-of-lies-by-joseph-s--nye-2018-08?utm_source=Project+Syndicate+Newsletter&utm_campaign=7fedc3377d-sunday_newsletter_12_8_2018&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_73bad5b7d8-7fedc3377d-104371661

international institutions. On the one hand, tweets and statements of the President D. Trump that the U.S. has been "a piggy bank that everyone keeps robbing" refer to an important shift in the role of the U.S. as seen by its President, a shift from rule making and leading by example to transactional view of international relations. On the other hand, current President of the U.S. is by no means the first one who has been urging other NATO members to match their words with financial contributions into defence and stop free-riding as members of the alliance. Moreover, in the background of Presidents' critical statements towards NATO allies, the actual allocation of resources and military deployments decided upon during several recent NATO summits has signalled stronger commitments of the U.S. to its allies in the Baltic Sea region.

On the one hand, D. Trump has consistently criticised Germany and the EU for trade imbalances with the U.S. and threatened to impose import duties on the same grounds of national security as vis-à-vis China. On the other hand, after the meeting with the President of the European Commission J.-C. Juncker, President D. Trump declared that they agreed "to work together toward zero tariffs, zero non-tariff barriers, and zero subsidies on non-auto industrial goods"[2]. To be sure, he also emphasised the importance of reciprocity and fairness in trade, which are the key words reflecting a mercantilist understanding of international trade, the need to reform the WTO, and also the importance of the exports of the U.S. liquefied natural gas to the EU. Still, the joint US-EU executive working group, the setting up of which was also announced after the meeting, could actually revive the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), although under the different name. However, it could just as well become only a short-lived tactical bargaining exercise without any practical results, especially having in mind that negotiations on TTIP have been facing difficulties due to resistance of interest groups and general public in a number of EU member states even before the presidency of D. Trump.

[2] See: "Remarks by President Trump and President Juncker of the European Commission in Joint Press Statements," *The White House*, July 25, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-president-juncker-european-commission-joint-press-statements/

The abovementioned examples all point to several characteristics of the current U.S. approach towards its transatlantic partners and the rest of the world. First, although the forecasts of the U.S. turning isolationist have so far not been confirmed, the national interests of the U.S. have been redefined to favour a mercantilist understanding of international economic relations with a focus on positive trade balance and promotion of exports, fair rather than free trade, bilateralism and unilateralism instead of multilateralism and regionalism. Second, the primacy of domestic politics and a narrow understanding of national interests leads to a weakening support for the spread of norms of liberal democracy and market economy abroad, and adopting transactional bargaining approach treating allies similarly as adversaries – since it is not societal orders and adherence to the international norms but trade disbalances that define friends and foes. Third, there is a frequent dissonance between positions taken by the President D. Trump, on the one hand, and majority in the Congress, on the other, which has probably been most clearly expressed in current U.S. policies towards Russia.

Most of these characteristics contribute to what is regarded as increasingly unpredictable nature of the U.S. foreign policies, even though some of the basic ideas about the international system – on economic relations, in particular, are articulated by President D. Trump very consistently, often disregarding evidence and dominant economic wisdom. International norms and institutions traditionally served as instruments of reducing unpredictability and allowing to negotiate differences to find the win-win type of agreements in managing mutual interdependencies. However, in the absence of central enforcement mechanisms in the global governance, international relations scholars often point to the need for a hegemon to be present to facilitate international bargaining and enforce the rules, as Great Britain did in the 19th century, and the.assumed this role after World War II. But as the U.S. now seems less willing to continue playing this role, questioning rather than supporting regional and international institutions, the key issue which concerns many minds is what could help sustain the system that contributed to the prosperity of a large share of world population. Within the space of this essay, the question should be

narrowed down to – how should countries like the Baltic states adapt their policies in the context of these changes in order to manage their interdependencies and minimise external risks?

Managing risks in an uncertain world

The key challenge for countries like the Baltics and other small interdependent states in Europe is that President D. Trump seems intent on abandoning the post-1945 strategy of the U.S. that was based on the assumption that "the country's vital interests and fundamental institutions were linked to the survival of like-minded polities in Europe"[3], and this happens at a time when Russia has been pressuring its neighbours either by direct aggression or covert operations, causing confusion and distrust in liberal democratic institutions in Western democracies, including the U.S. This is a also a time when formerly marginal political movements in many European countries are gaining ground by exploiting popular dissatisfaction with stagnant living conditions, immigration and other phenomena attributed to the globalised world, taking aim at the international institutions, which provide important instruments of managing interdependencies. Also, differently from traditional U.S. policy of support for European integration and transatlantic community of values, the current U.S. President tends to regard the EU as just another bureaucracy and prefers to talk about Europe of nations. Although the U.S. has increased its military resources within NATO structures in Europe, it also accompanied this move with criticism of its European allies targeted at the insufficient spending on defence and trade imbalances.

For the Baltic states, accession to the EU and NATO formed the basis of their foreign policies since early 1990s, and since 2004 membership in these organisations provided important instruments for the implementation of other policy priorities, including the management of relations with neighbours, as

[3] Melvyn P. Leffler. "The Strategic Thinking that Made America Great. "Europe First" and Why It Still Matters," *Foreign Affairs*, August 10, 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-08-10/strategic-thinking-made-america-great?cid=int-fls&pgtype=hpg

well as upgrading their infrastructure, security and welfare. However, both institutions are currently challenged not only by the uncertainty regarding the prospect of the U.S. global leadership and further support for the European integration, but also by divergent domestic policy priorities of their members originating from divergences in patterns of interdependencies and threat perception, historical experiences and domestic politics – in particular, the politicisation of EU affairs and mistrust of non-majoritarian institutions. In this context, smart policies should combine (a) attentiveness to the concerns and national preferences of the foreign partners, (b) consistency in matching diplomacy within the EU and NATO as well as other international formats with relevant domestic policies and (c) efforts at building political and societal consensus on how to manage external exposure which would balance opportunities and potential risks of international interdependencies. More concretely, it means the following.

Attentiveness to preferences of the partners means that the Baltics should be in continuous search for the ways to find win-win solutions to those problems which are considered important by their partners within NATO and the EU and advance the management of interdependencies from the point of the Baltics. For example, in the case of the U.S. and taking into account mercantilist understanding of international trade by President D. Trump, exports of LNG from the U.S. to the Baltic states could be a good example of such a win-win solution. This type of trade relations is both in line with understanding of beneficial (export) trade policy of the U.S. administration and desirable (diversification of the sources of supply) energy security policies of the Baltic states. More generally, advancing international trade and investment provides win-win solutions for small open economies, unless significant short-term adjustment costs for domestic societal groups are involved. Recent increases in defence spending by Latvia and Lithuania to join Estonia in reaching 2% of GDP is another example of meeting expectations of the U.S. administration and at the same time becoming more consistent in matching diplomacy, which has for more than a decade been emphasising geopolitical threats from the East, and the actual

national politics of budgetary expenditures.

To be sure, there are limits to win-win type political exchanges, for example, in reacting to the concerns of Southern European countries regarding migration flows or in negotiating post-2020 EU multiannual financial framework under the conditions of departure of one of the key contributors to the EU budget, fiscal constraints in the EU member states, and competing national priorities of how "to divide a pie". Also, countries like the Baltic states have very limited influence on such exercises as negotiating TTIP which could potentially strengthen transatlantic alliance. But well targeted work with the officials from different institutions reaching beyond foreign policy actors, including policy makers in the legislative institutions and societal actors, in the U.S. and other most important partners of the Baltic states such as Germany, could provide opportunities to discover potential trade-offs and win-win deals. Similarly, flexibility in Brexit negotiations is important on all sides so as not to lose sight of the strategic imperative – to minimise the damage to all sides involved in this lose-lose process of reintroducing barriers to economic exchange between the UK and the rest of the EU.

In addition to the EU and NATO as institutions for managing interdependencies, smaller forums of like-minded countries have been practiced both within the Baltic Sea region, such as regular meetings of the Baltic and Nordic heads of states on the margins of EU summits, as well as wider formats of ministerial meetings, such as the Hanseatic league, which in addition to the Baltic and Nordic countries includes Netherlands and Ireland uniting "trade friendly and fiscally conservative EU governments", as described by commentators[4]. These types of groupings, although used mostly as diplomatic forums to express national preferences, could help preserve EU's attention to the continuous efforts at removing existing barriers to the Single market and new initiatives aimed at signing free trade agreements with WTO members that are important trade partners of the EU. It seems that the prospect of the UK leaving the EU has given additional impetus to the EU's efforts to enter new free trade deals (the ones with Canada and

[4] Mehreen Khan. "EU's new Hanseatic League picks its new battle," *Financial Times*, July 19, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/aedbe32a-8af7-11e8-bf9e-8771d5404543

Japan being among the latest examples) which are important for smaller countries and should be supported in the future.

Consistency between what is being presented to foreign partners and domestic policies actually implemented at home is another important factor which affects credibility and effectiveness of small states' policies. Often there is a significant gap between foreign diplomacy, or statements and concerns presented to foreign partners, and domestic political decisions, which is caused either by demands of interest groups or short-term political calculations, when the perceived need to appease voters as elections approach overrides strategic priorities. Since 1990s, there have been many examples of such inconsistencies in the Baltic states' policies, including, for example, delayed energy projects such as electricity connections between Baltic and Nordic countries, decisions on constructing LNG terminals and, more recently, difficulties in agreeing on the method and direction of synchronising Baltic electricity systems with Continental Europe.

Another dilemma which might become increasingly relevant for the Baltic states if the process of EU reforms advances and the differentiated integration gains traction among the core group of EU member states is the trade-of between being part of the integrationist core and possible economic effects of new integration projects on national competitiveness and growth. The initiative to harmonise corporate taxes is a good example of such a dilemma, when the desire to be within the avant-garde of integration could override economic interests of relatively less prosperous states, which aim at attracting investment by offering relatively more favourable tax regime to foreign investors than the richer EU member states. Similar initiatives such as digital taxation are likely to be high on the EU agenda as they are among those few integration projects on which there is a consensus between Germany and France.

Finally, the most complicated task is forging national consensus on strategic economic and social policies linked to the management of interdependencies. High rates of emigration, in particular from Latvia and Lithuania, into richer EU member states, especially after the start of the economic crisis in 2008, together with high rates of mistrust of national institutions, could be seen as failures

of national policies, which muddle through with structural reforms and lack national consensus on strategic priorities, that could provide the basis for economic growth by combining external openness and structural reforms with adequate social safety net required to protect most vulnerable population.

To be sure, Baltic states could be regarded as success stories in terms of their catching-up with the EU average and have rightfully been regarded by the Eastern partnership countries as good practice examples to be followed. Besides, the recent rise of (re)-immigration flows which started exceeding emigration numbers could be a sign of the reversal of demographic trends that have become the key concern since joining the EU. Also, as conventional wisdom has it, from the long-term historical perspective, the Baltic states have never been so secure and prosperous during their entire history of statehood.

Still, the increasingly uncertain international environment and geopolitics of the region once again point to the more urgent need for good governance, resilient society and effective management of interdependencies, which rely on evidence-based policy making and adequate definition of national interests. These are extremely challenging tasks since they require that policy makers should possess, as Tanzi succinctly put it, "the Solomon's wisdom, the knowledge accumulated by Google and the honesty of saints"[5]. But experimenting with illusionary "taking back control of money, laws and borders" motivated by short-term politics could result in much larger losses for small open economies than the UK is going to experience due to the Brexit. The best insurance policy of protecting national sovereignty is the appropriate functional management of interdependencies required for those countries to prosper and be secure within the community of liberal democracies.

[5] Vito Tanzi. "Governments versus Markets. The Changing Economic Roles of State," Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 4.

Enabling Deterrence: U.S. Security Policy Toward the Baltic

Glen E. Howard

In early August 2018, former Estonian President Tomas Ilves gave an interview to *Foreign Policy* magazine where he spoke about the current state of U.S. foreign policy. In this interview Ilves advised Europeans to focus on "what the U.S. does, and not to focus on what President Trump says" in regard to his foreign policy.[1] Ilves's wise recommendation is one of the challenges of understanding American foreign policy following one of the tensest NATO summits in its 69-year history. President Trump had taken up the issue of Germany's backing of the Nordstream 2 undersea pipeline and questioned German policy toward Russia. Immediately following the NATO summit President Trump traveled to Helsinki, Finland to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin that on the one hand, pointed to an improving climate in U.S.-Russian relations, but, on the other hand, created tremendous uncertainty in the Baltic over U.S. rapprochement with Russia and how this would affect the American commitment. Perhaps for this reason President Ilves sought to keep everyone's "eye on the ball", to quote an American baseball expression, when assessing the role of the United States during the presidency of Donald J. Trump. Former Estonian President Ilves correctly pointed to not forget what U.S. actions have occurred, and continue to occur in the Baltic rather than dwell on the words of the U.S. President. This essay seeks to highlight those actions rather than dwell on President Trump's twitter feed or efforts to spar with the American media that bears

[1] Interview with Tomas Ilves. "Europe Should Look to what the US Does, not What Trump Says," *Foreign Policy*, August 3, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/03/europe-should-look-to-what-the-united-states-does-not-what-trump-says-russia-toomas-hendrik-ilves/

a strong resemblance to the age of realpolitik during the Nixon era. Historical similarities exist between President Trump and Nixon as former U.S. president – Richard Nixon sought to have détente with the Soviet Union while maintaining a strong NATO despite a bitter war at home with the American media.[2]

In the first full 18 months of Trump's presidency the one visible trend that has occurred is how United States has continued to use its financial and military muscle to continue American efforts to deter Russian aggression in the Baltic through a continued military buildup of NATO forces. The United States in this period has moved from a capacity building partnership with its Baltic allies to that of a deterrence posture capable of resisting Russian aggression. One year into his Presidency, Trump had his first interaction with the leaders of all three Baltic countries in a White House ceremony on April 3, 2018, commemorating 100 years of Baltic independence. Trump welcomed Latvian President Raimonds Vejonis, Estonian President Kersti Kaljuaid and Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite to Washington, D.C., when they were met in the East Room of the White House to mark this remarkable achievement. President Trump took the opportunity to applaud the 2% threshold in NATO defence spending reached by the three Baltic states. Trump also used the gathering to brandish his credentials for being tough on Russia by stating that "we just passed a USD 700 billion military budget, next year, USD 716 billion – the largest ever passed. We are going to have a military stronger than we ever have before, by far – that's not exactly a good thing for Russia," Trump gloated as he stood before the three Baltic presidents. The U.S. president went on to note that he had recently expelled 60 Russian diplomats from the United States, and that this number had exceeded the number of Russia diplomats expelled by Germany or France. In true 'Trumpesque' fashion, the U.S. president noted that while he had been tough on Russia, he also wanted better relations with Moscow in an effort to show his *real politik* side while flaunting the Teddy Roosevelt aspect of his personality by hailing the buildup

[2] For a comparison of the two Presidents and how they are similar, see: https://www.macleans.ca/politics/washington/trump-vs-nixon-a-look-at-how-the-two-leaders-compare/

of American military power as part of his "big stick" approach to international relations.[3]

If President Trump is to be judged by his actions, no clearer sign about the U.S. commitment to Baltic security is the appointment of uber hawk James N. Mattis as his new Secretary of Defence. Mattis made visiting the Baltic one of his top priorities within four months of taking office as Trump's Secretary of Defence. Mattis visited Lithuania on January 20, 2017 in his first trip to the region and in a highly symbolic gesture met with the three different defence ministers of each Baltic republic, a move designed to calm regional nerves about the U.S. defence commitment.[4] Several months later, the Vice President of the United States Mike Pence traveled to the Baltic to meet the three Baltic Presidents on July 31. At a news conference with all three Baltic Presidents, Pence stated that: "Under President Donald Trump, the United States stands firmly behind our Article 5 pledge of mutual defence. An attack on one of us is an attack on us all," he said. Pence's statement reiterating the U.S. commitment to Article 5 should finally put to rest the fears of many in the region that the Trump administration will honour its security commitment to the Baltic states.

If there is one word to define US-Baltic security ties in the past twelve months, it would be American leadership. Whereas Great Britain, Canada and Germany have backed up their commitment with boots on the ground in the Baltic through the formation and deployment of the Enhanced Forward Battlegroups (EBGs) in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, American leadership and financial muscle have continued to shoulder the costs of shoring up NATO deterrence capabilities in the Baltic. The foundation of this assistance is made possible by the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI).[5] Created shortly after the Russian invasion, occupation, and seizure of Crimea, the ERI kicked off in February 2016 with a USD 3.4 billion budget (for fiscal year 2017) in U.S. defence spending shortly after the Obama administration had withdrawn the last

[3] Michael Birnbaum. "Russia starts disruptive military exercises a day after Baltic leaders meet with Trump," *Seattle Times*, April 04, 2018, https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/russia-starts-disruptive-exercises-a-day-after-baltic-leaders-meet-with-trump/

[4] Glen E. Howard. "Mattis Goes to the Baltics," *Real Clear Defense*, May 10, 2017

[5] Ibid.

American tanks from Europe in early 2014. The United States immediately reversed this trend with the adoption of ERI after the U.S. responded to the Crimean invasion by building up U.S. forces in Europe.

Under the Presidency of Donald J. Trump, America's military commitment to Europe has increased by nearly USD 2 billion for the ERI and now stands at over USD 4.8 billion for fiscal year 2018. By 2019, the total will reach USD 6.5 billion (twice more than it was during the Obama administration) in spending as the United States significantly bolsters its military presence in Europe.[6] From the North Atlantic to the Baltic, U.S. leadership has continued to see a deepening NATO military presence in the region as NATO upgrades its military infrastructure in the East.

From Baltic air policing to air defence

US and NATO debates on how to improve military deterrence in the Baltic has steadily evolved since the crisis year of 2014, when Russia invaded and annexed Crimea and the Atlantic Alliance began to react with greater seriousness to the Russian threat. NATO's response to this threat was to strengthen the Baltic air policing effort that had been initiated after the Baltic states joined NATO in 2004. After 2014, NATO widened and expanded its activities by deploying F-16 aircraft to the Amari air base in Estonia as well as Siauliai air base in Lithuania.[7] Rotational air deployments by various NATO countries to the Baltic are evolving into a wider air strategy aimed at providing greater air defence capabilities for the region that were largely non-existent prior to 2014.

2018 is rapidly becoming the year of air defence in the Baltic and will likely receive more of a focus from an air power perspective with the forthcoming appointment of U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE) General Ted Wolters, who will replace current SACEUR

[6] Jen Judson. "Funding to deter Russia reaches $6.5B in FY19 defence budget request," February 12, 2018, https://www.defencenews.com/land/2018/02/12/funding-to-deter-russia-reaches-65b-in-fy19-defence-budget-request/

[7] "NATO Air Policing," *NATO*, https://ac.nato.int/page5931922/-nato-air-policing

General Curtis Scaparrotti.[8] President Trump even mentioned this point during his White House meeting with Baltic presidents on April 3. During the Baltic summit in Washington, the presidents of the United States, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia noted in the joint declaration that they would search for new ways of enhancing regional air defence on both bilateral grounds and in the NATO format. The joint declaration approved at Trump's Baltic summit also noted that the U.S. and all three Baltic countries would search for new ways of enhancing regional air defence on both bilateral grounds and in the NATO format. During the question and answer session with Trump, the President of Estonia stated that "we will continue to explore new ideas and opportunities, including air defence, bilateral and in NATO, to enhance deterrence across the region." [9]

One of the major intellectual voices in Washington advocating this approach is former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) Philip Breedlove, who wrote an extensive report published by the Atlantic Council calling for the U.S. to invest in Baltic air defence. His report provided in-depth recommendations on ways the U.S. and NATO could address the Russian air defence threat to Northern Europe.[10] According to Breedlove, providing four multinational eFP battle groups is not enough. Deterrence requires specific enablers, such as sufficient forward logistics, robust command control, and further planning and capabilities for the air and maritime domain, he noted. Breedlove argued that establishing an integrated and robust air defence for the Baltic Sea region is the next logical step in protecting NATO's forward presence after making major investments in improving its airbases in the Baltic.[11]

The United States is continuing to make major military investment in the Baltic and Eastern Europe by improving its

[8] Gordon Lubold. "Military Faces a Sweeping Turnover Among American Military Commanders," *Wall Street Journal*, August 20, 2018

[9] "Remarks by President Trump and Heads of the Baltic States in Joint Press Conference," *The White House*, April 3, 2018, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-heads-baltic-states-joint-press-conference/

[10] Philip M. Breedlove. "Toward Effective Air Defense in Northern Europe," *Atlantic Council*, March 05, 2018, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/issue-briefs/toward-effective-air-defense-in-northern-europe

[11] Ibid.

airfields, air bases, and air defence in NATO's east. As part of its 2018 defence budget the United States has funded refuelling infrastructure and a tactical fighter aircraft parking apron and taxiway at Amari Air Base in Estonia, so that it can support the A-10, F-15, F016, F-22 and F-35 aircraft. Moreover, the 2019 U.S. defence budget seeks USD 16 million for U.S. Special Operations Command to establish a training and operational facilities at the Amari air base.[12] Moreover, the U.S. also will continue with periodic deployment of U.S. military forces to the Baltic states to strengthen regional deterrence and to catalyse the efforts of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to develop their national defence.[13]

In other areas, the United States also has started pouring money into Baltic ammunition procurements to build up regional ammunition stocks in the event of a Russian invasion. For example, the U.S. has provided over USD 100 million for the Baltic states to procure large caliber ammunition to expand their ammunition stocks, as well as provided over USD 70 million in training and equipping programmes to build the capacity of the national military forces of all three countries. The United States also is providing over USD 3.5 million in International Military Education and Training (IMET) to send over 150 students for military training and education in the United States.[14] While the United States does not have permanent ground forces based in the Baltic, more than 5,000 American troops will join NATO multinational forces in this year's Saber Strike exercises, which is the largest military exercise of its kind to take place in the Baltic region. The U.S. is also spending USD 3 million to work with the Baltic States to build public resiliency against Russian disinformation by strengthening public service broadcasters and independent media.

Command and control (C2) of operations remain the vulnerable Achilles heel of NATO – these forces adapt to their new environment as NATO struggles to staff these forward deployed forces with the ability to regulate NATO's Baltic landscape that spans three countries. U.S. leadership is helping NATO to conceptualise and deepen its command and control headquarters staff in the Baltic

[12] "Poking the Bear: US Air Force Builds in Russia's Backyard," *Defense News*, June 25, 2018
[13] Baltic Defense Review, Baltic News Service (BNS), March 28 – April 03, 2018
[14] Baltic Defense Review, Baltic News Service (BNS), March 28 – April 03, 2018

in an effort to bolster one of its weakest links – Command and Control, or C2 in military parlance. Two important milestones occurred in this area in 2018. First to bolster its overall military readiness Defence Secretary Mattis introduced a plan at the June 7 meeting in Brussels that was adopted by NATO calling for member countries to begin implementing the concept of the four 30s to counter a Russian ground force threat in Europe.[15] The plan requires that NATO member states be able to assemble 30 land battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat vessels in 30 days by 2020.[16] What prompted this move was a RAND corporation report that showed that among member countries only Britain, France, and Germany could deploy a heavy brigade unit to NATO's eastern within a month and that any heavy losses by these units in fighting could not be sustained in a long-term deployment without further reinforcements from NATO. The second major development to affect NATO's defence posture in the Baltic was in the realm of C2 with the creation of the Multinational Division Headquarters North, or MND-North headquarters in Latvia starting in 2019.[17]

For the tiny Baltic nation of Latvia, the establishment of MND-North is an important strategic development as it strives to become a hub of NATO's collective defence in the Baltic. With the deployment of the Canadian spearhead force in Latvia via the formation of the Enhanced Forward Battlegroup (EFB), the creation of MND-North will be another step in bolstering the country's security and strengthen NATO's nascent command and control in the Baltic. MND-North will be based at Ādaži air base in Latvia and will have responsibility for planning and coordinating the defence of the Baltic region, as well as the organisation and implementation of military training and other activities in order to increase the interoperability of the participating countries.[18]

[15] "NATO Agrees To 'Four 30s' Plan To Counter Russia," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, June 7, 2018, https://www.rferl.org/a/nato-ministers-expected-to-okay-four-thirties-initiative-stoltenberg/29275979.html

[16] Victoria Leoni. "Here's how the US is preparing for a possible Russian attack in Europe," *Military Times*, June 06, 2018, https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2018/06/06/heres-how-the-us-is-preparing-for-a-possible-russian-attack-in-europe/

[17] "Latvia will host new NATO northern headquarters from 2019," *LSM*, July 12, 2018, https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/defense/latvia-will-host-new-nato-northern-headquarters-from-2019.a285123/

[18] Ibid.

MND-North will be a complement to the already existing MND Northeast based in Szczecin, Poland. Unlike MND Northeast, MND North will have more of a focus on Russia proper, whereas as MND Northeast has more of a focus toward Belarus and defending the Sulwalki gap. MND North will oversee the defence of NATO's northern flank in the Baltic and oversee the defence of Estonia and Latvia. What is not outlined in the announcement is the threat posed by Russian ground forces in thenearby Pskov. MND-North will help NATO deal with the threat emanating from the Western Military District and the 76th Guards Air Assault Division based at Pskov, which spearheaded the military assault on Crimea in February 2014 and poses a major military threat to Latvia.

Russia's hybrid war at sea

Moscow added a new twist to its array of threats to be used against its regional neighbours in 2018 by applying a naval form of non-linear warfare to its use of military power in the Baltic. Often referred to as hybrid war, the Kremlin announced plans to conduct live missile firing exercises in the Baltic from April 4 to 6 immediately following the Baltic leaders meeting with Trump in the White House on April 3. The Kremlin announced plans to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile from the Baltic Sea between Latvia and Sweden one day after the meeting in Washington. What made the April 4-6 live firing missile exercise different – unlike Russian snap military exercises previously held in the Baltic that were quite predominant in 2015 – was the public announcement of a live firing missile test. Until recently, Moscow has mostly relied on the harassment of NATO aircraft and vessels deployed to the Baltic by using Russian military aircraft in dangerous flyovers.

A major incident occurred in the Baltic in April 2016 when a Russian fighter aircraft flew near an Arleigh Burke class destroyer USS Donald Cook and has engaged in similar tactics again and again. However, the announcement of the live firing exercise of a Russian missile was a new development used by the Kremlin to harass the Baltic states by using the missile exercise to interfere with regional shipping. The Russian announcement led to a three-

day shutdown of commercial traffic in the Baltic Sea in order to avoid the announced Russian testing area. In reality, however, the missile test never occurred, as Moscow failed to launch any missiles for unclear reasons that may have been technical – or the launch never was intended. Regardless, Moscow used the missile exercise to disrupt Baltic commerce without actually resorting to a test or a display of force. Unlike previous Russian naval activity in the Baltic, which were deemed by one retired U.S. naval officer to be "tactically irrelevant", this exercise likely had another dimension to it that was designed to demonstrate Russian naval power in the Baltic. According to retired U.S. naval officer William Combes, most naval exercises held by navies are limited to pre-defined coastal areas rather than shipping lanes of countries. Instead, this exercise appeared to have a psychological and economic component to it designed to demonstrate Russian capabilities to conduct naval operations anywhere in the Baltic, without fear of repercussions. Ironically, as Combes noted, ultimately there was no missile fired during the exercises, which may have been for technical reasons, such as equipment malfunctioning.[19]

For Latvia, the Russian missile testing led to a shut down of Latvian air space. It was also the first time that Russia had announced a live firing of munitions in Latvia's exclusive economic zone – a stretch of waters in the international waters just outside the Baltic. Latvian state secretary of defence Janis Garisons said "what concerns us is that it's the first time when they've exercised so close to our borders." Garisons noted that, "we regard it as a show of forces, nothing else."[20] Russian missile testing appeared to follow a new pattern of Russia's hybrid efforts at sea when it sought to disrupt the laying of a high voltage undersea power line connecting Lithuania and Sweden in the spring of 2015 in order to send a political message to these states when a series of military exercises. The link was intended to make Lithuania less dependent on Russia and Belarus for electricity. It was eventually completed.

[19] See William Combes, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 2, 2018. https://jamestown.org/program/russia-the-baltic-sea-and-unexecuted-missile-tests-off-the-latvian-coast/

[20] Michael Birnbaum. "Russia starts disruptive military exercises a day after Baltic leaders meet with Trump," *Seattle Times*, April 04, 2018, https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/russia-starts-disruptive-exercises-a-day-after-baltic-leaders-meet-with-trump/

NATO mobility in the Baltic

One of the most pressing questions facing NATO policymakers in Baltic security is the question of mobility and mobilisation to redeploy its forces to the region in the event of conflict. The race for mobility in warfare is as old as war itself, as the vaunted Schlieffen Plan of World War One was oriented around German troops massing via railroads to knock France out of a war before its Russian ally in the East could mobilise in time. NATO faces a similar mobility issue in a race against time to reinforce the Baltic states in the event of a Russian invasion, or even a limited war. Mobility has become a key pressing issue inside NATO as policymakers weigh the challenges of deploying its forces to the Baltic by air, land, and sea.

The issue first made its way into public discussions on security in NATO's east by former Commanding U.S. Army Europe, General Ben Hodges. Hodges raised the issue of the need to create a 'military Schengen' system for American and NATO forces to freely move around the military theatre in Europe in reaction to a Russian military action on the NATO periphery. European Union restrictions, however, on the movement of military forces inside Europe have created enormous bureaucratic obstacles and delays in U.S. military deployments during exercises in Europe.[21] The U.S. military had faced this problem repeatedly in its efforts to organise and participate in military exercises as proponents of NATO mobility, such as Ben Hodges, have noted that undocumented migrants can move faster across Europe than American military forces. Referring to the Saber Strike military exercise, Hodges said: "this exercise has helped us improve our speed of assembly, the movement of allied forces from all over Europe to the Black Sea region and highlighted that we still have challenges with freedom of movement." Hodges noted that "more than anything we need a military Schengen zone, something that would allow a military convoy to move across Europe as fast as

[21] Jen Judson. "Outgoing US Army Europe commander pushes for 'Military Schengen Zone'," July 28, 2017, https://www.defensenews.com/smr/european-balance-of-power/2017/07/28/outgoing-us-army-europe-commander-pushes-for-military-schengen-zone/

a migrant is able to move across Europe. .. Right now that is not the case."[22]

In the age of Russian-backed hybrid warfare, speed of movement by NATO remains critically important. While NATO has tried to correct this problem by creating and deploying multinational battalions to the Baltic, these forces at best are tripwire forces designed to slow or stall a Russian invasion. Additional NATO forces will need to be brought into the theatre from outside the region and this could take days, if not weeks. Bureaucratic challenges created by the EU for this reason have become an enormous internal issue inside NATO. The recently retired General Hodges likes to retell the story of how after he had completed a NATO-led military exercise in Hungary the Hungarian customs officials raced out to his plane, stopping his plane on the military airfield and prevented his plane from taking off by demanding to check the passports of every American military officer on the plane, including that of General Hodges. These officials demanded on-the-spot approval from the proper authorities that U.S. military officers must have their proper documentation before leaving. This incident, according to Hodges, infuriated him and his staff as they know that the timing in war and reaction time can often hobble a military operation that could be life or death, particularly at a vulnerable and exposed airfield.

At best, American strategic planners give NATO a window of two weeks to mobilise its forces to redeploy their forces to the Baltic as the common view held in Washington is that Russian forces from their military bases in Pskov could be in downtown Riga in less than an hour by air, or even less if unchallenged. General Hodges, now retired, often retells the story of how even American military deployments from nearby Germany for the first of his Operation Dragoon Ride exercise to Poland frequently faced delays and obstacles from local Polish officials in villages and cities along the deployment route through Poland due to a lack of understanding and advance knowledge of the movements of American forces by central authorities.

[22] Jen Judson. "Outgoing US Army Europe commander pushes for 'Military Schengen Zone'," July 28, 2017, https://www.defensenews.com/smr/european-balance-of-power/2017/07/28/outgoing-us-army-europe-commander-pushes-for-military-schengen-zone/

In an interview with *Baltic Defense Review,* Estonian defence minister Juri Luik noted that NATO is working towards "the seamless movement of allied forces" across the borders of member states in Europe to ensure the fast and efficient strengthening of units had been deployed. [23] Luik went to add that: "The movement of forces is at present very slow as countries have very different attitudes towards when the forces of other countries, including allied forces, are moving through their territory." There are dozens of obstacles that to be formalised and it must be taken into account and alluded to the problem that these forces would be carrying ammunition with them and that by itself presented problems for EU countries and that the plan is to harmonise the procedure. Referring to the Hodges proposal, Luik said there can never be a "citizens" Schengen, but the bureaucratic procedures can be significantly accelerated and that the EU is just the kind of organisation that can handle these types of institutional problems, and can harmonise the procedures between the EU and NATO.

Many security experts believe the path to overcoming NATO's mobility problem in the Baltic is through strategic infrastructure investment. Turning major ice free ports like the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda into a logistics terminal on the Baltic or building the 870 kilometre (395 miles) Rail Baltica 1435 mm European gauge railroad project from the Estonian capital of Tallinn to the Lithuanian-Polish border are two prime examples of the type of investment needed to bolster NATO's ability to reinforce the region.[24] The Rail Baltica project has been viewed as a threat to Russia due to its ability to be used militarily for rapid NATO troop deployments to the Baltic. The railway would enable NATO to bypass Russia's Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad. Moscow has turned Kaliningrad into a heavily fortified Anti-Access/Area Denial A2/AD outpost with the capacity to prevent NATO reinforcements from reinforcing the three Baltic states by air and by sea.[25] Each Baltic country is making headway

[23] *Baltic Defense Review*, Baltic News Service (BNS), November 8-14, 2017

[24] "Technical Parameters," *Rail Baltica*, http://www.railbaltica.org/about-rail-baltica/tehnical-parametrs. Also, for an excellent overview of the strategic significance of the Rail Baltica project see the article by Olevs Nikers "Joint Baltic Rail Venture Attracts Wider Regional Interest" in *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 28, 2017. https://jamestown.org/program/joint-baltic-rail-venture-attracts-wider-regional-interest/

[25] See for example the excellent article by Paul Goble. http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2016/07/rail-baltica-project-military-threat-to.html

into building its own separate segment of the Rail Baltica project utilising funds from the European Union. Lithuania, for example, is seeking funds for investment into the Rail Baltica project from the EU 2021-2027 budget to be applied for dual purpose transport infrastructure to facilitate the movement of military equipment in EU member states.[26] Lithuanian officials hope to receive up to 430 million euros (USD 460 million) from what they describe as a military mobility fund. Moreover, the EU Commission is proposing to invest 4.9 billion euros (USD 5.7 billion) for military mobility into next year's budget. In addition, about 40 million euros will be invested in the development of the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda that will also have applications toward improved military mobility infrastructure.[27]

The EU military mobility fund is part of the EU's "Defending Europe by 2025" vision for improving military mobility within the EU. The goal of the project is to remove barriers that prevent the use of military assets, such as eliminating barriers to insufficient height and load capacity for bridges, roads, and ports in order to create a dual use infrastructure that ensures that key infrastructure is suitable for use by military assets.[28] The programme will be overseen by the European Defence Agency working in conjunction with NATO to eliminate these barriers. The EDA has drawn up a series of steps that will be undertaken so that by 2019 the key areas will be identified for investment and the first list of projects will be presented.

Conclusion

Despite NATO's progress in improving its deterrence capabilities in the Baltic, the one issue that Baltic countries continue to raise with the United States in regard to regional security is the presence of American boots on the ground. Initially, after the Crimean invasion in 2014, the United States responded unilaterally to Baltic concerns

[26] *Baltic Defense Revie*w, July 4–10, 2018.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Jean Claude Junker. "Defending Europe: Improving Military Mobility in the European Union – State of the Union Address," *European Commission,* September, 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/2018-military_mobility_factsheet.pdf

by immediately deploying a company of American soldiers to each Baltic capital as a gesture of American commitment. These forces were not permanently stationed in the Baltic, but initially were rotational in nature, with a company size unit based in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.[29] Following the Warsaw summit, NATO proceeded to create and deploy the multinational battlegroups to the Baltic, and the United States subsequently withdrew its units to Poland in 2017, creating in essence a sort of U.S. strategic reserve to call upon to deploy to the Baltic in the event of a crisis. American planners thought that with limited numbers of soldiers it made more sense to pull back to Poland and let its NATO allies assume a greater share of defending the Baltic. Baltic leaders would prefer that American forces return in some fashion to the region due to the psychological factor and its impact on Russia rather than the actual deterrence factor created by the American presence. These officials continue to quietly raise this issue in private with their American counterparts in their ongoing security discussions in the hope of obtaining a permanent U.S. military presence in the Baltic.

Meanwhile, a new debate has emerged in U.S. policy circles about Poland's request for the U.S. to permanently create a major American military base in Poland. The Polish request is to create a "garrison" presence of American forces similar to the long-standing American military presence in Germany. To sweeten U.S. interest, the Polish government has indicated it would provide USD 2 billion to pay for a permanent U.S. military base. No public response from the Trump administration has been forthcoming despite a Polish lobbying campaign in the U.S. Congress to obtain a U.S. decision, as the issue remains unresolved. Judging by the initial response from former senior level U.S. military officials, such as retired U.S. Army General Ben Hodges, the reaction has been largely negative for several reasons. First, the United States does not have the military manpower in Europe to create a permanent U.S. military base in Poland. Second, after operating for nearly 70 years in Germany, the American military continues to value its bases there, which geographically is a natural logistics hub

[29] Jean Claude Junker. "Defending Europe: Improving Military Mobility in the European Union – State of the Union Address," *European Commission,* September, 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/2018-military_mobility_factsheet.pdf

between the Baltic and Eastern Europe. The American air base at Ramstein, and Germany's modern railroad infrastructure offer the United States military a far superior ability to deploy U.S. forces around Europe in the event of a crisis. Any move to permanently base American forces in Poland would likely lead to a closure or downscaling of the U.S. presence in Germany for the sake of a larger forward presence closer to the Baltic.

The Polish initiative to create a permanent military base resulted in a highly negative reaction from retired U.S. Army General Ben Hodges who voiced his concern about the issue by writing an article in the American publication *Politico* criticising the Polish proposal. Hodge's opposition to the Polish basing idea is based upon his view that American forces in Eastern Europe should not be permanently confined to a "garrison" state nature, which would result in U.S. forces being specifically tied to one geographic location. Hodges strongly feels that U.S. forces should retain their bases in Germany and instead become more rotational in nature, shifting from one part of Europe to another Hodges believes that the concept of rotational deployments should be extended not just to NATO member countries, but also be expanded to NATO aspirant countries like Ukraine and Georgia. In essence, to expand the geographic perimeter of American deployments to NATO's Black Sea borderland. From a military strategy standpoint, Hodges and other retired U.S. generals this author has spoken to about this issue in the past six months widely share the view about the strategic importance of Germany to U.S. strategy in Europe. Former senior ranging American officers think that Germany is indispensable from a basing standpoint for the reasons cited above, and that it would make far more sense for the United States to shift to periodic rotational military deployments around the periphery to avoid being limited to one location. Poland rationalises that U.S. deployments to the Baltic would be far easier from a base operating inside Poland, but Americans counter this view by noting that their ability to move forces to other parts of Europe from Poland, such as hot spots in the Black Sea, would take more time to deploy and be more challenging from a logistical standpoint.[30]

[30] Ben Hodges. "Don't Put US Bases in Poland," *Politico*, June 04, 2018, https://www.politico.eu/article/dont-put-us-bases-in-poland/

In the final analysis, what the Polish basing proposal and Hodges counter-argument to their idea suggests is that American policymakers in the United States are now involved in an internal debate over what exactly U.S. military strategy in Europe should be. At the height of the Cold War, American forces in Germany totalled 350,000 ground forces to defend the Fulda Gap, and today they number 50,000 for all of Europe. Lacking the manpower needed to deter the Russian threat from the Arctic to the Black Sea is an immense challenge for NATO policymakers and how this debate is resolved will strongly affect American defence commitments to the Baltic in what will be one of the biggest debates on American defence strategy since the end of the Cold War. One thing is certain, that with the likely nomination of USAFE General Wolters to become the next SACEUR, America's strategy in defending the Baltic increasingly will rely on the use of American air power rather than boots on the ground.

Paying it Forward: Sustaining the Transatlantic Relationship through Canada's Renewed Commitment to NATO's eFP

Christian Leuprecht, Joel Sokolsky, Jayson Derow

Immediately prior to the NATO summit in July 2018, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau renewed Canada's commitment to the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) as the Framework Nation for Latvia for four years. The existing mandate of Operation REASSURANCE was to end in March 2019, however, it was expected to be renewed before then.[1] That Canada renewed more than half a year prior to the expiration of the existing mandate for an extended four-year period signalled sustained leadership with regard to both the headquarters and battlegroup. This decision reflects Ottawa's concern about not only the situation in Latvia and the eFP, but also the fate of the Alliance itself, Canada's role in it and, indeed, about the future of Canadian defence policy. It comes on the heels of a letter in June by U.S. President Donald Trump that chides Canada for not meeting NATO's aspirational target of spending 2% of GDP on defence, Trump castigating NATO members on burden sharing, reverberations of Trump's previous remarks about NATO's irrelevance, U.S. unilateralism in dealing with North Korea that saw Trump suspending military exercises without prior consultation with allies, and concerns Trump might unilaterally offer similar concessions to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

[1] For an analysis of Canada's decision to commit to the eFP in Latvia see: with Christian Leuprecht, Joel J. Sokolsky, Jayson Derow. "On the Baltic Watch: The Past, Present and Future of Canada's Commitment to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia," *Macdonald-Laurier Institute*, Ottawa, Ontario, 2018, from which parts of this paper are drawn.

NATO internationalism: "Keep the Russians out"

Since the late 1940s, followed by the contentious times of the Cold War, and up to the point of the July 2018 recommitment to the eFP in Latvia, Canadian defence and foreign policy has been largely influenced by the US-led multilateral, liberal-democratic Western international(ist) security order. This is especially true with regard to Europe through NATO and in North America through a wide array of bilateral defence and security linkages, and the 'binational' North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). Any suggestion that this order might be coming to an end calls into question Canada's entire defence posture. Though much doubt attended the inception of NATO, the seemingly always problematic and fractious Alliance has defied its skeptics and continually puts to the lie predictions of its imminent demise: As it was at the "creation," throughout the Cold War, into the 1990s, post-September 11 – which saw the Alliance play a significant role in Afghanistan – to today's rapidly evolving threat environment; Canada remains prepared to go to great lengths and incur considerable costs to ensure its "proper place" in the now enlarged NATO alliance. Canada can do so because it has capacity and capability. Canada's commitment to the security of the Baltics, Latvia in particular, while certainly self-interested, also largely represents an effort to persuade the Trump administration that "NATO was neither obsolete nor a club of states free-riding on American largesse as a means of shoring up the alliance."[2] The pall Trump has cast over America's commitment to the Transatlantic Alliance is potentially highly problematic for Canada. As a founding member of NATO, the Alliance has been a cornerstone of Canadian defence policy for decades. Arguably, nothing runs more counter to Canadian grand strategy than a weakened NATO, let alone a NATO without its most powerful member state: the United States of America. Ergo, Canada has every interest to forestall American disengagement. That necessitated Ottawa counter-"tweeting" a steadfast commitment to the Transatlantic Alliance, particularly through its renewed commitment to the eFP in Latvia.

[2] James R. McKay. "Why Canada is best explained as a 'reliable ally' in 2017," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 16, no. 2,2018, 137-164.

To be sure, recent votes in Congress and the reaction from past and present members of the American foreign policy elite indicate that the President's ideas of what made the United States great and what an effective "America First" policy requires is not universally shared in the United States. The U.S. defence budget for Fiscal Year 2018/2019 included major new funding to support American forces and NATO. And it is now known that the President's senior advisors, lead by National Security Advisor John Bolton, obtained allied consensus on the Brussels Summit communiqué, which included agreement on several key NATO initiates prior to the contentious meeting in July 2018.[3]

Nevertheless, executive politics in Washington remain erratic, uncertain and unpredictable. Trump's bluffs may not be called, but he could still play his 'trump cards' in a high stakes game where 'the Joker is wild.' Given the power of the Presidency to shape foreign policy and the strength of Trump's base, which identifies with his anti-NATO rhetoric, going into the 2018 and 2020 elections the Transatlantic Alliance had better hedge its bets.-

Trump may well try to cut a Singapore-style deal with Putin, since he does not believe Russia to pose a (genuine existential) threat to the US: stop burying trans-Atlantic differences for the sake of anti-Russian unity, defect from the NATO consensus on deterring Russia, dispense with perceived defence free-riders, instead putting a premium on Offshore Balancing to "bring the troops home" and conceding U.S. and NATO exercises along the eastern flank. That would spell the likely end of the eFP. France might opt to keep the eFP on life support by backfilling for the U.S. as a Framework Nation in Poland; but as a wholly European mission without U.S. backing, the eFP's deterrent effect would be much diminished.

[3] Helene Cooper and Julian E. Barnes," U.S. Officials Scrambled Behind the Scenes to Shield NATO Deal From Trump," *The New York Times* Aug. 9, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/09/us/politics/nato-summit-trump.html?action=click&module=MoreInSection&pgtype=Article&region=Footer&contentCollection=Politics

eFP options: the way ahead

In making its decision to renew, Canada had to hedge against alternative futures, three of which seem plausible:

1. Status quo. There are no major Russian provocations. If Russia consolidates its gains instead and allied anxieties subside, Canadian renewal is both politically easy and readily manageable in terms of resource requirements.

2. Russia steps up its pressure on the Baltics. The eFP becomes a higher priority on the U.S. agenda, which calls on NATO allies to double down on their commitments. That would exert pressure on Canada to do more. Coming from the Trump administration, such a demand may cause the Canadian government – irrespective of political stripes – some discomfort. However, under this scenario, Ottawa's main problem will be getting European allies to agree first and contribute as well, many of whom are far more irritated by Trump than Canada. To curry favour, for the sake of allied unity, and to incentivise decision-making, Ottawa could have found itself under pressure to surge military resources. In this context, such a decision would, in fact, come down to additional military forces in the form of enablers, such as Air Defence, long-range precision fires, electronic warfare assets, surveillance, and other similar capabilities, all of which are currently in short supply in the Canadian military. To be sure, additional troops might be useful, but the aforementioned enablers would be a more effective deterrent. The issue then is that the U.S. possesses most of these assets, and as such, any withdraw of their commitment to the security of the Baltic states would surely call into question the ability of NATO member states to provide the much-needed assistance and equipment to assure security in the Baltics should Russia step up its pressure in the region.

3. American disengagement. The Trump administration, given its other defence and security priorities and questioning the need for alliances, could lose interest in the Baltics and the eFP, declaring that it was a European problem, and thus should be dealt with by the Europeans. President Trump's characteristically blunt language says to Europe: "We Americans are busy. You

Europeans sort it out!"[4] Yet "European forces are too hollowed out, lack key enablers, and vital logistics, and their leaders are too lacking in political will to respond in force."[5] Based on Trump's surprise adoption of North Korean rhetoric about American military "provocation" and his offer to sacrifice US-Korean military exercises while floating a general pull-back of U.S. forces in the Asia Pacific area, America may well retrench from NATO-enabling commitments in Europe, especially those Russia has long deemed an affront, the eFP first and foremost among such "provocations". This would reflect a major – yet quite possibly fundamental and prolonged – shift in U.S. national security and foreign policy toward the status quo ante before the Second World War: that approach was already detectable at the end of the Cold War but delayed by unipolarism, Clinton's internationalist engagement and NATO enlargement, and the neo-imperialist moment precipitated by 9/11.

NATO multilateralism: "Keep the Americans in"

This third alternative future would be the most difficult for Canada because it would give rise to a serious predicament. Should Canada re-commit, even increase its contribution to show its continued faith in NATO? If the U.S. decision were to weaken NATO to the point where it could no longer play the role of eFP enabler, should Canada still join in an EU-only show of effort in the Baltics as a way of demonstrating the most credible commitment possible for the sake of deterrence? Although it could be argued that the U.S. does not enable the overall eFP construct to a considerable extent, this would however change if direct conflict were to occur. But what really is the future of the Alliance, let alone of the eFP, with waning U.S. support and new fissures such a move is bound to open up, is the EU in a position to take over the eFP given the challenges it is already facing? Even if it were in a position to backfill for a U.S. drawdown along the north-eastern frontier,

[4] "NATO: The Enduring Alliance 2016," *Atlantic Treaty Association,* 2016, http://www.atahq.org/ata-policy-focus/nato-the-enduring-alliance-2016/

[5] Ibid.

would that be high enough a priority on the EU's agenda, and even if it were, would there be enough resources to go around to scale up in Poland, especially without compromising competing EU security operations along its southern flank, across the Middle East, and Africa?

To be sure, Canada could have surged defence spending; but it is unclear whether President Trump would take notice, let alone be satisfied with whatever Canada could reasonably inject, especially given the federal government's highly fiscally constrained environment. Even if Canada were to change course and up its game on defence spending, the nature of the budgetary cycle means that it would have had little bearing on the decision to renew the Latvia mission, since the next federal budget is not due until spring 2019. Since the current government of Prime Minister Trudeau is up for reelection in 2019, in that election budget domestic priorities are bound to trump international and defence spending. To the contrary, the Prime Minister may well decide that Trump's recent imposition of tariffs on some Canadian goods and his disparaging ad hominem remarks gives him license and domestic support to resist U.S. pressure to ramp up defence spending.

NATO needs: "More Canada"

No surprise then that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and new Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, were quick to stick to their policy guns, claiming that what counts is not some arbitrary, hard to count, inconsistently applied measure of the portion of national wealth devoted to defence spending, but capacity, capability, and commitments to NATO's collective defence posture. Canada's significant contribution to the eFP not only reflects its role as one of the most militarily capable NATO member states, but also as having a rather important role in political messaging and establishing credibility of the operation as a whole. Credibility is key to the eFP as a successful mechanism of deterrence against Russian adventurism, and one that can be achieved through various types

of messaging. By example, Canada's renewal of its commitment to Baltic security in general, and Latvian security in particular, conveys the military capability to inflict substantial costs on an adversary, while denying it any ability to quickly achieve its objectives.[6] In turn, a key feature of the eFP concept is the multinational character and interoperability capacity of the battlegroups. This is politically and militarily crucial in signalling allied solidarity and enables burden-sharing.[7] In this context, having made clear that it is not about to up its "fully costed" spending on defence, Canada only had capacity, capability, and commitments left to leverage. By renewing early for four years, Canada is looking to lead by example: a sustained commitment to the eFP. The hope is that others will follow suit. Canada's position as a Framework Nation differs from that of the UK in Estonia, Germany in Lithuania, and the U.S. in Poland insofar as Latvia involves contributions from (many) more NATO members countries: together, they make up a third of the Alliance.

Canada and its member state partners in Latvia committing early to renewal sets the pace for renewal by Framework Nations and partners in Estonia and Lithuania. Together, these member states are sending a clear signal to the U.S.: an unambiguous commitment to burden-sharing – at least insofar as the eFP is concerned. Rather than the United States having to coral Canada to commit, as President Obama did when the Americans were looking for a member state with headquarters capacity to become the Framework Nation in Latvia, Canada is now looking to coral the United States: making sure the U.S. recommits as the eFP Framework Nation for Poland and stays the course on the European Deterrence Initiative as a way of staying the course on Russia. In a show of additional commitment to the eFP, the Canadian government has signalled its intent to post Canadian Armed Forces members and their families to the Canadian Headquarters element in Latvia. Former Commander of the eFP Battlegroup Latvia, Brigadier-General Simon Hetherington, said the decision to station

[6] Jüri Luik, Henrik Praks. "Boosting the Deterrent Effect of Allied Enhanced Forward Presence," Policy Paper, Tallinn: *International Centre for Defence and Security,* 2017, *https:// www. icds. ee/fileadmin/media/icds. ee/doc/ICDS_Policy._ Paper_Boosting_the_Deterrent_Effect_of_Allied_eFP. pdf*

[7] Ibid.

Canadian Armed Forces, and potentially their families, in the Baltics permanently, is to ensure a "consistent and continuous presence in Latvia.... We've learned over the years that we have to have that consistency at a command level."[8] This degree of commitment, with Canadians stationed in an open-ended assignment that could last years and see Canadian families join the soldiers, is unique amongst eFP Framework Nations and NATO member countries and signals a level of commitment and partnership well beyond the rotational elements of the battlegroup.[9]

eFP Framework Nation: paying it forward

Concretely, as a Framework Nation in Latvia, Canada contributes 455 of the approximate 1,175 foreign NATO member state troops in the land domain, consisting of a headquarters component and parts of a battlegroup with a Canadian infantry battalion as well as reconnaissance and support elements.[10] That amounts to almost 40% of the total non-indigenous troop strength contributed by NATO allies to the eFP in Latvia, and approximately 10% of the combined total non-indigenous troop strength contributed by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, which sits at approximately 4,547 troops as of May 2018.[11] Canada's commitment will increase to 540 troops in spring 2019. Canada's commitment in troop strength, as well as command and field units, in terms of total numbers may not be comparable to Canada's Cold War deployment to Germany, but on a per capita basis Canada's commitment to the Baltics in general, and Latvia in particular, actually surpasses the proportion of Canadian troops stationed in Europe during the Cold War.

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[8] Juris Graney. "Canadian troops to find permanent home in Latvia to deter Russian aggression," *Edmonton Sun*, February 25, 2017, https://edmontonsun.com/2017/02/25/canadian-troops-to-find-permanent-home-in-latvia-to-deter-russian-aggression/wcm/2e3b-4bc4-5be6-4d08-a04d-d8c27afa001c

[9] Marc Montgomery. "NATO and Russia: Canadian troops have challenges to overcome in Latvia," *Radio Canada International*, March 21, 2017, http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2017/03/21/nato-and-russia-canadian-troops-have-challenges-to-overcome-in-latvia/

[10] "NATO'sEnhancedForwardPresence,"*NorthAtlanticTreatyOrganisation,* June2018,https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_06/20180606_1806-factsheet_efp_en.pdf

[11] Ibid.

By contrast, the costs for Canada to defect from the eFP, let alone its commitment as a Framework Nation, are high. Defection would have closed doors, let down old and new friends, wasted human and political capital along with the political-military credibility Canada's commitment to the eFP has generated. Canada would be abandoning a low-risk mission that continues to pay dividend in developing Canadian and partner military capability, interoperability, training, and readiness to act in face of the ever-changing security environment.

What is more, at the Brussels Summit in July 2018 Canada also committed to assume command of NATO's new multinational non-combat training and capacity building mission in Iraq for its first year of operation. The Canadian government ensures that this mission is the natural next step for Canada, in so far as it is Canada's objective to move forward from the militarily successful fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and assist in building institutional capacity of Iraq's security forces, its defence and security institutions, and its national defence academies to establish robust foundations for long-term peace, security, and stability. Specifically, this will entail the deployment of up to 250 Canadian Armed Forces personnel and assets from fall 2018 to fall 2019.[12] NATO's efforts, and in turn the efforts of the Canadian government, are focused at the national level and not directed at capacity building of non-state actors such as the Peshmerga. To rebut Trump's complaints about defence spending, Canada is now leading on NATO's most important in-area and out-of-area missions: the eFP and Iraq. Since both announcements came in quick succession, Canada appears to be trying to alleviate Trump's bluster. Massie and Zyla conclude: "NATO should make clear to its members that the alliance is about more than just the United States, and that they have an individual and important role to play in shaping the identity of the alliance to come."[13]

[12] Justin Trudeau. "Canada's Leadership in Iraq," *Prime Minister of Canada*, July 11, 2018, https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/07/11/canadas-leadership-iraq

[13] Justin Massie, Benjamin Zyla. "Alliance Value and Status Enhancement: Canada's Disproportionate Military Burden Sharing in Afghanistan," *Politics & Policy* 46, no. 2, 2018, 320-344.

Needs (more than) Americans to operate

Parallels to Canada's deployment to Afghanistan are compelling. Canada's military commitment to the U.S.-led coalition operations in Afghanistan has been considered a means to buttress the credibility of Canada's relationship with the United States as well as the transatlantic multilateral alliance. This notion of valuing the Alliance helps to reinforce Canada's decision to go to war and remain at war. By example, between 2007 and 2011, Canada ranked first among NATO allies in terms of the share of its military personnel deployed to Afghanistan as a percentage of its armed forces. Canadian troops suffered the third highest ratio of casualties among the multinational coalition as a share of troops deployed. The fundamental question then comes forward: Why did Canada carry such a considerable share of the burden, which is so evident from the aforementioned statistics? Massie and Zyla argue "the size and riskiness of Canada's military deployments as part of the ISAF operation not only reflected Canada's value for the alliance but also aimed at revamping the country's international status as a leading military ally."[14] As with Canada's outsized contributions to Afghanistan, putting troops on ground, in whatever numbers, is noticed in Washington where it counts: at the Pentagon and in Congress.

Canada offers a military that is popular, robust, competent, and well-equipped. As such, Canada has become the paradigm for analysts arguing that the United States' favoured metric of spending 2% of GDP on defence is arbitrary, and what matters, however, is contributing effectively to coalition operations when requested to do so. This metric, at times, tends to discount the efforts of allies who make meaningful contributions to the Alliance, while still falling short of the 2% threshold. By example, what we are currently witnessing as part of the eFP Latvia is certainly a continuation of Canada's long-standing commitment to NATO – once again dispatching forces to Europe and lending its capabilities and highly sophisticated military expertise to

[14] Justin Massie, Benjamin Zyla. "Alliance Value and Status Enhancement: Canada's Disproportionate Military Burden Sharing in Afghanistan," *Politics & Policy* 46, no. 2, 2018, 320-344.

bolster the stability and security of a region that remains essential to Canada's national interests. This commitment to the protection of security on the European continent has become a testament to the success and the strength of the NATO Alliance.

Although a U.S. decision to step back from the eFP and the Baltic States would call into question the future of the Alliance, Ottawa assures its European allies that it will hold firm to its current policy, affirming Canada's commitment to its solidarity with Ukraine, and remaining committed to the 29-state alliance without it becoming weakened should the U.S. scale back its involvement in European security. By providing a sustained military presence in Europe, Canada's leadership of a battlegroup in Latvia will continue to represent Canada as an effective ally when it comes to providing for the protection of European security.

In the end, the motivation of states to contribute to NATO operations has little to do with threat perceptions, domestic defence spending, and the heckling of a world leader thereof in the domestic political realm. Rather, what explains some states' motivations is an appreciation for the overall health of the alliance – alliance value – and a perceived need to increase their overall status on the international stage – status enhancement.[15] This explains why Canada is trying to convey that it is doing its fair share in strengthening the deterrence and defence posture of NATO. Yet, "[w]hy invest billions to maintain a capable, professional, well-funded and well-equipped Canadian military?"[16] The answer is obvious, states Freeland: "To rely solely on the U.S. national security umbrella would make us a client state.... [s]uch a dependence would not be in Canada's interest.... It is by pulling our weight... in all our international partnerships, that we, in fact, have weight." In that regard, given current fiscal constraints, the eFP is a manageable international commitment to the NATO Alliance. In turn, it is a commitment that advantages the Canada-US relationship by demonstrating a willingness to "share the burden"

[15] Justin Massie, Benjamin Zyla. "Alliance Value and Status Enhancement: Canada's Disproportionate Military Burden Sharing in Afghanistan," *Politics & Policy* 46, no. 2, 2018, 320-344.

[16] Chrystia Freeland. "Address by Minister Freeland on Canada's Foreign Policy Priorities," *Global Affairs Canada*, June 6, 2017, https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/address_by_ministerfreelandoncanadasforeignpolicypriorities.html

without significantly increasing current defence spending, which is at USD 25.5 billion for the 2018/2019 fiscal year. Yet, as we have written about elsewhere,[17] in the larger public policy context governments cannot easily escape the dilemmas, problems, and paradoxes of defence spending, especially for unanticipated foreign deployments.

Canada's approach is in keeping with its recent defence White Paper – *Strong. Secure. Engaged* – and thus principled. Given the uncertainty and complexity of the global security environment and, with that, its intricate implications for Canadian security, "Canada will pursue leadership roles and will prioritise interoperability in its planning and capability development to ensure seamless cooperation with allies and partners, particularly NATO. The Canadian Armed Forces will be prepared to make concrete contributions to Canada's role as a responsible international actor."[18] The political benefit of this approach to engaging in eFP Latvia demonstrates Ottawa's willingness to deploy its military assets in support of common defence objectives, notwithstanding Canada's defence expenditures falling well below the objective of 2% of GDP for NATO members – currently sitting at 1.23%.

Conclusion

A commitment to NATO has been central to Canada's foreign and defence policy for almost 70 years. The Atlantic Alliance always entailed much more than providing a countervailing balance to Soviet power, and now to Russian aggression. The interdependence and interconnectedness of the modern world demand an alliance that stands and falls on its unity. The dissolution of the Soviet Union may have altered the rationale for NATO, but the fundamental principles that comprise the foundation of such a relationship remain intact: the defence of shared values and interests. In this

[17] See: Christian Leuprecht, Joel J. Sokolsky. "Defence Policy 'Walmart Style': Canadian Lessons in 'not-so-grand' Grand Strategy," *Armed Forces & Society* 41 (3), 2015, 541–562.

[18] "Strong, Secure, Engaged. Canada's Defence Policy," *Government of Canada*, http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf

respect, NATO's unity, and even more so, its presence in the Baltic states is of the utmost importance.

The enduring commitment of Canada to the protection of security on the European continent has become a testament to the success and the strength of the NATO alliance, at least for the time being. Along with the continuation of the European integration project, NATO has brought stability and democratic norms and values to post-communist Europe. However, the true strength and effectiveness of the NATO alliance is certainly being tested in Europe today, and as a result, NATO will have to evaluate its approach to Russia. While Russian adventurism is unlikely to rival the Cold War in its degree of danger, it will nonetheless represent an unsettling source of European instability into the future. In this ever-changing security environment, Canada needs NATO to remain strong, ready, and capable of forging interdependencies between European states to be better positioned to respond to the challenges that may seem local, but actually threaten the entire rules-based international order.[19] As long as there is a need, in one way or another, Canada will stand guard on the Baltic watch. The eFP has become a symbol of collective strength that reminds us that only the commitment and the unity of the Alliance will deter Russia – and now a litmus test for robustness of the Transatlantic relationship as a whole.

[19] Dov Seidman, James Stavridis. "Supreme Allied Commander Stavridis: Donald Trump is so Wrong About NATO." *Time*, July 21, 2016, http://time.com/4417061/donaldtrump-wrong-about-nato/

NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Latvia: Canada's Ticket to Fairer Burden-Sharing in NATO?

Stéfanie von Hlatky

We certainly hope that the message is passed clearly to President Putin that his actions in destabilizing and disregarding the international rules-based order that has been successfully underpinned by NATO amongst others over the past 75 years or so is extremely important
Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau
Latvia, July 2018

Canada is a middle power with access to some influential forums: it is a NATO ally and a G7 country, it shares a tight economic and security relationship with the United States through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), and is re-engaging with the United Nations (UN) in the hopes of security a non-permanent seat on the Security Council. Canada's standing within those privileged clubs is often taken for granted by politicians and the public, but the election of President Trump has considerably muddied the waters.

The newly complicated nature of the bilateral relationship was on full display in 2018 as NAFTA negotiations took a turn for the worse. During the G7 Summit in Charlevoix, Trump rejected the communiqué and had some harsh words for the host, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It is within this political climate that the NATO Summit in Brussels took place a few weeks later and Trump, true to form, controlled the narrative and forced everyone's attention onto burden-sharing.

It is true that in 2014, during the Wales Summit, NATO allies made a pledge to spend 2% of their GDP on defence within ten

years. Defence spending has indeed increased since, but the pace of change is not satisfactory for the White House. Yet, this narrow focus on the 2% rule obscures the multi-faceted contributions that allies make to NATO. NATO allies host NATO installations, develop capabilities that enhance transatlantic security and make direct military contributions to NATO missions and operations. Countries who cannot afford, either financially or politically, to do good on their 2% pledge immediately, thus have other outlets through which they can showcase their value as alliance partners.

Canada is very much reliant on this more flexible formula and has pointed to its contribution to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), leading a multinational battlegroup (BTC) in Latvia since 2017. But whether one agrees with Trump or Trudeau, it is worth asking: how can we best assess allied contributions to NATO and to transatlantic security more broadly?

This article focuses on this question by looking at recent efforts to transform security outcomes in the Baltics, with special attention paid to Canada's role in Latvia. While the question of burden-sharing is not new, it has grown in significance since Trump's election, but also because NATO-Russia relations have worsened, leading to more demands placed on alliance members.

Burden sharing in context

Since Trump came into office, NATO's Secretary General, Jen Stoltenberg, has tried to manage expectations. He has simultaneously cajoled President Trump by seconding his point about allies needing to spend more on defence *and* pushed for a broader understanding of burden-sharing, one which would take into account actual contributions to NATO's capabilities and missions.

During the 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels, the Secretary General reiterated this point, stating that:

> *Burden sharing is about spending, it's about contributions, it's about capabilities, so we speak about the three Cs, cash, contributions and capabilities. And of course the cash, the money, has to be put in to*

good work, for instance investing in new capabilities or financing contributions like training missions in Iraq.[1]

This was a welcomed statement for Canada which has been emphasising similar language in its messaging efforts. Canada used the momentum from the Brussels Summit to showcase its own contributions, with the Prime Minister stating that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) would be leading NATO's training mission in Iraq and establishing its Headquarters in Baghdad, while also staying in Latvia until 2023, thereby extending the operation by another four years.

These commitments demonstrate Ottawa's efforts to be perceived as a reliable and valuable ally within the NATO context and stave off criticism that it is not spending enough on defence since it is far from meeting its 2% commitment, even over the course of 10 years. The academic community has picked up on the theme of NATO burden-sharing and has offered contrasting viewpoints on existing burden-sharing metrics and their fairness.[2] There is a fairly robust consensus, among both academics and practitioners, that defence spending alone is not an adequate measure of burden-sharing.

First, burden-sharing takes on new meaning in times of conflict and war. What governments spend on defence is important insofar as states make meaningful contributions to NATO's operations and security objectives. During the war in Afghanistan, contributions to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) were scrutinised because regions varied a lot in terms of security. Some nations risked a lot and suffered higher proportions of casualties than others, which fed into allied perceptions on burden-sharing.[3]

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[1] "Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Heads of State and Government (NATO Summit Brussels)," *NATO*, 11 July 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_156733.htm

[2] Benjamin Zyla. "Sharing the Burden? NATO and its second-tier powers," Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015; John Alexander. "Canada's Commitment to NATO: Are we Pulling our Weight?" *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Autumn 2015: p. 7; Alexander Lanoszka, "Do Allies Really Free Ride?" *Survival,* Vol. 57, No. 3, 2015: p. 133-152; Jeffrey Rice, Stéfanie von Hlatky, "Trudeau the Reluctant Warrior? Canada and International Military Operations," in Norman Hillmer and Philippe Lagassé (eds), *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy,* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018; Sara Greco, Stéfanie von Hlatky, "Soft Contributions are Hard Commitment: NATO and Canada's Global Security Agenda," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal,* May 2018, https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2018.1467837

[3] David P. Auerswald, Stephen M. Saideman, "NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone," Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014

Second, even during peacetime, it is not sufficient to just track defence spending. Indeed, looking at defence budgets does not tell us which portion of the money directly supports NATO or its activities. It is also unclear how inputs (defence spending) and outputs (capabilities and contributions) translate into improved transatlantic security.

Third, states make contributions to NATO security goals that are often not captured in defence budgets. For example, governments are often politically constrained in the types of contributions that they can make and so, will find alternative ways to support alliance goals, such as supporting development projects in conflict or post-conflict settings.[4] These projects may cost millions of dollars but are not coming out of defence budgets. Yet, such projects can directly contribute to the security environment of a particular community or region, as was demonstrated throughout NATO's involvement in Afghanistan.

What this discussion shows is that, in practice, governments have a certain amount of flexibility in terms of the contributions they can make to NATO. The important thing from an Alliance perspective is that allies *actively* contribute and that transatlantic security, unity and cohesion are enhanced as a result. This much is recognised in the 2018 NATO Summit Declaration:

> *The number of activities in which we are engaged has increased, and Allies continue to make valuable force and capability contributions that benefit the security of the Euro-Atlantic area through NATO's operations, missions, and other activities, as well as through the operations and missions conducted under national authority and the authority of other organisations.*[5]

With Trump in power, this flexibility appears to have somewhat narrowed. This puts pressure on NATO allies to not only boost defence spending but also to work harder in terms of messaging to showcase the various contributions that they make to support the Alliance. It is through this prism that Canada's extension of the

[4] Stéfanie von Hlatky, Jessica Trisko Darden, "Cash or Combat? America's Asian Alliances during the War in Afghanistan," *Asian Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2015: 31-51.

[5] "Brussels Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018," *NATO*, July 11, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm

operation in Latvia should be seen: an attempt to satisfy the U.S. but perhaps more realistically, other NATO allies, when it comes to pulling its weight within the Alliance. To this end, the next section will survey Canada's role in Latvia and how this contributes to NATO's security goals in the region.

Canada's role in the Baltics

The Canadian contribution to the eFP battlegroup in Latvia is part of a larger commitment in Central and Eastern Europe known as Operation Reassurance. While the primary objectives of Canada's activities in the region are deterrence of Russia and reassurance of NATO allies and Ukraine, the tasks which the Canadian Armed Forces carry out are quite varied. This section will assess the nature of Canadian contributions in the region in order to evaluate if and how these commitments enhance NATO's collective defence and security in the Baltic region, more specifically.

Operation Reassurance relies primarily on land and sea assets, though there has been an air component in the past, through the CF-188 Hornet Air Task Force to Europe or the CF-18s in support of NATO's air policing mission in the Baltics. For the sea component, Canada has deployed a maritime taskforce since 2014 which consists in a frigate and a Cyclone helicopter that operate alongside ships from other NATO countries in the Baltic Sea, totalling 225 military personnel.[6]

Canada currently contributes to Standing NATO Maritime Group One which conducts multinational exercises to strengthen interoperability in littoral environments and continues to offer situational awareness and a deterrence presence. This deployment directly contributes to improved readiness as the maritime groups are part of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, under the NATO Response Forces.[7]

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[6] For a full description of Canadian assets in Central and Eastern Europe, see: http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad/nato-ee.page

[7] To learn more about the maritime groups operating under NATO's Allied Maritime Command, see https://mc.nato.int/missions/maritime-groups.aspx

On land, the most visible commitment is Canada's role as the Framework Nation for NATO's multinational battlegroup in Latvia, which also includes troops from Albania, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. The battlegroup was stood up in January of 2017 and Canada's commitment has been extended to 2023, with a planned increase in military personnel to 540, up from 455.[8]

The troops are stationed in Ādaži and involved in training activities and military exercises. The CAF also participate in community outreach, presumably to help build support for the BTC's presence and to provide general information about their activities. CAF assets in Latvia are one mechanised infantry Battalion with armoured fighting vehicles, a reconnaissance platoon and support elements.[9]

The three other eFP BTCs are in Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, but a little further afield, Canada has also deployed troops to Ukraine since 2014. These 200 troops train Ukrainian soldiers under Operation Unifier and are part of a broader whole-of-government effort to support the government of Ukraine. This role is entirely separate from Canadian personnel operating under the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine is a civilian presence and does not interact with the CAF deployment, seeking instead to "observe and report in an impartial and objective way on the situation in Ukraine; and to facilitate dialogue among all parties to the crisis".[10]

NATO's eFP has been an initiative of significant magnitude for the Alliance, given the broad participation of allies in the battlegroups. This is important for NATO's deterrence posture because any attack by Russia in the Baltics or Poland would automatically trigger a response from all nations deployed as part of eFP. The credibility of the tripwire is enhanced by its multinational nature even if the deployed force is relatively small in size (over 4,500 troops).

[8] "Prime Minister Concludes Successful Visit to Latvia", *Prime Minister's Office*, July 10, 2018. Online: http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad/nato-ee.page

[9] "NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence" *NATO*, May 2017, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_05/1705-factsheet-efp.pdf

[10] For mission information and daily reports, see: https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine

If we look at the Canadian-led Battlegroup in Latvia, only one of the contributing nations, Poland, spends 2% of their GDP on defence, yet all BTC participants directly support Alliance goals and have accepted a modest level of risk by providing tripwire forces. While this illustrates the shortcomings of the 2% burden-sharing measure, there remains the question of how Canadian investments in Latvia and in the region are improving security outcomes.

Improving security outcomes in Latvia and in the Baltics

If inputs like defence spending and outputs like the number of military personnel deployed are not ideal to assess whether allied contributions enhance transatlantic security, what sort of indicators should we be looking at? If we are focusing on eFP specifically, a good place to start would be to survey attitudes of local populations with regard to the NATO presence, to see if there are noticeable improvements in perceptions of security at the national level.

Ahead of the 2017 deployment, the Latvian Ministry of Defence conducted such a survey, which provides some baseline assessments for future surveys. In answer to the question "Does the presence of NATO troops in the territory of Latvia increase or decrease security of Latvia," 58,7% of respondents answered in the affirmative, 21,5% answered "hard to say" and 19,9% answered in the negative.[11]

Attitudes toward the Canadian presence more specifically were somewhat less enthusiastic, with 44% responding positively, 39% choosing "hard to say" or "neutral" and 17% answering in the negative.[12] Now that the battlegroup has been operational for more than one year, it would be interesting to see if those numbers have improved.

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[11] Poll results are accessible online: "Latvijas iedzīvotāju viedoklis par valsts aizsardzības jautājumiem / Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja," Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, November 2016, http://www.mod.gov.lv/~/media/AM/Ministrija/Sab_doma/2016/SKDS_aptauja_2016.ashx

[12] Ibid.

Canadian attitudes are important to survey as well since domestic support for eFP and Canada's role as a lead nation will be important to sustain this commitment over time. The strength of this commitment makes for a more credible deterrence signal to Russia and helps NATO in terms of reaffirming security assurances to Latvia. When asked if Canada should use military force "if Russia got into a serious military conflict with one of its neighbouring countries that is our NATO ally," 58% of respondents answered in the affirmative, meaning the Article V commitment has robust support, even for newer member allies in Central and Eastern Europe.[13] Overall, however, the mission in Latvia is not high on the public radar given its relatively low risk and cost, so the extension for four more years was not controversial and even encouraged by security experts.[14]

In terms of the troops in Ādaži, the main threat to date has been fake news and propaganda pushed out by Russian trolls and bots onto social media or Russian-language outlets online, aiming the Latvian population. This is where the CAF's community outreach efforts can have an impact, setting the record straight with the local population. Compared to 2017, the pace of cyberattacks seems to be slowing down.[15] While the Canadian battlegroup commander, Lieutenant Colonel Sean French was at a loss to explain why, one possible reason is that Russia propagandist are focusing on the upcoming Latvian elections, in October 2018, rather than the NATO presence.[16]

Ultimately, Russian behaviour is probably the most important determinant when assessing threat perceptions in Central and Eastern Europe. While Russia has been steadfast in its condemnation of the eFP battlegroups, Moscow has been prudent not to escalate the situation and it would seem against its

[13] Moira Fagan. "NATO is seen favorably in many member countries, but almost half of Americans say it does too little," *Pew Research Centre*, July 09, 2018, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/09/nato-is-seen-favorably-in-many-member-countries-but-almost-half-of-americans-say-it-does-too-little/

[14] Christian Leuprecht, Joel Sokolsky, Jayson Derow. "On the Baltic Watch: The Past, Present and Future of Canada's Commitment to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia," *MacDonald Laurier Institute*, June 2018, https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/20180327_MLI_LATVIA_WebF.pdf

[15] Murray Brewster. "Cyberattacks targeting Canadian troops in Latvia seem to be easing off," *CBC News,* July 09, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canadian-nato-latvia-cyber-1.4737340

[16] Ibid.

interests to provoke a military conflict with any NATO ally hosting a multinational battlegroup on its territory. Some Russian actions have caused alarm in Latvia, to be sure, like its missile tests in the Baltic Sea last April.[17] Even if those tests are part of military exercises, Latvia was sufficiently alarmed to close its airspace to commercial flights in response to the drills.

What is perhaps most concerning is the worsening attitudes Russians hold toward NATO, indicating a difficult political climate for constructive dialogue and diplomacy. A 2016 Gallup poll revealed that "Sixty-seven percent of Russians in 2016 view NATO as a threat, which is up 29 percentage points since 2012, and is the highest number that Gallup has recorded since it started tracking Russians' views on NATO in 2008."[18]

Finally, NATO as an Alliance, has not observed any significant improvement in Russia's posture. This is clearly communicated in the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration:

> *"The Euro-Atlantic security environment has become less stable and predictable as a result of Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea and ongoing destabilisation of eastern Ukraine; its military posture and provocative military activities, including near NATO borders, such as the deployment of modern dual-capable missiles in Kaliningrad, repeated violation of NATO Allied airspace, and the continued military build-up in Crimea; its significant investments in the modernisation of its strategic forces; its irresponsible and aggressive nuclear rhetoric; its large-scale, no-notice snap exercises; and the growing number of its exercises with a nuclear dimension."*[19]

NATO's decision to establish a Multinational Divisional Headquarters, which will be fully operational by the end of the year, along with new initiatives to improve military mobility and readiness, such as the "Four Thirties" initiative, described as "a commitment to have by 2020: 30 mechanised battalions; 30 air

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[17] Gederts Gelzis. "Russian Rocket Tests Force Partial Closing of Baltic Sea, Airspace," *Reuters,* April 04, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-latvia-missiles/russian-rocket-tests-force-partial-closing-of-baltic-sea-airspace-idUSKCN1HB1O3

[18] Michael Smith. "Most NATO Members in Eastern Europe See It as Protection," *Gallup,* February 10, 2017, https://news.gallup.com/poll/203819/nato-members-eastern-europe-protection.aspx

[19] "Brussels Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018," *NATO*, July 11, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm

squadrons; and 30 combat vessels, ready to use within 30 days or less,"[20] further points to a worsening security environment. While not specifically mentioning that this commitment is meant to boost NATO's deterrence posture on the Eastern Flank, this kind of readiness initiative would not make sense in the absence of the Russian threat. There is simply no other state provoking this type of conventional response from NATO at the present time.

Conclusion

Amidst all of the headlines generated by President Trump regarding NATO, the complaints about burden-sharing are probably the most damaging. They are damaging because they demonstrate a lack of appreciation for the varied commitments that allies make to NATO and to transatlantic security. When Trump shows disregard for his allies, he is straining the political bond that unites twenty-nine European and North American countries and playing right into Russian interests.

Nevertheless, seasoned NATO observers understand that burden-sharing squabbles are not new and that the 2% rule is problematic as a benchmark of allied reliability. The NATO Secretary General is first to point this out by stressing the need for spending that will enhance capabilities and better enable allies to make contributions to Alliance activities and missions. This article has adopted this broader view of burden-sharing to examine Canada's commitments to NATO, with a focus on its role in eFP battlegroup in Latvia.

While Canada has taken on a leadership role in this context and announced an extension of its commitment during the 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels, what remains uncertain is exactly how this military operation will enhance the security of Latvia and the Baltic region. The article suggested looking at public attitudes in Latvia, Canada and Russia, to track the impact eFP is having on key stakeholders, but ultimately assessing how contributions translate into more credible deterrence and assurances remains difficult.

[20] "NATO Summit set to begin in Brussels," *NATO*, July 10-12 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_156597.htm?selectedLocale=en

Russia in the Baltic Sea Region and Beyond

Strategic Restlessness: the Latest Stage of Russian Policy?

James Sherr

In September 2017 we noted in the pages of the previous edition of Rīga Conference Papers, "it is becoming clear that Russia's political objectives and defence policy have acquired a disturbing coherence".[1] One year later that proposition is open to doubt. Having seized the strategic initiative in Ukraine in 2014, then reinforced it in Syria in 2015, its determination to reformat the post-Cold War order has defined the East-West agenda and set the pace despite Moscow's own mistakes and a more unified response from the West than it expected.

Two years into the Trump administration, this no longer is the case. The centrepiece of the East-West drama is no longer Russia's revisionist policy but the disturbing incoherence in the policy and actions of the United States. To be sure, much of this suits Russia perfectly (whether it was "made to order" by Kremlin political technologists or not). If the basis of NATO is deterrence, the basis of deterrence is confidence, and there can be no confidence without trust in the President of the United States. Yet although Donald Trump has demonstrated an unprecedented ability to astonish, offend and damage the interests of allies, the forces he has unleashed are causing disorientation in Russia as well as in Europe. Moreover, they are not diminishing Russia's ability to damage its own cause or remind NATO Allies of the threat that it poses. Not least are they lightening the burdens on Russia's economy or the constraints on its capacity to realise its ambitions.

[1] James Sherr. "The Baltic States in Russia's Strategy," *Riga Conference Papers,* September 2017

The oscillation of moods

Russia's aims have not changed since 2014, but its mood has. Following the annexation of Crimea, that mood was expressed epigrammatically, pugnaciously and ominously: "new rules or no rules",[2] "learn the lessons of Yalta or risk war",[3] the restoration of "historical Russia",[4] "Moldova and the Baltic states should study events in Ukraine and draw conclusions".[5] The performance of Russia's political establishment at the 2014 annual session of the Valdai Club reiterated and amplified these expressions of direct and righteous defiance of the Helsinki-based European system. But the tone and discourse of the autumn 2017 Valdai session was discernibly different: defensive, evasive and morose. The leading question put to the author by his RT interviewer encapsulated the change: "surely, the impasse in Ukraine benefits nobody".

That there is an impasse in Ukraine rather than the establishment of *Novorossiya* is the first change. Expectations of Ukraine's dissolution were commonplace in 2014. (In November that year, a Kremlin ideologist was eager to assure the author: "don't worry, by next winter there will be no Ukraine"). Despite Ukraine's entirely unanticipated routing of the Donbas insurgents in spring-summer 2014, Russia's combined arms offensives of September that year and February 2015, along with the ensuing Minsk accords, reimposed its rules on the conflict. But these rules have not been accepted by Ukraine's political class, they have not disrupted the consolidation of Ukrainian national identity, and they have not been conceded by Ukraine's Western partners, who to be sure have temporised, but have not abandoned Ukraine, have not softened the sanctions regime

[2] The title of the Report of the Eleventh Annual Session of the Valdai Club and the theme of Putin's Valdai Club speech, October 25, 2014.

[3] Sergey Naryshkin (then chairman of the State Duma, now Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service). 'Dialogue rather than War: Sergey Naryshkin calls upon Western leaders to study the "lessons of Yalta"," [*Dialog a ne voyna: Sergey Naryshkin prizval liderov Zapada uchit' "uroki Yaltiy"*] *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, February 4, 2015.

[4] Vladimir Putin. "Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," March 18, 2014. In his speech, Putin referred to 'historical Russia', Russia's 'historical lands' and its 'historical legacy' on eight occasions.

[5] As stated by a high ranking foreign policy official at the Valdai Club annual session, October 24, 2014.

and, indeed, have continued to provide essential support – not least military training and, latterly, the supply of lethal weapons. Ukraine might be "doomed", but four years into the conflict, it is very much alive. "Ukraine fatigue" might put an end to Western unity, but so far it has not done so.

Secondly, the profile of the incoming Trump administration was the very picture of cognitive dissonance. To the Kremlin's understandable bewilderment, this garishly Russophile president put in place a national security team of undiluted professionals with a marked coolness towards Russia and a very orthodox reading of U.S. national interests. One need not have been a clairvoyant to understand that however discomfiting "America First" might be to U.S. allies, at least two of its flagship policies – energy pre-eminence and military revival – did not bode well for Russia. The budget established for EUCOM [US European Command] in May 2017 for FY [fiscal year] 2018 was 41% above the 2017 budget programmed by the outgoing Obama administration, almost certainly in anticipation of a Clinton presidency. Even by comparison to an undeniably impressive 10.1% increase in the overall defence budget, the emphasis on EUCOM threw into stark relief that gap between the rhetoric of the Oval Office and the defence priorities of the new administration.

Third, it was no longer possible to pretend that Russia could readily adapt to sanctions as well as mock them. Its determination to do both ignored the collateral impact of initially modest sanctions on Russia's access to international capital markets, the confidence of foreign investors and, indeed, their investments. No less seriously, it ignored the logic and cumulative impact of the third tier, sectoral sanctions (autumn 2014), which imposed swingeing restrictions on the export of advanced technology to the two most critical sectors of Russia's economy, energy and defence. These measures steepened the gradient of decline, already well established, in the technological level of Russian industry. By autumn 2017, these realities and the general uselessness of Russia's countermeasures, were understood by Russian insiders even if the wider *politicum* (and much of the international coterie of think-tankers) continued to deny them. The measured judgement of one Western expert bears citing:

So far, sanctions have played an important role both in deterring military escalation and reaffirming international norms. They have not, though, induced Russia to reach a political settlement….This real, if incomplete, success is notable. The speed of this success is also striking. Sanctions often take years, even decades, to produce significant results. And the impact of sectoral [Tier-3] sanctions, compounded by the second-order effects of Russia's response to them…will continue to grow with time. They will cause Russia to fall further behind the rest of the world….[6]

In summer 2016, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Mark Milley noted the difficulties the even the United States faced in identifying the technologies and capacities that would determine success in war in twenty years time. One can reasonably assume though, that it will be well placed in this competition. It would require faith as well as confidence to say the same about Russia, however highly one assesses its military capacity today.

Adaptation, boldness and guile

It bears reiterating that wars are not decided by GDP ratios or a tabulation of industrial patents. What matters on the day is deployable capacity against the opponent in question, who might or might not understand the particular war he is fighting. If examples are needed of how a country proficient in the art of war can succeed in defeating a "more advanced" adversary, then Russia provides them in abundance. The difficulties Russia has experienced since 2014 do not diminish, indeed only reinforce the Kremlin's conviction that Russia is locked into a complex, geo-strategic and civilisational struggle with the West. Russia will work within the constraints it is given. But it will continue to exploit its comparative advantage where it exists.

The most dramatic example of this can be found in Syria. Yet the immediate reason for the dispatch of a Russian air group and supporting contingents in September 2015 was necessity, not opportunity. Once the immediate threat to Assad was removed,

[6] Nigel Gould-Davies. "Economic Effects and Political Impacts: Assessing Western Sanctions on Russia," *Bank of Finland*, BOFIT Policy Brief, No 8, p 20, 2018.

opportunity followed. In political terms, Russia's adversary in Syria was the United States, a country whose putative goal of "regime change" threatened primordial interests, yet one that nevertheless had created a permissive environment for the deployment of Russian forces. Lacking either a rigorous understanding of Russia's war aims, a firm baseline of U.S. national interests or a clear strategy for maintaining them, Secretary of State Kerry's "tireless" diplomacy expended scarce political capital on the mirage of agreement and the fool's gold of "trust". Russia had no "model" for the Syria conflict. But by understanding the political chessboard as clearly as the military one, it beguiled the United States, removed Turkey and Israel from the ranks of potential opponents, neutralised NATO and established itself as the indispensable partner of friend and foe alike. With a fraction of the USSR's military power, it has acquired a standing in the region that few would have anticipated three years ago and a greater range of interlocutors and partners than its Soviet predecessor enjoyed.

By the same token, Syria provides no model for waging war in Ukraine or destroying the West from within. Like the Russian armed forces and intelligence services, the political, diplomatic and economic arms of the Russian state are now expected to advance state interests in "non-standardised" situations. As Lenin said in the face of far graver threats than those confronting Putin, "in war one must know how to advance and retreat properly". Or, in the more astringent words of Françoise Thom some sixty years later, "in Russia, a retreat on one front is usually a sign of an advance somewhere else".

One will not make sense of Russia's current behaviour without understanding that this Leninist calculus is very much in place. Given the current disposition of forces in the West, a return to brute force in Ukraine poses risks that must give pause even to the relatively risk averse occupants of the Kremlin. But that does not mean that fundamental objectives are being reconsidered. In the virtual reality of Western television news, Ukraine's Donbas is quiet. But as the daily reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission document in dry but unequivocal detail, it is nothing of the kind. Neither is the conflict "frozen". It merely has changed

its shape. Current Western sanctions and the promise of worse have not inspired Moscow to seek that long heralded "face-saving way out", but to move the conflict to realms below the threshold of Western attention and assiduously test where that threshold lies. In the conflict zone itself, more and more electronic warfare assets appear.[7] "Humanitarian convoys" (a Shoygu innovation that first came to light during the Kosovo conflict when the current Minister of Defence was Minister of Emergency Situations) are cycling in and out of Donbas with renewed intensity on off-road routes and in the dead of night.[8]

Outside the conflict zone, economic warfare against Ukraine has intensified. The newly constructed Crimean Bridge traversing the Kerch Strait, ingeniously engineered to limit the size of ships entering the Sea of Azov, is but one of several unilateral Russian measures virtually nullifying the 2003 Russia-Ukraine Treaty on Cooperation in the Azov Sea and rendering the ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk all but unusable for commercial shipping.[9] As Robert Homans has observed, "except for Ukraine's coastal waters, Ukraine's concern is that Russia is in the process of effectively annexing the entire Sea of Azov, and there is not much Ukraine, on its own, can do about it".[10] The West is in a position to do something about it, not least by imposing sanctions on traffic to Russia's port of Novorossiysk, but so far, with the admirable exception of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, there has not been a murmur.

To all intents and purposes, Putin's 2017 instruction to Russia's security services to "reset Ukraine's ruling regime" is very much in place.[11] One of the more ghoulish manifestation of this effort,

[7] "New Russian Electronic Warfare in Horlivka?" *Minsk Monitor,* April 26, 2018, https://medium.com/dfrlab/minskmonitor-new-russian-electronic-warfare-in-horlivka-efcc65410eb7

[8] Halya Coynash. "OSCE catches Russia bringing war to Donbas by night," *Human Rights in Ukraine,* August 12, 2018, http://khpg.org/en/index.php?id=1534013815

[9] "Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Cooperation in the Use of the Azov Sea and Kerch Straight," ["Dogovor mezhdu Rossiyskoy Federatsiey i Ukrainoy o sotrudnichestve v ispol'zovanii Azovskogo morya i Kerchenskogo proliva,"] December 24, 2003, http://www.fao.org/fishery/shared/faolextrans.jsp?xp_FAOLEX=LEX-FAOC-045795&xp_faoLexLang=E&xp_lang=en

[10] Facebook post of Robert Homans's commentary, posted by Lidia Wolanskyj, August 14, 2018.

[11] ""Putin orders intel services to achieve "reset of Ukraine's ruling regime" – SBU chief," *UNIAN*, July 22, 2017, https://www.unian.info/politics/204349-putin-orders-intel-services-to-achieve-reset-of-ukraines-ruling-regime-sub-chief.html

the campaign of assassinations of key Ukrainian military and special forces personnel has subsided for the moment, but the increasing utilisation of criminal groups to commit violent political acts and eliminate Russian opponents of the Putin regime, periodic "false flag" operations and the enhancement of fifth column activity might be the prelude to worse as the country approaches presidential elections (March 2019) and parliamentary elections, which must take place before the end of next year.

None of these endeavours suggests that the Kremlin has yet decided what to *do* with Ukraine, and it is most unlikely to discern just what options it has until elections take place. For now, it would welcome an opportunity to manoeuvre either the incumbent, President Poroshenko or his arch rival, Yulia Tymoshenko into a coalition with Russia's "systemic" candidate, former Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Boyko. But this is far from an assured route to power given the fluidity of Ukraine's political matrix and the salient fact that none of the established contenders enjoy more than paltry support. That Russia will change its game after the elections is likely, and in the right circumstances, it will not hesitate to raise it. Yet it is most unlikely that Moscow has yet decided how to do either of these things.

The implosion of Russian active measures and infowar against the West in all of its manifestations – alliances with "non-systemic" political forces, "collusion" with established ones, hacking of party and parliamentary data bases, suborning of EU judges and politicians, fifth column activity and a blizzard of fake news – is also a sign of retreat as much as advance. In 2014 and 2015 the West was treated to displays of bullying, military intimidation and nuclear blackmail. Even in 2017, the campaign of military pressure against NATO, not only encompassing a large ambit of activity supporting exercise Zapad-2017 but a simulated attack by Russian bombers against the Norwegian intelligence service station in Vardo.[12] Nevertheless, the indirect and "plausibly deniable" approach is becoming more prevalent. Russian diplomacy remains

[12] Anita Raji, 'The Perils of Playing Footsie in Military Boots: Trident Juncture and NATO's Northern Front', *War on the Rocks,* 20 August 2018 https://warontherocks.com/2018/08/the-perils-of-playing-footsie-in-military-boots-trident-juncture-and-natos-nordic-front/

tenacious and brutal. At the same time, the West is entreated to ignore everything taking place and return to the path of mutual cooperation and commercial profit.

This is not impressing those who need to be impressed. NATO Allies, alarmed and affronted by the bombastic *démarches* of President Trump, conspired behind his back, with State Department and Pentagon encouragement, to produce the toughest statements on Russia in any NATO summit declaration since the Cold War. U.S. Republicans, otherwise supine in their treatment of the President, have threatened to unleash "sanctions from hell" if Russia's actions continue. Yet they continue. The alienation of Greece, congenitally partial to Russia and phobic towards the US, is the latest startling casualty of its approach. The Skripal affair exercised Russia's unrivalled talents in "wet affairs", mendacity and denial, yet it produced a robust display of support for Britain despite the pall that Brexit has cast over its relationship with Europe. Only Russia's relationship with Turkey has prospered, a far from trivial gain by any means, but although Russia's hand with Turkey has been played exceptionally well, the latest catalyst of warmer relations has been the war of words and tariffs unleashed by Donald Trump.

Tenacity and restlessness

Like the Russian temperament, the Russian state displays a talent for living with contradictions. It also creates them. This does not make life easy for its Western counterparts, and it is not meant to. Throughout most of Putin's stewardship, Russia has been rigorously consequentialist in its actions and its ends-means calculations. Increasingly it miscalculates. Then it redoubles its miscalculation by bluster and denial. (Not only does Putin deny that the Russian Federation produced Novichok, he insists that the USSR did not do so either). What is the defining feature of Russian policy today: advance or retreat? fixity of purpose or ambivalence? resourcefulness or crudity? These are inescapable questions, but anyone who believes that Russia is "either" this "or" that does not understand the country.

There are three explanations for today's contradictions, and the beginning of wisdom is to understand that they are not mutually exclusive. First, the circle of power has become malignantly inbred. It has spent too long, in John Lough's words "breathing its own oxygen". The *Bolotnaya* protests of 2011-12, and with it, the disenchantment of the more urbane segment of the middle class, propelled Russia's political system in a defensive and illiberal direction. Since the election of 2012, necessary dissonances – Yeltsin era liberals, economists and technocrats, "liberal'niye derzhavniki" (liberal imperialists) and the "cosmopolitan" part of the business elite – have been streamed out of the body politic. Now the influence of those who always were present – the *siloviki,* the custodians of "national capital" and the ideologues of "fortress Russia" – is almost uncontested, and their outlook has become unchallengeable. The result is not only paranoia and aggressiveness, but error.

The second explanation is that these very people, or some large proportion of them, believe that permanent turmoil in the enemy camp and the ultimate dissolution of "the West" is a prize vastly more significant than the cost of sanctions, the spectre of U.S. rearmament and the alienation of those contemptuously referred to as "our Western partners". Rather than "learn the lessons" of these costs, Russia is reading the West its own morality tale about Russia's elemental importance and the costs of trying to "isolate" or "ignore" it.

The third explanation is that Russia's talent for exploiting opportunity and turning the tables continues to erode the established positions of those who take them for granted. By inducement, pressure and patience, it has assiduously transformed Azerbaijan from a country firmly in the Western orbit into a country now contemplating membership of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. With Turkey, it has extracted geopolitical dividends from NATO's fecklessness, Europe's moralising, America's bullying and Erdogan's innate truculence. Even after the devastating results of ChVK (PMC) Vagner's sanguinary encounter with U.S. special forces in eastern Syria, Russia's "private military companies" grow in importance and continue to expand Russia's writ in other places. In all of these endeavours, Western fumbling and ambivalence removes incentives for Russia to draw conclusions from its own.

Yet Russia now understands that its cards are no longer the only wild ones in the game. The euphoria of the Trump-Putin summit lasted scarcely a week before Moscow was reminded of the mercurial character of the American president and the unpredictability of the country that he leads. His actions brook no doubt that it remains the most powerful country on the planet. Russia will remain assiduous in finding new ways to expand its influence in domains where there is no resistance to be feared. Its system is mobilised for hybrid war, and it will continue to pursue it by methods that friends and adversaries have yet to master or fully understand. But on the main East-West axis, voices counselling caution are contesting those urging a fresh round of "defence through expansion". That contest, and the restlessness it fosters, provide no grounds for Western complacency or indifference.

The Role of Military Power in Russia's New Generation Warfare Arsenal in Ukraine and Beyond

András Rácz

The present article[1] intends to study the practical manifestation of Russia's new generation war (*novoe pokolenie voyni*) concept in the recent armed conflicts Russia has been involved in. The analysis intends to find answers to the question to what extent the concept of a new generation war can be applied to describe the Russian involvement in the wars in Ukraine and Syria.

Russian theory of a new generation war and the role of conventional military

Russian military theorists have extensively discussed the nature of future armed conflicts ever since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Development of military thinking constituted a continuous, process, with authors organically building upon the works of their predecessors. The brief article[2] of Russian Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov published in 2013 received widespread international attention and was considered by many as a revolutionary playbook of how Russia plans to wage war. Yet, the work contained much less original and new information than the amount of attention focused on it might have implied. As pointed

[1] The research has been supported by the No. 129243 grant of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office of Hungary, titled "Tradition and Flexibility in Russia's Security and Defense Policy."

[2] Valery Gerasimov. "Tsennost' nauki v predvidenii," *Voyenno Promyshlenniy Kuryer*, February 26, 2013, http://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632

out by Charles Bartles,[3] Gerasimov did not propose a new way of warfare at all; instead, he described the current and future operational environment in which Russia will need to defend its national interests. His arguments were largely built on the work of those Russian authors, who discussed sixth generation warfare back in the 1990s and 2000s. The article probably got inspirations also from Evgeny Messner's 'subversion war' (*myatezh' voyna*) concept, dating originally back to the 1950s, but widely referred to by contemporary Russian authors as well, such as Andrei Budaev or Andrei Manoylo.[4]

Russian theorists of the new generation war have generally been on the position that in future wars the role of non-military means will significantly increase as compared to the past armed conflicts. Gerasimov himself argued for a 4:1 ratio in favor of non-military means, while Sergei Chekinov and Sergei Bogdanov[5] refrained from defining a concrete number, but emphasised the growing importance of non-military means in general.

At the same time, however, it is important to note that the growing importance of non-military tools does not mean that conventional military power would have become useless or unnecessary. The new element was the role Russian military theoreticians prescribed for conventional military in a 'new generation war' context. As pointed out by e.g. Jānis Bērziņš[6], in the initial phases of an armed conflict, conventional military does not get involved in direct, overt actions. In the very beginning, amassing military forces on the border of the enemy state has a deterrence effect on the adversary state. Later, instead of crossing the enemy state's border, the attacking military employs long-range artillery and precision strikes capabilities, as

[3] Charles K. Bartles. "Getting Gerasimov Right," *Military Review*, February 28, 2016, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art009.pdf

[4] Quoted in detail by Ofer Fridman: "Hybrid Warfare or Gibridnaya Voyna? Similar, But Different," *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 162 – 2017, Issue 1, p. 43-45. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03071847.2016.1253370?needAccess=true

[5] Sergei Chekinov, Sergei Bogdanov. „The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War," *Military Thought*, No. 4, 2013, http://www.eastviewpress.com/Files/MT_FROM%20THE%20CURRENT%20ISSUE_No.4_2013.pdf

[6] Jānis Bērziņš. "Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy," *Policy Paper*, No. 2. 2014, National Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research, http://www.naa.mil.lv/-/media/NAA/AZPC/Publikacijas/PP%2002-2014.ashx

well as special operation forces and cyber and electronic warfare (EW), in order to disrupt the enemy's communication, command and control (C2) chains and damage its critical infrastructure, but without getting engaged in direct combat. This approach has often been called contactless war (*bezkontaktnaya voyna*) or network-centric war (*setevaya voyna*) in Russian military literature.[7]

As Michael Kofman puts it, the possibility of delivering such massive strikes from long distance makes the spatial component of war a lot less relevant than before. Besides, it also increases the importance of the initial phases of the conflict, when such strikes are delivered, decisively reducing the enemy's potential to resist.[8] Meanwhile, at the initial stages, only special operation forces, together with deployed mercenaries, mobilised local criminal groups and other actors formally not connected to the attacker are present on the very territory of the enemy. Larger, conventional armed formations are put into action only in the later, already less relevant phases of the conflict.[9]

In other words, according to Russia's concepts of a new generation war, regardless of the growing importance of non-military means, military superiority is still an essential precondition of winning a war. This applies particularly to the fields of state-of-the-art, high precision, long-range capabilities, as well as of electronic and cyber warfare, all necessary to deliver the initial, decisive strikes. Superiority in terms of conventional ground forces becomes relevant in the terminal phases of the conflict, when armed forces of the attacking country openly enter enemy territory and destroy the remaining resistance.[10]

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[7] See, for example, Leonid Savin. "Bezkontaktniye i seteviye voyni," April 17, 2013, https://topwar.ru/26880-beskontaktnye-i-setevye-voyny.html

[8] Michael Kofman. "The Role of Pre-Conflict Conflict and the Importance of the Syrian Crucible," in: John R. Deni (ed.): *Current Russia Military Affairs. Assessing and Countering Russian Strategy, Operational Planning and Modernization*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, July 2018, p. 21-23. https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/download.cfm?q=1385

[9] Ibid.

[10] Chekinov, Bogdanov, ibid.

Ukraine: from a new generation to a limited war

The war in Ukraine, that has started in 2014 by the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the insurgency in the Donbas, was the first large-scale reality check of how and to what extent the concept of new generation warfare could be used to adequately describe and predict field realities.

Events in Ukraine seemed to generally follow the logic of a new generation war from February 2014 onwards. With a daring and highly skillful combined employment of special operation units, rapid reaction forces, intensive information warfare and masterful diplomacy – that involved denying any Russian involvement – Moscow managed to take over the Crimean Peninsula in a few weeks and without any firefight. The new Ukrainian leadership that had freshly emerged from the EuroMaidan was unable to resist, mainly due to the sorry state of its armed forces and its disorganised and disoriented administration, shaken by the change of power and the rampant corruption under previous President Viktor Yanukovich. Ukraine's Western allies also urged Kyiv not to resist, mostly because Russia has amassed tens of thousands of highly mobile troops along Ukraine's Eastern and North-Eastern borders under the disguise of a snap exercise, and these forces posed an immediate danger of an overwhelming conventional attack. In other words, these Russian formations fulfilled their duty to serve as a deterrent that seriously limited the freedom of maneuver of the Ukrainian leadership, just as the logic of new generation warfare prescribes.

However, the insurgency in Eastern Ukraine had significantly different results. Initially, the weak and disorganised Ukrainian armed forces quickly lost territory to the advancing separatist militias, that enjoyed the support of various Russian formations in organizing, equipping and also leading them. Besides special operation forces of Russia's military intelligence, the GRU, state-operated paramilitary formations, like Cossacks and Chechen units of the Ministry of Interior, as well as small detachments of the Wagner Private Military Company all took part in the fighting. Devastating artillery shelling coming from the Russian side of the border considerably contributed to the defeat of Ukrainian

forces and to their loss of control over the border.[11] However, Ukraine's largely self-organised volunteer battalions managed to significantly slow down the advance of the separatist/Russian units, compensating their weak training and equipment with exceptionally high fighting morale – though they undoubtedly suffered severe losses.[12]

The time won by the volunteer battalions, the setup of a new government, as well as the hastily started transformation of the Ukrainian military together with increasingly visible Western support made it possible for Kyiv to launch a large-scale counter-attack against the separatists in April 2014. The operation, officially called Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO), gained momentum after the election of Petro Poroshenko as President of Ukraine on 25 May 2014. Advancing Ukrainian troops were supported by air force, artillery and armored components, against which the largely irregular, often chaotically operating and lightly armed separatist formations stood little chance.[13]

By early August 2014, the ATO managed to take back nearly all occupied territories and was close to cutting the two main cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, held by the separatist forces, from each other. In order to prevent the military defeat of the insurgency, Russia decided to launch a massive conventional attack that involved more than 10.000 regular troops. Ukraine's military suffered a staggering defeat in August-September 2014 in the battle of Ilovaysk, and another, even more serious one in January-February 2015 at Debaltseve. From spring 2015 onwards, the frontline in Eastern Ukraine remained largely stabilised, with no significant territorial changes occurring anymore.

After the battles of Ilovaysk and Debaltseve, the conflict had gotten decisively transformed. The dominantly contactless

[11] For details, see: Sean Case, Klement Anders. "Putin's Undeclared War Summer 2014. Russian Artillery Strikes against Ukraine," *Bellingcat*, December 21, 2016, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2016/12/21/russian-artillery-strikes-against-ukraine/

[12] For details, see: Anna Bulakh, Grigori Senkiv, Dmitri Teperik. "First on the Front Lines. The Role of Volunteers in Countering Russia's Military Aggression Against Ukraine," *ICDS Report*, August 2017, https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/ICDS_report_First_on_the_front_lines_ukraine.pdf

[13] Franklin Holcomb. "The Kremlin's Irregular Army. Ukrainian Separatist Order of Battle," *Russia and Ukraine Security Report*, No. 3., September 2017, p.8. http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISW%20Separatist%20ORBAT%20Holcomb%202017_Final.pdf

fighting of spring and summer of 2014 conducted by long-range, precision strike capabilities and electronic warfare got replaced by massive, lasting ground presence of Russian regular forces. While the official non-involvement narrative of the Russian government is still sustained, it has lost even the remaining bits of credibility after Ilovaysk.[14]

Russia has considerably centralised the way its actors operate in Eastern Ukraine over the three years that passed since 2015. Instead of the diverse, often chaotic paramilitary formations of 2014-2015, by the summer of 2018 both separatist entities – the so-called Donetsk National Republic (DNR) and Luhansk National Republic (LNR) – have armed forces that are fully interoperable with the Russian Armed Forces, de facto constituting two army groups. Separatist C2 structures are overseen both on the tactical and strategic levels by Russian military personnel,[15] and they hold regular joint exercises together with the Russian army.[16] At present, everyday fighting and clashes are conducted by the separatist proxies, thus the bulk of the fighting (losses, exhaustion, etc.) is on their shoulders.

Regardless of the role played by various proxies, the massive involvement of Russia's regular armed forces in 2014-2015 and the subsequent stabilisation of the frontline in Eastern Ukraine resulted in a strange, half-war, half-peace situation, that was described by Lawrence Freedman as a 'limited war'.[17] In Freedman's interpretation, 'limited war' means that while on one part of the Russia-Ukraine border there has been an intensive armed conflict going on, on other parts of the border everyday traffic and people-to-people contacts have continued in a mostly

[14] For example, Russian military press openly published on the performance of certain tanks in the battle of Ilovaysk, namely of the T-72B3 variant that was never in service in Ukraine. Hence, these particular tanks could not get into the battle from anywhere else, but Russia. See: Pavel Ivanov. "Troyanskiy kompleks. Amerikanskiye postavki letal'nogo oruzhiya dob'yut ukrainskuyu armiyu," *Voyenno Promyshlenniy Kuryer*, August 7, 2017, https://vpk-news.ru/articles/38266

[15] Holcomb. Ibid, p. 9.

[16] For example, see: ""You can expect anything": Ukraine on Russia amassing troops on demarcation in Donbass," *UNIAN*, August 03, 2018, https://www.unian.info/war/10212734-you-can-expect-anything-ukraine-on-russia-amassing-troops-at-demarcation-in-donbas.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

[17] Lawrence Freedman. "Ukraine and the Art of Limited War," *Survival*, Vol. 56, 2014, Issue 6, p. 7-38. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00396338.2014.985432

uninterrupted manner. Despite the ongoing war in the Donbas, energy transit, as well as cross-border trade have also been going on, and diplomatic ties were not severed either.

Though Gerasimov himself pointed out that "each war represents an isolated case",[18] thus there is no unified way of approaching all armed conflicts, it is interesting to note how reality diverted from the new generation war theory in Ukraine only after a few months of fighting. Though initially Russia was able to conduct the conflict basically along the logic of new generation warfare, Ukraine's gradually strengthening resistance changed the overall nature of the conflict towards a more conventional, less dynamic, and definitely not contactless war.[19]

Syria: new generation war in an expeditionary setting

Russia's involvement in the war in Syria did not start with the aerial campaign that commenced in September 2015, but much earlier, as Russia and Syria have a decades-long past of military cooperation. The agreement on the Tartus naval facility used by the Russian (then Soviet) Navy was signed back in 1971. Syria has been a primary buyer of both Soviet and Russian weapons systems, and Russia had thousands of advisors and other technical personnel in Syria even before the civil war started in 2011.

The first documented involvement of Russian fighting formations – though not of the regular armed forces – date back to 2013. Then a Russian private military company named Slavonic Corps appeared in Syria with a total of 267 fighters. In order to circumvent restrictive Russian legislation, the group was officially part of the Moran Security Group and registered in Hong Kong. However, as the only thing worse than the management of Slavonic Corps was their equipment, the sole high intensity action they participated in turned to be a serious fiasco, after which the survivors returned to Russia and the

[18] Bartles. Ibid., p. 34-35.

[19] Levente Jenei. "Az orosz 4. generációs hadviselés elmélete és gyakorlata Ukrajnában," *Unpublished M.Sc. thesis*, 2018, National University of Public Service, Hungary

group was disbanded.[20] Hence, Russia's first attempt to use proxy forces in Syria failed.

Regardless, owing to the long-standing ground presence in Syria, when two years later in July 2015 Syrian President Bashar el-Assad requested Russia's military assistance, the operation could commence in a relatively short time. Air strikes started on 30 September 2015 and were composed both of tactical attacks conducted by aircrafts deployed to the Hmeimim air base, and by long-range strikes of Tu-22, Tu-95 and Tu-160 strategic bombers that operated from bases in Russia. In addition, the Russian navy component deployed to the Mediterranean launched a number of precision attacks with Kalibr cruise missiles starting from October 2015.

In order to operate and protect its bases, as well as to coordinate airstrikes with Syrian governmental forces, Russia gradually deployed more and more regular forces to Syria. Since the beginning of the campaign Russian forces have managed to establish a well-functioning C2 network that mirrors that similar structures of the Syrian army,[21] which allows very close coordination even on battalion level. Owing to this, Russia's massive and efficient (though often indiscriminate) air strikes played a key role in turning the tide of the war and restoring the military dominance of Assad over the various anti-government forces, including the Islamic State.

Another success of Russia's approach in Syria is that official military losses remained limited. According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, as of May 2018, a total of 93 military personnel died in Syria, out of which 43 lost their lives in combat, while the others constituted non-combat losses.[22]

Hence, in its early phases, the Russian involvement in the Syrian civil war basically corresponded with the logic of new generation warfare: long-distance, precision strikes were conducted against enemy positions, while regular ground forces got involved only

[20] "The Last Battle of the "Slavonic Corps"'," *The Interpreter*, November 16, 2013, http://www.interpretermag.com/the-last-battle-of-the-slavonic-corps/

[21] "Russia learns military lessons in Syria," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, https://www.janes.com/images/assets/758/69758/Russia_learns_military_lessons_in_Syria.pdf

[22] "Geroi voyny: poteri Vooruzhonnykh Sil RF v khode siriyskoy operatsii," *TASS*, May 27, 2018, http://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/3445013

to the minimum extent, limited basically to securing the airbase and its vicinity. The Syrian war offered Russia the opportunity to test various new weapon platforms, and also to show the world its long-range precision strike capabilities, as the Kalibr missiles launched against Syrian targets from ships sailing on the Caspian Sea (!)[23] in October 2016 did.[24]

Another similarity to the original new generation war concept was that while the involvement of the regular army remained limited, proxy formations played a much more important role. The case of Syria, however, differs from that of Ukraine in the sense that the main Russian proxy formations are not quasi-states, like the DNR and LNR, but private military companies (PMC).

Though there are more than one such Russian formations operating in Syria, the most important one of them is the so-called Wagner Group. Some members of the company already participated in the conflict in Ukraine, however, this is not the main reason why Wagner is a highly special PMC.

As pointed out by Endre Hart,[25] Wagner differs from traditional Western PMCs and of their Russian equivalents in a number of factors. First and foremost, the company has very close relationship with the GRU, including frequent exchanges of personnel, a shared training facility in Molkino (Krasnodar Region) and the past of their founder, Dmitry Utkin, who himself served in a GRU unit before he established Wagner. Second, unlike Western PMCs, Wagner has no known normal commercial clients, except for a number of Russian energy companies with strong links to the state and oligarchs.[26] Third, while also Western PMCs are capable of conducting high-intensity operations, in Wagner's case this seems to be the main profile of the company. Moreover, Wagner operatives are known to employ tanks,

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[23] Thus missiles were launched from more than 1500 kilometers distance.

[24] Sebastien Roblin. "Why Russia's Enemies Fear the Kalibr Cruise Missile?" *The National Interest*, January 22, 2017, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/why-russias-enemies-fear-the-kalibr-cruise-missile-19129

[25] Endre Hart. „Az orosz katonai magánvállalatok és a Wagner Csoport szerepe, illetve működése," *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 2018, to be published in Autumn 2018.

[26] Sergei Sukhankin. "War, Business and hybrid Warfare: The Case of the Wagner Private Military Company (Part One)," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 15, Issue 60, April 19, 2018, https://jamestown.org/program/war-business-and-hybrid-warfare-the-case-of-the-wagner-private-military-company-part-one/

armored personnel carriers and even heavy artillery, that is highly unusual for other PMCs. Fourth, Wagner apparently enjoys strong state support from Russia, unlike other PMCs. In addition to their GRU-links, another indicator is that after the company suffered severe losses from a U.S. airstrike at Deir ez-Zor in Syria in February 2018, wounded Wagner operatives were transported to Russia on Russian military airplanes and received treatment in military hospitals. Fifth, as the fighting in Syria demonstrated (for example, the battle for Palmyra), Wagner has modern, well-functioning command and control structures, which also permit close cooperation with Russian regular forces. All in all, the company appears more to be a vaguely concealed tool of the Russian security establishment – according to Jamestown Foundation's Sergey Sukhankin, Wagner is managed by the 'triumvirate' of the Ministry of Defence, the GRU and the Federal Security Service (FSB)[27] – than a conventional PMC.

Outsourcing many high intensity operations to Wagner allowed Russia to obscure the exact scale and details of its involvement in the conflict, by employing the well-known tool of deniability. The ability to hide their actions both from the domestic and international public provides Russia with considerable freedom of maneuver. Besides, it also allows to conceal many combat losses. As Wagner operatives are not members of the regular military, the Russian Ministry of Defence does not need to mention them among the fallen military personnel (*voennosluzhayshikh*), even if hundreds of them die, as it reportedly happened at Deir ez-Zor.[28] As by March 2018, not less than 4840 Wagner operatives were reportedly working in Syria.[29]

[27] Sergei Sukhankin. "War, Business and hybrid Warfare: The Case of the Wagner Private Military Company (Part One)," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 15, Issue 60, April 19, 2018, https://jamestown.org/program/war-business-and-hybrid-warfare-the-case-of-the-wagner-private-military-company-part-one/

[28] Marek Menkiszak, Krzysztof Strachota, Piotr Zochowski. "Russian losses near Deir ez-Zor – a problem for the Kremlin," *OSW Analyses*, February 21, 2018, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2018-02-19/russian-losses-near-deir-ez-zor-a-problem-kremlin

[29] "The number of Wagner operatives named," ["Nazvano chislo naemnikov ChVK Vagnera,"] *Lenta.ru,* March 13, 2018, https://lenta.ru/news/2018/03/13/vagner/

Conclusion and outlook: increasing global presence growingly outsourced

Russia's wars in Ukraine and Syria demonstrate that the overall concept of new generation warfare can be well applied to the use of military power in these conflicts, though with certain local alterations. From Russia's perspective, in the initial months of the war in Ukraine the skillful combination of long-distance precision strikes, special operation forces, various proxies, information warfare and local actors brought strategic gains – i.e. most importantly gaining control over the Crimea, but also the de facto control over parts of the Donbas. Moreover, all this could be achieved with the minimal ground presence of conventional military forces. Though the initial success of Ukraine's counter-attack required a massive invasion conducted by regular units in August-September 2014 to prevent the defeat of the proxy formations controlling Eastern Ukraine, the strategic situation was stabilised after the defeat of Ukraine's army at Debaltseve. Since then, the persistent and continuous strengthening of local proxies has empowered Russia with full, centralised and efficient control over the occupied parts of Eastern Ukraine, while regular military presence could again be reduced to minimum. However, the full interoperability between Russia's regular army and the separatist proxies enable Moscow to quickly deploy significant capabilities into the Donbas, if needed.

Largely similar conclusions could be drawn from the Syria campaign, too. In the initial phases of Russia's involvement, air and missile strikes, conducted both by forward deployed aircraft, helicopters as well as by strategic bombers, had a decisive influence on the conflict, while the ground presence of regular military remained limited. Thereafter, most of the ground combat could be 'outsourced' to proxies (massively supported by special operation forces), be it Syrian units or Wagner personnel, while Russia's regular armed forces have provided the air, artillery, C2, intelligence, and EW support.

All in all, the cases of Ukraine and Syria demonstrate that Russia's involvement was conducted clearly along the concept of new generation warfare initially, even though the nature of both

conflicts has later changed. Another conclusion to be drawn is that ensuring full interoperability between proxies and Russian regular units has been one of the key components in both cases that allowed Moscow to keep its own army largely intact, and make proxies do the hard work.

The recent reports on Wagner operatives present in Libya, Sudan, as well as the Central African Republic suggest that Russia intends to increasingly rely on proxy forces – and particularly on private military companies – in pursuing its own interests. Moreover, the Kremlin intends to follow this strategy on an increasingly global scale. Of course, the further away from Russia do these proxies operate, the more difficult it gets for Russia's conventional military to provide them with proper support. Regardless, these formations may still assist Russia's local allies with a large variety of services, ranging from training to protective duties, and from combat support to actual fighting.

Besides, Russian proxies are a lot more likely to be deployed to distant conflict zones than regular army units, due to both political and legal reasons. This allows Russia to prevent its regular forces both from getting overstretched and from suffering losses, thus their full potential to defend the country can be maintained. Meanwhile, as the example of Wagner demonstrates, necessary combat experience can still be ensured by temporarily re-assigning prospective personnel from regular units to the proxy formations, and vice versa. Last, but definitely not least, as these proxies are officially not part of Russia's state structures, by increasingly relying on them the Kremlin will be able to exert its security and military influence with even less transparency and accountability than it has done before.

This applies to the Baltic Sea region as well. Based on Russia's experiences gained in Ukraine and Syria, if any confrontation takes place (without assessing the actual probability of it), it is highly likely that initially the offensive would follow the logic of new generation warfare. In practice, this would mean strong emphasis on the combination of long-distance, precision strikes, and the widespread, innovative and aggressive use of various proxies, with special operation forces among their ranks.

Mapping Russian Lawfare as a Pivotal Russian Hybrid Warfare Domain: Implications for the Region and Policy Recommendations

Mark Voyger

Russian hybrid warfare has become a highly discussed analytical and media topic since the Russian hybrid invasion of Ukraine in 2014. Policy-makers, analysts and the general public alike have been focused on two of its pivotal elements – information warfare and cyber warfare – as the most visible and widely analysed Russian hybrid warfare domains. Indeed, those have proven to be extremely dangerous and disruptive as non-military tools used by the regime in Kremlin to sow dissent and divide the public opinion in the West, wreak social havoc and foment popular discontent, target critical infrastructure and influence electoral campaigns. This paper argues that there is a third pivotal domain of Russian hybrid warfare that has received considerably less publicity and analytical attention, but that is an equally dangerous, albeit somewhat less visible one. The domain in question is Russian 'Lawfare', or the offensive exploitation of international and domestic law by Russia as instruments of state power and hegemonic expansionism. Russia's weaponisation of the law is helping it assert its renewed regional ambitions, but this Russian abuse of international law has also the potential to impact international order on a global scale for the foreseeable future. NATO and the West as a whole must develop a deep understanding of Russian 'Lawfare', in order to design a truly comprehensive strategy for countering the Russian hybrid challenge to the European security architecture of today, in the name of preserving the stability of the world order of tomorrow.

This piece is not meant to serve as an in-depth analysis of the theory and practice of Russian lawfare, which would be the subject of a far more detailed study. Rather, its goal is to provide a working definition and an overview of this peculiar hybrid domain, propose a model for mapping its techniques as employed primarily against Ukraine and the Baltic states, and based on those examples – offer policy recommendations on how it could be tracked and successfully countered.

Definitions of lawfare

The term 'lawfare' was first coined by MG (ret.) Charles Dunlap, former U.S. Judge Advocate General, and Professor of International Law at Duke University. In his 2009 paper "Lawfare: A Decisive Element of 21st-Century Conflicts?"[1] he defined 'lawfare' as "a method of warfare where law is used as a means of realising a military objective". He broadened the definition in 2017 to include "using law as a form of asymmetrical warfare"[2]. Those original definitions focus on the exploitation of the law primarily for military purposes, which is understandable given that the term "hybrid warfare" did not enter the Western political parlance until the summer of 2014 with its official adoption by NATO. Given the prevalence of non-military over military means (not only in an asymmetric military sense) in Gerasimov's hybrid warfare model presented in February 2013, it is necessary to re-visit and broaden the original definition of 'lawfare' in a holistic fashion in order to place Russian lawfare in its proper context as one of the pivotal domains of Russian hybrid warfare. In his 2016 update to his original model, Gerasimov stated that, "Hybrid Warfare requires high-tech weapons and a scientific substantiation"[3]. In that regard, Russian lawfare's primary function is to underpin those efforts by providing their legal foundation and justification. To be precise, the term 'lawfare' itself does not exist in Russian, but the 2014

[1] Charles J. Dunlap Jr. "Lawfare: A Decisive Element of 21st-Century Conflicts?" *54 Joint Force Quarterly*, 34-39, 2009.
[2] Charles J. Dunlap Jr. "Lawfare 101: A Primer," *97 Military Review,* 8-17, May-June 2017.
[3] Valery Gerasimov. "Based on the Experience of Syria", *Military-Industrial Courier*, Issue No 9, 8 March 2016.

Figure 1: Russian Lawfare among the Russian Hybrid Warfare Domains. © Mark Voyger

Russian military doctrine recognises the use of legal means among other non-military tools for defending Russia's interests.[4] As this paper will demonstrate, Russia has been using international law as a weapon since at least the 18th century.

The proposed graph of Russian Hybrid Warfare above (*Figure 1: Russian Lawfare among the Russian Hybrid Warfare Domains*) visualises Russian Lawfare as the domain that intertwines with, and supports Russian information warfare, thus providing the (quasi) legal justification for Russia's propaganda claims and aggressive actions. To provide further granularity, the proposed model for mapping Russian lawfare (*Figure 2 on next spread: Mapping Russian Lawfare: The Intersection of the Areas of the Law with the Hybrid Warfare Domains*) demonstrates that the legal domain of Russian hybrid warfare can be understood in its entirety only

[4] "The Military Doctrine reflects the attachment of the RF to the use of military means to defend its interests and those of its allies only after having applied political, diplomatic, legal, economic, information and other instruments of non-violent nature." *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, Provision 5, 26* December 2014. Russian language original from: http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf

through the comprehensive analysis of the intersection of the areas of the law, with the various other domains of hybrid warfare of military and non-military nature. The model is not by any means exhaustive in terms of the number and type of lawfare techniques, but it is replicable and expandable, and can accommodate other relevant areas of the law and other domains and sub-domains of Russian hybrid activities.

The imperial origins of Russian lawfare

The roots of this type of Russian conduct should be sought in the history of the Russian and Soviet interactions with the international system of nation-states known as "the Westphalian order". At various times in its history Russia has either been invited to the European Concert of Powers, or invaded by some of those Powers. In its formative centuries the nascent Russian empire did not deal with its neighbouring states as equals, but took part in their partition (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), and the division of Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. It also regularly acted to suppress ethnic nationalism within its own territories, while at the same time encouraging Balkan nationalisms and exploiting the ethno-religious rifts within the Ottoman Empire throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. International law was pivotal for Russia's expansionist agenda, as it claimed that the 1774 Treaty of Kucuk-Kaynarca with the Ottomans had granted it the right to intervene diplomatically and militarily in the Balkans as the sole protector of the Orthodox Christians.[5] Based on that fact, 1774 should be regarded as the year of birth of Russian Lawfare. This method for justifying imperial expansionism thrived also during the Soviet era as the USSR partitioned states, annexed territories and launched overt aggressions and clandestine infiltrations across national borders, in the name of protecting and liberating international workers, or in order to impose its limited sovereignty doctrine on its satellite-states.[6]

[5] Roderic H. Davison, "The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Sep., 1976), pp. 463-483.

[6] For a detailed overview of the history of Russia's interaction with the European legal system, see Lauri Mälksoo, "Russian Approaches to International Law," *Oxford University Press*, Oxford: 2015.

Figure 2: Mapping Russian Lawfare: The Intersection of the Areas of the Law with the Hybrid Warfare Domains

	HYBRID			
LAW AREAS:	**Political**	**Diplomatic**	**Socio-Cultural**	**Information**
Legal Theory	Uphold ethnic self-determination over state sovereignty in target states	Assert Russia's right to 'spheres of interest'; blur boundaries between peace and war	Use history to legalise interventions and annexations	Claim Russia's status as USSR legal successor when beneficial
Customary International Law	Emphasise the fluidity of international law over peremptory legal norms	De-recognise neighbouring states' governments to justify Russian invasions and annexations	Assert Russian 'cultural values' over individual rights	Portray existing international order as West-centric and unfair toward Russia
Humanitarian Law	Assert Russian 'responsibility to protect' its compatriots in "Near Abroad"	Create new ethnic realities on the ground through Russian passports	Provide Russian citizenship on historical grounds	Claim Russian minorities' oppression and violation of language rights
Constitutional Law	Assert supremacy of Russian constitution over international law	Claim the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine contradicted Soviet constitution	Close ethnic minorities institutions accusing them of separatist propaganda	Claim USSR dissolution was 'unconstitutional' under Soviet law
Criminal Law	Justify domestic repressions to preempt 'Colour Revolutions'	Abuse Interpol arrest warrants to target critics sentence foreign "war criminals"	Criminalise the offence of religious feelings of believers	Force hostages to admit to 'terrorist' activities
Maritime Law	Cancel Ukrainian State licenses to expropriate natural shelf resources in the Black and Azov Seas	Oppose the presence of U.S. navy in the Black Sea	Exploit history to assert warm ports access	Portray Azov and Black Seas as "Russian Seas"
International Organisations	Abuse UN Security Council veto to obstruct UN resolutions	Create Russian-dominated regional organisations	Accuse neighbours of 'Nazism' at UN bodies	Portray Russian international organisations membership as stabilising
International Treaties	Uphold the principle of 'Rebus sic stantibus' over 'Pacta sunt servanda'	Use ceasefire negotiations to delay response and divide public opinion	Use zero-sum game culture while negotiating treaties	Exploit legal loopholes to claim non-performance of other signatories
Law of Armed Conflict	Assert that Russian aggression against Ukraine is "civil war within Ukraine"	Sign SOFA with Syria assuming no liability for war crimes	Use Russian fears of encirclement by NATO	Accuse Ukraine and West of war crimes in Donbas and Syria

WARFARE DOMAINS:				
Economic/ Financial	**Energy/ Infrastructure**	**Cyber**	**Intelligence**	**Military**
Set the legal groundwork to dominate Eurasian economic integration	Assert Russian State sovereignty over energy resources	Assert Russian State sovereignty over the cyber domain	Define Western legal concepts as foreign and subversive to Russia	Assert the Russia's right of pre-emptive actions abroad
Expropriate foreign assets to compensate for assets frozen by the West	Oppose Western sanctions against Russian energy infrastructure	Oppose U.S. sanctions for meddling in U.S. elections	Oppose Western sanctions for chemical attacks on UK soil	Assert right to military exercises within Russia's borders
Exert pressure on EU through migration flows	Destroy energy infrastructure to justify humanitarian convoys	Target Western humanitarian organisations	Collect intelligence during reconciliation campaigns	Target civilians to trigger humanitarian crises
Subject economic entities to state interests in wartime	Vest the Russian National Guard with the rights to protect infrastructure	Launch cyber attacks on Western electoral systems	Legalise the supremacy of Russian security apparatus over individual rights	Define Russian military as a pillar of Russia's domestic order
Tax evasion charges against opposition leaders	Fabricating infrastructure attack plots to arrest foreign citizens	Criminalise Internet criticism as 'terrorism' and 'extremism'	Legalise intelligence services control over the Internet	Define 'Colour Revolutions' as a domestic military threat
Impede maritime traffic to Ukrainian ports	Obstruct access to Ukraine by building the Kerch bridge	Use cyber tools to target Western ports or naval assets	Compromise Western underwater cables claiming 'research' activities	Support extended Russian claims on Arctic shelf by more bases
Leverage Russian membership in World Trade organisation	Oppose EU energy infrastructure rules in Europe	Use cyber to target international organisations	Exploit international organisations to collect intelligence	Use Russian OSCE observers for intel on Ukrainian military
Use Russian loans to keep neighbouring states within Russian orbit	Use Russian infrastructure to 'hardwire' countries to Russian energy supplies	Enlist international support for greater Internet control	Collect intelligence during treaty negotiations	Abuse 'snap' exercises by exploiting the Vienna Document's loopholes
Hire private military companies to fight overseas	Destroy civilian infrastructure to justify humanitarian intervention	Oppose NATO attempts to define cyber attacks as Art. 5 events	Use cyber for intelligence acquisition and influence operations	Claim that Russian military in Ukrainian are on leave or retired

The twisting and permissive reinterpretation of history in support of Russian lawfare to justify *ex post ante* Russia's acts of aggression against its neighbours was codified on 24 July 2018 when the Russian Duma adopted a law recognising officially 19 April 1783 as the day of Crimea's "accession" to the Russian Empire. Catherine the Great's Manifesto proclaiming the annexation of Crimea is a diplomatic document that had an impact far beyond the borders of Russia and throughout the centuries that followed, and it has regained new relevance in present-day Russian strategy. It is unique also in that Empress Catherine II employed arguments from all domains of what we nowadays refer to as "hybrid warfare" – political, diplomatic, legal, information, socio-cultural, economic, infrastructure, intelligence, as well as military (both conventional and clandestine) – to convince the other Great Powers of Europe using the 18th century version of strategic communications, that Russia had been compelled to step in to protect the local populations in Crimea.[7] In that regard, April 19, 1783, can be regarded as the official birthdate of Russian hybrid warfare, in its comprehensive, albeit initial form, enriched later by the Soviet traditions of clandestine operations, political warfare and quasi-legal justifications of territorial expansionism. It is noteworthy that the Russian word "принятия" ("prinyatiya") used in the text literally means "to accept", and not to annex or incorporate. The authors of the law expressed their confidence that the setting of this new commemoration date for Russia affirms the continuity of the existence of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as part of the Russian state.[8] This legal reasoning contravenes the fact that in territorial terms the Russian Federation of today is the successor of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) as a constituent of the USSR, and not of the Russian Empire, and that the RSFSR only incorporated Crimea from 1922 until 1954.

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[7] "Manifesto of Catherine the Great on the Accession of Crimea", 19 April 1783, *Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire*, Vol. XXI, available from the RF Presidential Library at: https://www.prlib.ru/en/node/358615

[8] RF Duma communique "The day of accession of Crimea into the Russian Federation has become a new notable date," ["Den' prinyatija Kryma v sostav Rossijskoj Imperii stal novoj pamyatnoj datoj"], *State Duma of the Russian Federation State Assembly*, July 24, 2018, http://duma.gov.ru/news/27704 ; the Russian original of the law is available from: "Draft Law No. 495245-7," ["Zakonoproekt N° 495245-7,"] *Sozd Beta*, 2018, http://sozd.parliament.gov.ru/bill/495245-7

After the Soviet collapse, the use of lawfare allowed Russia to justify its involvement in Moldova that created Transnistria in 1992, the 2008 and 2014 invasions of Georgia and Ukraine, and the 2014 annexation of Crimea, including the 2016 Russian involvement in Syria, as these were all presented as essentially humanitarian peacemaking efforts. In all of those cases, Russia has claimed that friendly local populations or governments have turned to Russia for help, as Russia had felt compelled to answer that call and take those populations under its "protection", thus also assuming control over their ethnic territories and domestic politics. The successful operationalisation of this lawfare tool poses serious future dangers for all of Russia's neighbours, as it codifies a quasi-legal justification of Russia's "peacemaking operations" that no longer requires only the presence of ethnic Russians or Russian speakers for the Russian state to intervene – it can also be employed to 'protect' any population declared Russia-friendly, regardless of its ethnic origin.

All those examples clearly demonstrate how Russia has been trying to amalgamate international and domestic law with categories often as vague and contested as history and culture, for the purposes of implementing the Russian hybrid expansionist agenda. While these are nothing more than elaborately fabricated pretexts for Russian aggression, the fact that they are allowed to stand *de facto* enables Russia to continue employing them against its various nation-state targets.

Russia's use of lawfare in the 21st century: the challenges

International law dealing with conflict between states has evolved in order to prevent war through negotiations and agreements; regulate the right to go to war and set the rules of engagement; and normalise post-war relations through ceasefires, armistices and peace treaties. International law in its modern interpretation was not intended to sanction and justify the invasion and annexation of territories, the way it is used by Russia in ongoing aggression against Ukraine. The main systemic challenge that Russian lawfare

poses is that customary international law is not carved in stone, as it also derives from the practices of states, and thus, in many ways it is ultimately what states make of it. This fluid, interpretative aspect of international law is being used by Russia extensively and in the most creative ways to assert its numerous territorial, political, economic and humanitarian claims against Ukraine, as well as to harass its neighbours in the regions that it perceives as its post-Soviet "Near Abroad". So far, the existing international system based on treaties and international institutions has failed to shield Ukraine from the aggressive resurgence of Russian hegemony. It has submitted claims against Russia at the International Court of Justice on the grounds that Russia's activities in Donbas and Crimea support terrorism and constitute racial discrimination, but it has not been able to challenge Russia on the fundamental issues of Crimea's occupation and illegal annexation, and the invasion of Donbas.

While Russia does not have full control over the international legal system, and thus is not capable of changing its rules *de jure*, it is definitely trying to erode many of its fundamental principles *de facto*. The primary one is the inviolability of national borders in Europe that were set after World War II, codified at Helsinki in 1975, and recognised after the end of the Cold War, including by the Russian Federation. Another legal principle that Russian lawfare severely challenges is the obligation to adhere to international treaties, *pacta sunt servanda*, although the Russian leadership constantly pays lip service to it, and regularly accuses other signatories of international treaties and agreements (the US, Ukraine) of violations or non-compliance. The full domestic and international sovereignty of nation-states that is the cornerstone of the existing international system based on Westphalian principles is yet another fundamental principle eroded by Russia's actions. To compound things, the universally recognised right of self-determination is used by Russia to subvert Ukraine's unity as a nation-state by elevating the status of the Russian ethnic and Russian-speaking Ukrainian citizens in Crimea, Donbas and elsewhere, to that of separate 'peoples'.

The Russian lawfare actions range from strategic down to tactical, depending on the specific Russian objectives at every

point in time. Some specific examples since the beginning of the aggression against Ukraine have included, among others, a draft amendment to the law on the admission of territories into the RF that claimed to allow Russia to legally incorporate regions of neighbouring states following controlled and manipulated local referenda.[9] This particular draft law was removed from the Duma agenda on 20 March 2014 by request of its authors following the Crimea referendum of 16 March 2014. Nevertheless, the fact that it was submitted to the Russian Duma on Friday, February 28, 2014, barely a day before the overt appearance of "little green men" in Crimea and its subsequent occupation, is indicative of the high level of coordination between the military and non-military elements of Russian hybrid efforts, especially in the lawfare and information domains.

The legislative onslaught continued in April 2014 with a draft amendment proposing to grant Russian citizenship based on residency claims dating back to the USSR and the Russian Empire, as it was targeting primarily Ukrainians. The annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Eastern Ukraine in the spring of 2014 enabled Russia to expand another subversive practice – the giving away of Russian passports in order to boost the number of Russian citizens in neighbouring states (aka "passportisation"). This lawfare technique was used against Georgia in order to portray the occupations and forced secession of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a legitimate action in response to the will of the local "Russian citizens", coupled with the newly re-defined Russian right of 'responsibility to protect'. The scope and definitions of that particular right have proven to be extremely flexible since it was proclaimed in the "Medvedev Doctrine" of 2008. The initial intent to protect Russian citizens "abroad" later expanded to include the protection of ethnic Russians in Crimea, and then of Russian speakers in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, until in June 2014 Vladimir Putin postulated the concept of the "Russian World" (*"Russkiy*

[9] Opinion on "Whether draft federal law No. 462741-6 on amending the federal constitutional law of the Russian Federation on the procedure of admission to the Russian Federation and creation of a new subject within the Russian Federation is compatible with international law", Venice Commission, 98th Plenary Session, 21-22 March 2014, available from: http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD%282014%29004-e

Mir") – a supra-national continuum comprising of people outside the borders of Russia who are to be bound to it not only by legal and ethnic links, but cultural ones, too. Thus, Russia proclaimed its right to tie the affinity for the Russian culture writ large (Russian poetry, for example) of any category of people to their right to legal protection by the Russian state understood as Russian military presence.

In the military sphere, the exploitation of loopholes within the existing verification regime set by the OSCE Vienna Document of 2011 has proven to be particularly advantageous for Russia and difficult for NATO to counter effectively. Since 2014, Russia has regularly been using a lawfare justification based on those loopholes to defend its right of launching no-notice readiness checks ("snap exercises") involving tens of thousands of Russian troops. Such Russian military activities obviate the Vienna Document and run contrary to its spirit and the intent to increase transparency and reduce tensions in Europe. Paradoxically, this is made possible by the loophole contained in Provision 41, which stipulates that, "Notifiable military activities carried out without advance notice to the troops involved are exceptions to the requirement for prior notification to be made 42 days in advance."[10] In this case the Russian *modus operandi* involves having a major Russian news agency issue a communique on the very morning of the exercise stating that President Putin had called the Minister of Defence Sergei Shoygu in the early hours of that morning to order him to put the Russian troops on full combat alert – a simple but very powerful technique combining lawfare with information warfare. Russia has also been circumventing the requirement to invite observers to large exercises by reporting lower numbers than the observation threshold of 13,000 troops (the number it provides to the OSCE always miraculously revolves around 12,700) or by referring to Provision 58 that allows the participating states to not invite observers to notifiable military activities which are carried out without advance notice to the troops involved unless these notifiable activities have a duration of more than 72 hours. In that

[10] *Vienna Document 2011*, Provisions 41 and 58, pp. 21 and 26. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 22 December 2011, available from: https://www.osce.org/fsc/86597

case, when it comes to reporting those, Russia simply breaks down the larger exercises into separate smaller ones with shorter duration.

Russia has also long been exploiting international law through organisations, such as the UN and the OSCE, for a range of purposes, such as blocking adverse UN resolutions through its veto power; garnering international support for its actions, or portraying itself as a force of stability and a peacemaker in Ukraine and the Middle East. Russia also reportedly uses those structures for influence operations or for intelligence gathering, for example by having the Russian observers in the OSCE provide reconnaissance of the Ukrainian military's disposition in the Donbas. Other examples include the Russian attempts in 2014 to use the UN SC to sanction the opening of "humanitarian corridors" in the Donbas; the use of the cases of Kosovo and Libya as legal precedents for Russian actions; the sentencing of high-raking Ukrainian officials *in absentia* by Russian courts; and the multiple Russian allegations that the Ukrainian authorities have triggered a humanitarian catastrophe in the Donbas, in attempt to justify the overt deployment of Russian troops under the guise of "peacekeepers".

Russian lawfare: vulnerable areas and relevant responses

The areas that continue to be vulnerable to the effects of Russian Lawfare are primarily the territories in Ukraine under Russian occupation, such as Crimea and Donbas, but also the so-called 'frozen conflicts' in Transnistria, Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. They all contain multiple intertwined and often mutually exclusive historical narratives based on complex socio-cultural realities that provide fertile ground for Russia's presence and involvement under the quasi-legal pretext of stabilisation efforts.

Ukraine has also recognised the power of historical narratives as a counter-lawfare tool. According to a recent poll of Ukrainian public opinion, more than 70% of Ukrainians stated that Ukraine,

and not Russia is the rightful successor of Kievan Rus.[11] The Ukrainian state must capitalise on those social trends and leverage them to develop a coherent strategy targeting the domestic and international audiences and institutions, in order to counter the malicious exploitation of its history by Russia for the purposes of disinformation and lawfare-based expansionism.

Similar cultural claims have been used as pretexts by RUS to put pressure even on its traditional allies such as Belarus. The 2014 Russian military doctrine refers to it as "Belorussia", its Russian and Soviet imperial name, and the Russian military has been pushing to expand their presence in Belarus by requesting additional bases on its territory. The majority of the population in Belarus uses the Russian language for daily interactions and communication, and in the age of Russian hybrid warfare when culture is used to fabricate legal pretexts, the Belarusian leadership has recognised that very real threat, and is taking steps to improve its population's cultural awareness and language skills.

Unresolved border disputes with Russia also pose potential threats, as those can be exploited by Russia for infiltrating NATO territory, or for claiming that NATO troops are provocatively close to Russian territories. Russia has been using border negotiations as tools of influence against its neighbours, in particular Estonia, whose attempts to sign a border treaty with Russia extend over two decades. On 18 February 2014 the Russian Duma announced that it would ratify the bilateral treaty after negotiations lasting since 1994, a move came less than two weeks before the infiltration and occupation of Crimea by Russian forces, and was likely an attempt by Russia to secure its Western borders with NATO prior to launching its operation in Ukraine. As recently as the summer of 2018, the issue of the Russian-Estonia border has again been raised as Russia reneged on its commitment to ratify the treaty explaining it as a result of the "anti-Russian" attitudes of Estonia.

Russia, of course, does not enjoy free reign in the sphere of international law, and it can prove to be a double-edged sword

[11] "The dynamic of patriotic sentiment among Ukrainians: August 2018," ["Dinamika patriotichnyh nastroiv ukrainciv: serpen' 2018"] Rejting, August 21, 2018, http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dinamika_patrioticheskih_nastroeniy_ukraincev_avgust_2018.html

when the targets of Russian lawfare, in particular the Baltic states and Ukraine, decide to use it proactively to defend themselves with legal arguments of their own. The recent announcement by the Ministers of Justice of both Estonia and Latvia that they are exploring the legal options to demand compensations from Russia as the legal successor of the USSR for the Soviet occupation damages comes as a timely example of how this internationally recognised Russian legal status can also be leveraged for counterclaims by its affected neighbours.[12]

Apart from history and culture, Russian lawfare has also integrated and used skillfully the domain of science, in particular geology, chemistry and oceanography, in the area of the Arctic and the High North. The 2014 Russian military doctrine clearly identifies "securing the Russian national interests in the Arctic" as one of the main tasks of the Russian Armed Forces in peacetime. After ratifying the International Convention of the Law of the Sea in 1997, Russia began to exploit proactively the loophole provided by Article 76 to push for the expansion of the Russia exclusive economic zone from 200 to 350 nautical miles based on the claim that the Lomonosov Ridge that stretches for 1,800 km under the Arctic Ocean is a natural extension of Russia's continental shelf. The legal and scientific debates over the geological definition and chemical composition of that shelf threaten to have huge ramifications, as if the Russian claim ultimately succeeds, it would result in the accession of an area of more than 1.2 million square kilometres with its vast hydrocarbon deposits to Russian Arctic sovereignty.[13] While waiting for the legal case to be adjudicated by the UN Russia has been gradually expanding its military presence in the Arctic in a clear attempt to combine legal with lethal arguments in its ongoing quest to dominate this strategic region of the world as the effects of global warming open its routes for global navigation.

[12] "The Estonian and Latvian Ministers of Justice underscore the importance of obtaining the com-pensation for Soviet occupation from Russia," ["Minjusty Estonii i Latvii podcherknuli vazhnost' vzyskanija s Rossii usherba za sovetskuju okkupaciju,"] Err.ee, August 21, 2018, https://rus.err.ee/855366/minjusty-jestonii-i-latvii-podcherknuli-vazhnost-vzyskanija-s-rossii-uwerba-za-sovetskuju-okkupaciju

[13] Eric Hannes, "Russia's Arctic Ambitions: Russia is making moves to expand in the Arctic, and it could soon have the force of international law behind it", *US News and World Report*, 14 March 2017, from: https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2017-03-14/russia-is-making-a-land-and-resource-grab-in-the-arctic

The utility of tracking Russian lawfare

Lawfare provides numerous advantages to Russia, as so far it has proven to be less recognizable than its counterparts in the information and cyber domains, it successfully exploits the loopholes of international legal regimes, it uses diplomatic negotiations as a delay tactic, and it is capable of creating dissent and confusion among allies by exploiting legal ambiguities.

On the other hand, observing the patterns of Russia's weaponisation of the law as an element of its comprehensive hybrid strategy against target-nations, such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, can help NATO identify early signs of similar actions aimed against other countries in its neighborhood, in particular its Baltic member-states. The primary utility of tracking and analysing Russian legal developments is that lawfare moves, by default, cannot remain completely secret. They are meant first and foremost to justify Russia's actions on the international arena, and therefore, they must be employed overtly – either as a Russian legal claim, as a new law promulgated by the Russian Parliament, as a decree issued by the Russian presidency, or as troop deployment request approved by the Russian Senate.

While such inevitable overtness may appear paradoxical for a society, such as the Russian one, where secrecy and conspiracies have traditionally substituted public policy-making, the fact is that when it comes to the 'legal preparation of the battlespace', secret laws cannot serve the Russian leadership in defending their aggressive moves internationally, or in mobilising domestic support. In addition, since the preparation of those highly creative legal interpretations and pushing draft bills through the Russian legislation requires certain technological time and procedural efforts, if identified sufficiently early, the whole process can serve as an advance warning indicating the direction of the future political or military steps to be made by the Russian leadership, both domestically and internationally. To achieve this, the Western analytical community would have to clearly recognise lawfare as a domain of Russian hybrid warfare, and track and analyse Russian legal developments on a continuous basis. The expansion of the original DIME model, comprising the Diplomatic-Information-

Military-Economic elements of national power, to DIMEFIL by adding Financial, Intelligence and Legal, is definitely a step in the right direction, but "L" also has to be added to the PMESII analytical framework that describes the effects of the comprehensive preparation of the environment/battlefield through DIMEFIL actions.

Defending against Russian lawfare, of course, is not solely the task of analysts, as a comprehensive strategy to counter its tools and impact can only be elaborated and applied successfully by the coordinated efforts of political and military leaders, legal and academic experts, and the institutions they represent across borders and multiple domains. This would require constant and firm emphasis to be placed on upholding and strengthening the peremptory norms of international law at all levels – from the UN level through the international courts system to the various universities' law departments. The political leadership and the media organisations of the NATO and partner-nations must constantly seek to expose proactively (hand in hand with the experts in countering Russian information warfare) the ulterior motives and aggressive purposes behind Russia's 'peacemaking' campaigns, vehemently oppose Russia's claim to its own 'responsibility to protect' in its self-perceived sphere of interests, incessantly seek opportunities to close existing loopholes in international agreements exploited by Russia, and as a rule of thumb always approach negotiations with Russia as a multi-dimensional chess game that requires constant awareness that Russia's moves involve many steps ahead across all domains.

Conclusion

The continuous evolution of Russian lawfare is a proof to Russia's legal creativity in bending and reinterpreting international law in order to achieve its strategic objectives. While Russia has publicly been demonstrating ostentatious respect of international law, it has undoubtedly espoused a revisionist view of international law based on the concept of Great Powers' spheres of influence and a self-proclaimed right of intervention that challenge the main

tenets of the security arrangements in Europe and beyond. If its lawfare activities continue unchecked, Russia will be emboldened to continue applying those methods to justify its expansionist and interventionist policies in all areas that it regards as legitimate spheres of interest. Quite inevitably, other great and regional powers have already followed suit and are resorting to lawfare tools to lay claims on contested areas by (China), or justify their presence in volatile regions (Iran). The Middle East, Africa and Asia, of course, are particularly vulnerable to the application of lawfare, given the disputed, even arbitrary nature of many state borders there, but some NATO members are also not immune, especially those with sizeable Russian-speaking populations, or unresolved border disputes with Russia. Russia's use of lawfare as a primary domain of its comprehensive hybrid warfare strategy poses structural challenges to the stability of the international security system and the foundations of the international legal order as a whole, and therefore a cohesive Western response is needed to successfully counter it.

The Pros and Cons of a Russian Push into the Baltics. As Seen from Moscow

Pavel Felgenhauer

Russian military officials and defence analysts imply Russian forces could easily occupy the Baltic states, but do not have any strategic or poetical need or desire to do it. In June 2016 an unnamed source in the Russian General Staff (GS) commented on an analytical paper published by RAND Corporation about the Russian military being able to invade and occupy the Baltic region in 60 hours. The source called the paper "nonsense" and implied the lack of strategic objective in going in to occupy or reoccupy the region like in Soviet times, while at the same time declaring: "If we go ('theoretically'), we may do it in 1 hour. To say we [Russian military] need 60 h to take the Baltic region is an insult."[1] Two years later, the message coming from Moscow is essentially the same: the so called "Russian threat" is imaginary, Moscow is not interested in the Baltics strategically, but if need be, "if Russia is provoked" and goes into action and the Baltic region turns into a theatre of war, the local forces of Baltic states and Poland together with additional allied reinforcements, including the 4 recently deployed NATO multinational reinforced battalions or 'battlegroups', will be insufficient to deter or stop a determined Russian assault.[2;3]

[1] Viktor Baranec. "General Staff offended by the 60-hour Baltics takeover prognosis," ["V Genshtabe obidelis'na prognoz zahvata Pribaltiki za 60 chasov,"] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, June 10, 2016, https://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26540/3557499/

[2] Maksim Kislyakov. "NATO worried about the Baltics – nothing to protect it with," ["NATO perezhivaet za Pribaltiku: nechem zashitit',"] *MKRU*, June 25, 2018, https://www.mk.ru/print/article/1971167/

[3] Anna Lushnikova. "Expert comments on Esonian commander's statement about Russian army," ["Ekspert prokommentiroval slova estonskogo voenachalnika o rossijskoj armii,"] RT, July 10, 2018, https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/535323-estoniya-armiya-pribaltika-rossiya

Russian intensions are proclaimed to be benign. The constant Baltic whining about an upcoming Russian invasion is proclaimed to be a malicious 'provocation' intent on soliciting more foreign aid from Brussels and Washington. But what are the Russian capabilities? Are they as overwhelming as apparently presumed by Moscow, to make a westward push a walkover?

The buildup of Russian military capabilities

A massive programme of rearming and reinvigorating the Russian military began after the short war with Georgia in August 2008. The Russian foray deep into Georgia was seemingly victorious, but was considered ill-organised and falling short of main operational and strategic objectives in Moscow. A resounding defeat of the Georgian military in battle with the capture of a large number of POWs; a resulting speedy regime change in Tbilisi and a denunciation of any future plans of Georgian NATO membership – these objectives were not achieved. In August 2008, the Russian military demonstrated serious deficiencies in battle-readiness, unit cohesion and lack of essential modern weaponry, intelligence-gathering and communication equipment. After the Georgian war, staggering amounts of money were earmarked to rearm, reequip and retrain all branches and services: up to USD 1 trillion from 2010 till 2020 if counted at the 2008 exchange rate. In 2014, the price of export oil collapsed, and with it the ruble devaluated more than two times against the dollar. The Russian federal budget went into deficit from 2014 till 2018, but military modernisation and rearmament continued despite Western sanctions and budgetary deficits. The Russian defence and national security budget is highly secretive: nothing is known officially about the actual number of weapons procured or the true price per item paid by the budget. Figures that are published from time to time are often misleading or contradictory.

Apparently, only the long-running turf war between fractions of President Vladimir Putin entourage about defence spending – the so called liberal-economic officials and advisers and the military and military-industrial complex and national security elites – has

sometimes helped disclose some realistic spending estimates of Russia's 10-year military modernisation drive. In October 2017, finance minister Anton Syluanov declared at a meeting in the State Duma: "I fully understand – in the present situation we cannot cut defence spending. We spend about 1/3 of the budget on defence and security and that's a large share." Syluanov continued: "These expenditures are needed because we are a nuclear power and are forced to repel all those foreign political attacks. Strong and modernised armed forces make Russia strong."[4] In 2017, 1/3 of the federal budget was over 6% of GDP. That is indeed a lot. Though Syluanov was apparently referring to the joint defence & national security budget including spending not only on the military per se, but also on different Russian intelligence and security services, it is still a lot. Russian defence spending together with procurement could estimate at 4-5% of GDP in 2016-2017. That's more in GDP terms than any NATO nation including the US. President Donald Trump has been demanding European allies spend 2% and possibly up to 4% of GDP on defence in the future. Putin has apparently already done better.

The vast increase in defence spending allowed to procure new warships, submarines, ballistic missiles, fighter and bomber jets, new precision guided weapons and so on. The Russian army's fighting power is being dramatically expanded with modernised armour, artillery and missiles. From 2012 to 2017, the Russian army has procured 25,000 pieces of armour and military vehicles and over 4,000 pieces of artillery and missile launchers. According to the deputy defence minister (state secretary) Dmitry Bulgakov, by 2017 Russia had more tanks, armoured combat vehicles, and multiple rocket launch systems (MRLS) than any other military in the world – more than the U.S. or China.[5] Apparently Russia has more battle-ready tanks than all NATO allied armies together.[6]

[4] "One-third of the RF budget goes to defence and security – Syluanov," ["Tret' bjudzheta RF uhodit na oboronu i bezopasnost' – Syluanov,"] *Interfax*, October 17, 2017, http://www.interfax-russia.ru/print.asp?id=878693&type=view

[5] "Russia has become a world leader in the amount of tanks," ["Rossija stala mirovym liderom po kolichestvu tankov," *Interfax-AVN*, November 8, 2017, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=0&nid=466145]

[6] "Russia has twice the amount of tanks of the USA," ["U Rossii tankov v dva raza bol'she, chem u SShA,"] *Komsomolskaya Pravda,* November 8, 2017, https://www.kompravda.eu/daily/26755.4/3784624/?google_editors_picks=true

Most NATO nations have drastically cut the number of tanks in service after the end of the Cold War, as a major ground war in Europe seemed impossible. Russia was also in the process of utilising the vast stockpile of Soviet-vintage armour. But by 2015 it was decided to modernise at least 6,000 pieces of armour out of this stockpile.[7] In 2016, Uralvagonzavod in Nizhniy Tagil – Russia's only remaining tank-producing factory – began producing the so called 2016 version of the T-72B3 – a modification of the vintage Soviet T-72B tank. In 2017, and in 2018 hundreds of T-72B3 were being deployed to elite frontline armoured units. The T-72B3 has a new and more powerful computer-controlled diesel engine, reinforced armour capabilities including rear and sides, a computerised night & day fire-control system using French-designed night vision equipment, and an improved 125mm gun. The cost of the T-72B3 modification is about USD 1.2 million. Uralvagonzavod is planning to begin producing a modernised T-80BV based on the Soviet vintage T-80, a modernised T-90M Proriv-3 and refurnished BMP-1 armoured vehicles. The T-80BV modification shall follow the T-72B3 outline.[8]

Deputy prime minister Yuri Borisov in charge of defence industry (till May 2018 – deputy defence minister in charge of armaments) announced: The "new" T-72B3 and other modernised armour is so good (better than Western tanks and armour) and relatively cheap, Russia will not begin the mass production of the futuristic T-14 "Armata" tank or the 'Bumerang" armoured vehicle. The fancy Armata is deemed too expensive and will be apparently reserved only for demonstration at parades on the Red Square.[9] Previously Borisov announced Russia will refrain from mass-producing and procuring its much touted new "stealth" Su-57 jet fighter – quoting the same reason as with the T-72B3 – the Su-57 is

[7] "RF instead of utilisation has begun modernising Soviet armoured vehicles," ["RF vmesto utilizacii nachala modernizirovat' sovetskuju bronetehniku,"] *Interfax*, September 7, 2017, http://www.interfax-russia.ru/print.asp?id=867164&type=view

[8] "Russian army to receive modernised tanks T-90M "Proryv-3", and T-80BV," ["Rossijskaja armija v etom godu poluchit modernizirovannye tanki T-90M "Proryv-3" i T-80BV,"] *Interfax AVN*, March 6, 2018, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=0&nid=475430

[9] "Current armour equipment of the Russian army is performing very well, no need to switch to the new generation – Borisov," ["Stojashhaja na vooruzhenii rossijskoj armii bronetehnika otlichno sebja projavljaet, nuzhdy v perehode na novoe pokolenie net – Borisov,"] *Interfax AVN*, July 30, 2018, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=1&nid=487072

good, but too expensive, and the existing Su-35 fighter jet is good enough to take on any enemy.[10]

The decision to postpone, possibly indefinitely, the mass procurement of new generation weapon systems and concentrate on the deployment of cheaper, possibly more reliable modernised weapons instead could indeed be due to the need to economise, but also because of technological problems caused by sanctions. The production of newest Russian weapons and military equipment often requires the import of key components, materials, industrial equipment and software that are now not reaching Russia because of sanctions. In any case, the result is that frontline units are getting rearmed at much swifter pace with modernised equipment and the number of permanent readiness units is also rising at similar fastened pace.

In September 2016, after the conclusion of the major strategic Kavkaz-2016 military exercises, First Deputy Defence Minister and Chief of General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov announced plans to rapidly and massively increase the number of front-line battle-ready units: from 66 battalion tactical groups (BTG) in September 2016 in the army, the marine corps and the air force, to 125 BTGs during 2018. A Russian BTG is a ready-for-action reinforced mechanised battalion with additional armour (tanks), heavy guns, other artillery and MRLS, anti-aircraft capabilities, sapper or pioneer detachments and other auxiliaries that may be added in accordance with possible mission. A BTG can be from 600 to 900 men strong. According to Gerasimov, in 2016 each "brigade or regiment" formed one permanent-ready BTG. In 2018 each must have two BTGs.[11] In addition, in December 2017, some 200 units of the Russian military (some of them smaller than a battalion) from the army, marines, *VDV* and so on, were awarded the honorary title of "Storm Troops" (*Udarnye*) for excellence in battle readiness in 2017.[12]

[10] "Vice-premier Borisov sees no sense in forcing mass production of Su-57," ["Vice-prem'er Borisov ne vidit smysla forsirovat' massovoe proizvodstvo Su-57,"] *Interfax AVN*, July 02, 2018, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=0&nid=485080

[11] Aleksandr Sharkovskiy, "General Staff is concentrating main army powers at the South-West of the country," ["Genshtab sosredotachivaet glavnye sily armii na jugo-zapade strany,"] September 15, 2016, http://www.ng.ru/armies/2016-09-15/2_genshtab.html

[12] "Over 200 Russian army units named "storm troops"," ["Bolee 200 podrazdelenij rossijskoj armii priznany "udarnymi","] *Interfax AVN*, December 01, 2017, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=1&nid=468033

The doubling of permanent-ready units and their rapid rearmament are giving Russia the capability to fight a major ground war at short notice. At the same, time the Russian military has been testing and expanding its capabilities in strategic logistics to rapidly mobilise, move and supply large field troop contingents. The exact number of Russian personnel deployed in exercises is not always reported fully or accurately. But in 2016, the Defence Minister Sergey Shoygu announced: over 220,000 took part in Kavkaz-2016 – 125,000 military personnel and 97,000 defence ministry contractors.[13] Fielding and supplying such a massive force ready for action is an outstanding achievement.

Strategic mobility and logistics have been a key part of the present Russian military modernisation. In numerous large-scale exercises like Kavkaz-2016, tens and hundreds of thousands of solders with armour and other heavy weapons, together with war jets and warships have been moved from one potential theatre of war to another, testing the capability to swiftly concentrate and deploy for action large numbers of battle-ready troops and weapon systems. Previously the Russian military depended almost exclusively on the national railroad system as a means of strategic mobility of tank and mechanised units. This, among other things, severely limited the weight of Russian tanks (less than 50 tons). Russia is the only nation in the world that has a special branch of the military – the 28.500 strong Railway Troops – capable of building and maintaining railroads in peacetime and in war, including all-out nuclear global war. But times are changing: today, to increase mobility, limit the wear on tank tracks, and conserve fuel and road surfaces, the Russian army began creating special units of heavy tank transporters.[14]

According to the Ground Forces Commander-in-Chief Colonel-General Oleg Salyukov, by 2021, Russia will fully equip and deploy

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[13] "Shoygu outlines preliminary results of the "Kavkaz-2016" military excersise," ["Shoygu podvel predvaritel'nye itogi uchenij "Kavkaz-2016","] Interfax, September 19, 2016, http://www.interfax.ru/russia/528956

[14] Aleksej Ramm, Dmitrij Litovkin, Evgenij Andreev. "Tanks will be transported on "bicycles"," ["Tanki povezut na «velosipedah»,"] *Izvestiya*, June 21, 2017, https://iz.ru/608113/aleksei-ramm-dmitrii-litovkin/tankisty-peresiadut-na-tiazhelye-velosipedy

battle-ready army groupings on all strategic directions ready to "fight in conventional or nonconventional (WMD) conflicts".[15]

Russian intentions in Central Europe and the Baltic region

The Russian military command has good reasons to believe it has built up and is in the process of completing an overwhelming military superiority position on the eastern flank of NATO. An offensive by such an overwhelming force could indeed result in a virtual walkover "in one hour". NATO has deployed 4 reinforced BTGs in Poland and the Baltics and some other additional troops, but the Russian GS has much more, possibly, even 10 times more – it could swiftly deploy at least 40-50 BTGs to forward positions. The July 2018 NATO summit has approved the "30+30+30+30" plan to achieve the capability to move and deploy 30 combat (mostly European) allied BTG, 30 air force squadrons, 30 warships in 30 days to the east of Europe, primarily to Poland and the Baltic states, to deter or in the worst case to combat a massive force Russia may send into the area with hostile intent. [16] But Russian GS can move many more BTGs out of a battle-ready pool of 125 BTGs in a period significantly shorter than 30 days. Of course, the 30 or more NATO air force squadrons may arrive to the theatre of war earlier than in 30 days. The GS may believe they can muster substantial ground force superiority on the western front, but the presumed Western air superiority is a serious problem and much effort and money is being invested into building up a multilayer air/missile defence system.

A possible military confrontation on NATO's eastern flank could escalate into a limited or unlimited nuclear exchange that no one

[15] "RF army units to become self-sufficient in strategic and operational directions by 2021 – Ground Forces Commander-in-Chief," ["Gruppirovki armii RF k 2021 godu budut samodostatochny na strategicheskih i operacionnyh napravlenijah – glavkom Suhoputnyh vojsk,"] *Interfax AVN*, September 29, 2017, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=1&nid=463018

[16] "The security of the Black Sea region to be strengthened by the "combat ready" initiative and military mobility increase – Stoltenberg," ["Bezopasnost' Chernomorskogo regiona budet usilena za schet "iniciativy boegotovnosti" i uluchshenija voennoj mobil'nosti – Stoltenberg,"] *Interfax AVN*, July 11, 2018, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=1&nid=485732

wants. But on March 1, during his annual address to the parliament, Putin unveiled an array of nuclear superweapons, claiming Russia has secretly overcome the mighty U.S. by manoeuvring itself into a dominant strategic military position.[17] In a follow up background defence ministry briefing on March 3, 2018 a top Defence Ministry official scolded the West and the U.S. for being apparently too dumb to understand that Russia has already won the arms race and there is little choice left, but to follow Putin's public offer to "sit down and negotiate" an orderly surrender. Hundreds of different U.S. land and sea based MD interceptors (GBI, SM-3, THAAD) "have been rendered totally useless and have no military significance. Good to shoot at sparrows at best, because they cannot defend against the new Russian weapons," insist the Russian military. U.S. naval ships and newly deployed forces in the Baltics and Poland are defenceless and open to attack: "Against new Russian weapons, the U.S. MD is like a slingshot against a MIG fighter."[18]

In any case, while the Russian nuclear deterrent is intact, it could be reasonably assumed the U.S., Britain and France will not use their nuclear weapons first as long as Russia does not, too, while a possible conventional conflict on the eastern flank of NATO remains localised on the outskirts of Europe, were Russia can establish and possibly maintain a conventional superiority. Moscow plans to begin deploying a national MD system potentially covering all of its territory using the S-500 air defence by 2020.[19] While the U.S. MD is considered nullified by Putin's superweapons and with Russia deploying a national MD no one else has (possible exception – Israel), it is even more likely a military conflict on the eastern flank of NATO could stay localised.

Still, such a conflict carries an unpredictable risk of an uncontrolled escalation, and at present there seems to be no real

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[17] "President's Message to the Federal Assembly," ["Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniju,"] *The President of Russia*, March 1, 2018, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957

[18] "Russia calls the West to realise that the new weapons are already in the troops, and start negotiations," ["V Rossii prizvali Zapad osoznat', chto novoe oruzhie uzhe nahoditsja v vojskah, i pristupit' k peregovoram,"] *Interfax AVN*, March 3, 2018, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=1&nid=475216

[19] "Russian army to obtain three unit sets of C-400 in 2018," ["Rossiyskaja armija v 2018 godu poluchit tri polkovyh komplekta C-400,"] *Interfaks AVN*, April 8, 2018, http://www.militarynews.ru/story.asp?rid=1&nid=478304

intent to deliberately go into combat with no good reason despite presumed military superiority. Russian officials and commentators may be right: Moscow does not want to invade the Baltics or Poland, at least without a really serious justification from the Russian point of view. Since 2014, Moscow has been deeply involved in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis. In 2015, the Russian military, primarily the air force or VKS (*Vozdushno-Kosmicheskiye Sily*), actively intervened in the Syrian civil war. Some 90% of VKS pilots and many top army military commanders have been deployed on tours in Syria. The Baltic region seems to have faded out as a top priority in the works of the Russian state-run TV propaganda machine.

Of course, intentions may change overnight, especially if the capabilities are already in place. An unwarranted incident like a collision of aircraft over the Baltic Sea could escalate out of control. In 2016, the Finnish president Sauli Niinistö called on all military aircraft of all nations (Russia and NATO in particular) to fly in the Baltic Sea region with transponders – devices that automatically transmit the identity of an aircraft, its position and altitude in response to a radio-frequency interrogation – switched on, as a confidence-building measure "to avoid dangerous accidents." During a visit to Finland Putin agreed with Niinistö and promised to order Russian diplomats to negotiate confidence-building measures including the use of transponders.[20] Of course, this initiative was only a political gesture. Russian VKS jets do not have and never have had any transponders, therefore there is nothing to switch on. Only some transport and passenger VKS jets have installed transponders and their crews know some English to parley with civilian air traffic controllers. Russian combat air crews do not know English and are not trained to use transponders or parley with civilian air traffic controllers or with foreign jet crews.[21]

Instead of civilian transponders, military jets have friend or foe identification devices (IFF). Modern U.S. IFF devices may have

[20] "Press statements and answers to the journalists' questions on the results of the Russian-Finnish talks," ["Zayavleniya dlya pressi I otvety na voprosy zhurnalisov po itogam rossijsko-finlyandskih peregovorov,"] *Kremlin*, July 1, 2016, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52312

[21] Yuriy Karash. "Russian pilots forced to fly without transponders," ["Rossiyskie letchiki vynuzhdeny letat'bez transpoderov,"] *Vzglyad*, March 29, 2016, https://vz.ru/society/2016/3/29/802114.html

cryptographically secured transponder capabilities to disclose their identity, flight info and GPS position, but the commonly used Russian "Patrol" digitally coded IFF, developed in the late 1970s, does not have that feature. U.S. jets could possibly "switch on" transponders, but the Pentagon adamantly refused to do so on recon missions over the Baltic Sea in the sight of Russia, while Russian jets could not do that anyway: it would require years and billions to develop and install Russian-made new generation IFF devices that could also act as transponders – an expenditure the military command would see as senseless. The Niinistö initiative ended in a mutually agreed deadlock.

But the threat of incidents did not disappear and the problem of the lack of confidence is only getting worse. Any escalation of regional tension may result in preventive troop and armament movements: say, NATO allies may decide at a given point fully or partially execute the "30+30+30+30" plan, bringing additional reinforcements to the Baltic region to stabilise the situation. Since the Russian military have a clear time advantage and can introduce massive reinforcements to the region much faster than 30 days, it is essential that the NATO reinforcement effort must begin as early as possible to build up a force capability to deter any rash Russian moves. But for the same reason it does not make much military or strategic sense for Russia to sit on its thumbs and wait for the West to deploy fully. It would be the same strategic folly as that of Saddam Hussein in the fall of 1990, as he and his forces sat and waited in Kuwait, as a massive logistic operation turned an initially light opposing force incapable of a serious fight into an unbeatable allied army and Desert Shield into Desert Storm. Had Saddam Hussein struck with all his might from Kuwait south into the main Saudi oil fields in 1990, he could have changed the entire strategic balance of the conflict.

The Russian military see Central Europe and the Baltic states as a forward staging area and an important battleground, though not the only one in the emerging global standoff. The execution of "30+30+30+30" or any other serious reinforcement of this area could turn it into a fortress out of which NATO (US) air forces and long-range precision weapons could strike deep into Russia at its most valuable potential targets. Seriously reinforced

Baltic defences would leave the Kaliningrad enclave surrounded and vulnerable – at the mercy of the enemy. Any Russian counteroffensive attempt, when the eastern flank of NATO is already reinforced, could be futile and may require the use of tactical nukes to have any chance of success, which would open the door for a nuclear all-out exchange and be a total strategic disaster. It would seem that an early preventive move into the Baltic region could be seen as the only reasonable way to abort a serious hardening of the eastern NATO flank defences.

Traditional Russian propaganda has always implied that Moscow is benign and never aggressive. If Russian forces ever make an offensive move, it is always preventive and defensive in nature or a natural response to a foreign 'provocation'. In 1939, Russian (Soviet) forces moved into the Baltic republics officially essentially defensively – to prevent the Germans from going in and turning the Baltics into a base of operations against the USSR. It is possible the same or a similar reason may be used once again.

Evolution of the Belarusian Foreign and Security Policy: from Isolation to a Diplomatic Hub

Dzianis Melyantsou

During the recent years, Belarus has significantly changed its foreign policy approaches and has adapted its security and defence policy to new challenges. The country is gradually transforming itself from "the last Europe's dictatorship" into "a hub for regional diplomacy", according to OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger.[1]

In general, Belarus's foreign and security policy can be characterised by the following trends:

1) multi-vector relations – Belarus gradually normalises its relations with the West and seeks more independence from Russia. Minsk also develops deeper contacts with China in various spheres;
2) "Situational neutrality" and facilitation of the conflict resolution in Ukraine – Belarus tends to pursue foreign policy and security according to its own interests, remaining, nevertheless, in the defence union with Russia;
3) diversification of exports – Belarus adopted the "Three thirds" state programme aimed at exporting equal shares of goods to the European Union, Russia, and the rest of the world;
4) building of the defence system based on its own needs and capacities;
5) strengthening the image of the country as a peacemaker and a donor of stability.

[1] "Speech by Secretary General at the Minsk Dialogue Forum," *OSCE*, May 24, 2017, https://www.osce.org/secretary-general/385224

There are a number of reasons for such transformation, both external and domestic.

Firstly, more assertive behaviour of Russia and the case of Ukraine dictate the need to avoid orientation in just one foreign policy direction and towards a single trade partner. Moscow on its side facilitates alienation by decreasing subsidies for Belarusian economy, preserving trade barriers and refraining from providing Minsk with new sophisticated arms for purposes of collective defence.

Secondly, Belarus chose "situational neutrality" in the conflict between Russia and the West as taking any side in this conflict could have undermined the country's sovereignty and would have ruined the carefully built multi-vector foreign policy. Moreover, such a choice could have been fatal for Belarus's domestic stability.

Thirdly, the EU and U.S. themselves have changed their attitudes towards Minsk after the Ukrainian crisis and more than a decade of ineffective sanctions policy. Today, security and stability have replaced democracy promotion as the number one priority for the West. Thus Belarus, demonstrating its independent foreign and security policy and willingness to help with solving the crisis in Ukraine, became interesting for Western leaders.

Fourthly, Belarusian domestic public opinion has undergone significant transformation. Now, according to sociological surveys, there is a growing support of completely independent and non-aligned Belarus, and stronger pro-European attitudes among younger generation. Belarusian authorities, populist by their nature, cannot ignore these changes.

And fifthly, Belarusian political and economic elites have also been evolving. They are no longer conservative former Communist Party leaders or Komsomol activists, as they used to be in mid 1990s, but many of them (especially of the middle level) are young and patriotic men and women with good education and liberal views. They are more tolerant towards political opponents and open for communication and cooperation with the West.

Belarus–Russia

Russia remains Belarus's main strategic partner and the closest military ally. But after the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas it has become an increasingly uncomfortable and even a toxic partner for official Minsk. Moscow's specific understanding of the alliance, unequal integration conditions, permanent trade disputes as well as decreasing oil and gas subsidies motivate Belarusian authorities to be more critical towards eastward integration and to seek emancipation from Russia.

The political side of disputes between the two countries is connected, first of all, to the position Belarus took after the annexation of Crimea. Being interested in keeping Ukraine as an important trade partner, Minsk openly criticised Russia's actions in Ukraine and offered itself as a platform for peace negotiations. Such policy of "situation neutrality" had positive impact on Belarus's international image, but Lukashenka's actions against Russian foreign policy line caused Kremlin distrust and suspicion, leading to the deterioration of Belarus-Russia relations.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the foundation of relations between Minsk and Moscow could be described as an exchange of Belarus's geopolitical loyalty (participation in all Russia led integration projects and military alignment) for economic and foreign policy support from Russia. After the strengthening of Belarus's intention to pursue more neutral and multi-vector policy, its negotiating positions vis-a-vis Kremlin were weakened, as the main commodity Minsk had been trading with Moscow started to erode.

Belarus remains to be critically dependent on Russia's supplies of oil and natural gas, and lowered oil prices in international market lead to significant drop of the budget revenues as exports of refined oil products is one of the main sources of income for Belarus.

Belarusian authorities set the goal to break the one-way dependence on Russia in trade and to diversify its export. The main reason for that is the long experience of Russia's use of trade as a political leverage to influence Belarus. In the first half of 2018, the diversification strategy started to bear fruit. For the first fife

months of the year, the share of Belarusian export to Russia has dropped to 39.3% (compared to 44.9% in January-May 2017), and the share of export to the EU has increased to 32.8% (26.2% in January-May 2017).[2]

Belarus–EU

Minsk keeps seeking gradual normalisation of relations with the West, trying to take maximum advantage of the transformation of the EU's approaches to Eastern Europe, as well as its new role as a facilitator in resolving the conflict in Ukraine.

But nevertheless, there are no significant achievements in the recent couple of years that could bring bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. One of the mechanisms for overcoming this stagnation, according to official Minsk, could be the launch of the 'Minsk Process' for the de-escalation of international tension (also known as Helsinki-2). At the same time, the EU-Belarus cooperation agenda is expanding and getting more profound. New opportunities for trade and investment have opened up.

Belarus has also clearly showed its good will to improve relations with the West. Minsk has made an unprecedented step in the history of Belarusian diplomacy: entry visas were abolished for nationals of 80 countries, including the EU, on condition that foreigners enter the country by air through the Minsk National Airport and stay for up to 30 days.

Another important event took place during the Eastern Partnership summit in November 2017: as Lukashenka was invited to attend for the first time. It was a symbolic, yet an indicative gesture. Before, invitations had been sent to the country in general, because the Belarusian leadership was subject to personal sanctions imposed by the EU. Brussels explained that the international image of Belarus had changed and Minsk should be "encouraged" for its position on the conflict in Ukraine.

[2] "Data on foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus with selected countries in January," *Belstat,* May 2018, http://www.belstat.gov.by/en/ofitsialnaya-statistika/macroeconomy-and-environment/vneshnyaya-torgovlya_2/operativnye-dannye_5/data-on-foreign-trade-of-the-republic-of-belarus-with-selected-countries/

Lukashenka declined the invitation, saying that his schedule was tight and that Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makei was better prepared for the summit.

Belarus persistently worked on a transformation of the bilateral agenda towards a more pragmatic and depoliticised approach that has led to an increase in the number of projects of interest to both parties (border and environmental protection, infrastructure, transport, etc.). The European Investment Bank received its first mandate to work with Belarus, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development launched a new country programme.

Sanitary and phytosanitary standards topped the agenda of the bilateral trade relations. Belarus is not happy about the protracted talks and vagueness of the requirements regarding the EU standards. In turn, European officials believe that the problem is in the standards of the Eurasian Economic Union, which differ from European ones. In a more general sense, Minsk would like to have guaranteed access to the European market provided that all requirements are met and standards are adopted, whereas the EU wants the standards to be met first, and then, probably, the access will be granted. The EU also wants a different treatment towards itself: opened market without additional conditions that, naturally, irritates Minsk.

In 2017, the trade turnover with the European Union increased by 30.3% to USD 14,5 billion (23.0% of Belarus' total turnover). Exports were up 39.8% to USD 7.9 billion, and imports increased by 20.6% (6.6 billion). The surplus totalled USD 1.2 billion.[3] Germany, Great Britain, Poland, the Netherlands and Lithuania were Belarus' leading trade partners in the Union.

Despite the action-packed project schedule in 2017 and 2018, Minsk failed to achieve progress on the landmark agreements regarding visa facilitation and partnership priorities. Belarus also failed to persuade the EU to start negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA).

According to Belarusian diplomats, the Minsk-Brussels talks on the partnership priorities are nearing completion. The agreement is meant to provide a roadmap for 2018–2020 in four areas:

[3] "Foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus," *Belstat,* http://www.belstat.gov.by/en/ofitsialnaya-statistika/macroeconomy-and-environment/vneshnyaya-torgovlya_2/

strengthening of the public administration system; economic development and market opportunities; transport communications, energy, environment and climate; and people-to-people contacts.

Belarus and the EU have defined all issues on the agenda, but no decisions have been made yet. For instance, partnership priorities cannot be agreed on due to Lithuania's tough position on the Belarusian nuclear power plant, and the visa talks have stalled, among other things, because the parties cannot reach a consensus on a suspension of this agreement in case the EU resumes sanctions. Since these obstacles are political, one should not expect a rapid progress in the negotiations.

Brussels links the signing of the PCA with progress in the field of human rights and implementation of reforms in Belarus. Belarusian officials, on their side, insist on the priority of the economic component.

Formalised instruments of interaction with the EU remain discriminatory towards Belarus. In October 2017 Kyiv hosted the sixth session of Eastern Partnership Parliamentary Assembly (Euronest) to which only representatives of the Belarusian opposition were invited. The official delegation of Belarus to Euronest does not attend the Assembly because the EU considers the parliamentary elections in Belarus undemocratic, although some MEPs and members of parliaments of various EU member states see no obstacles to visit Minsk and have official meetings with their Belarusian colleagues.

Nevertheless, in the absence of formal contractual relations between Minsk and Brussels, the parties has developed a bilateral format for permanent communication – the Belarus-EU Coordination Group, which gathers every six months to summarise achievements in various spheres and to set goals for the next period.

Belarus-China

China remains to be the third (after Russia and the EU) pillar of Belarus's foreign policy. The main reason to develop closer cooperation with Beijing is to avoid the situation of choice and manoeuvring between just two geopolitical centres – Russia and

the West. An additional factor is that China does no attempt to influence the Belarusian political field and sets no political preconditions for cooperation.

In 2017, two-way trade grew by almost 20% (USD 3.1 billion); however, a strong imbalance is observed in the structure of the Belarus-China trade in favour of import (88.3% of the total turnover). In contrast to imports from China, which increased by 28.8%, Belarusian exports showed a decrease of almost 15%. Following the results of the year, the year-over-year deficit of trade in favour of China went up by nearly 30% (minus USD 2.381 billion)[4].

The dynamics shown by Chinese investment in 2017 were not surprising; it totalled USD 275.5 million (just a 6% year-over-year increase), including FDI of USD 113.6 million (+13%), which is hardly a gratifying result for Belarusian officials.

Belarus and China implement a number of large-scale joint projects. Among them – automobile production on the territory of Belarus. By the end of 2018, CJSC Belgee intends to reach a sales level of 8,000 vehicles per quarter, with the declared annual design capacity of 60,000 vehicles. On 27 February, the company announced the market launch of the Geely Atlas crossover in Russia, priced at RUB 1–1.5 million (about USD 17,700–26,600), depending on its configuration. The prices previously announced for Belarus are virtually the same. Earlier reports state that the company is going to elaborate certain sales promotion tools for Belarus[5].

Minsk and Beijing also develop military cooperation. In Spring 2018, alongside the visit to Belarus of the new Chinese Minister of Defence, Colonel-General Wei Fenghe, and the visit to China of the Minister of Defence of Belarus, Andrei Raukou, a number of high level meetings within military-technical dialogue were held. Belarus became the second country after Russia to be visited by the new Chinese Minister of Defence following his appointment. According to BelTA, Wei Fenghe called Belarus

[4] "Foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus," *Belstat,* http://www.belstat.gov.by/en/ofitsialnaya-statistika/macroeconomy-and-environment/vneshnyaya-torgovlya_2/

[5] Minsk Barometer #1 (January-February 2018), Minsk Dialogue Expert Initiative, 2018, http://minskdialogue.by/Uploads/Files/research/reports/pdf/1-en.pdf

and China "iron brothers"[6] under the leadership of Xi Jinping and Aliaxandr Lukashenka. During the visit, the President of Belarus noted that China "played a decisive role in strengthening the defence capability of Belarus", and helped to create "the most modern space units, send the most modern satellite into orbit" and "the most modern missile weapons for the Belarusian army"[7]. Lukashenka also thanked the Chinese Minister and promised to remember the support they have provided.

During this visit, both parties signed another agreement on China's provision of free military-technical assistance. What exactly is stated in this agreement remains unknown. However according to a previous similar agreement, signed in October 2017 for USD 4.5 million, the list of equipment is still being negotiated.

Adaptation of defence policy

Belarus, on the one hand, avoids being involved in the confrontation of the incumbent Russian leadership with the West and the Eastern European allies of the West. On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly disappointed with the Kremlin's growing unwillingness to strengthen its partners and allies in the military and economic areas. As a result of the increase in costs and the reduction of benefits from its alliance with Moscow, Minsk sees no other way of survival than a greater reliance on its own forces and pursuing its own security policy that would be increasingly different from that implemented by Russia.

Given the shortage of funds, the Belarusian leadership relied on "pinpoint" and "selective" rearmament (terms used by Defence Minister Raukou). Minsk is optimising the army, bringing it in line with its own needs and financial capabilities. This means creating an increasingly compact army and a reduction in certain types of

[6] "Wei Fenghe: Belarus and China have become iron brothers," ["Vei Fenhe – Belarus i Kitaj stali zheleznymi brat'yami,"] April 06, 2018, http://www.belta.by/politics/view/vej-fenhe-belarus-i-kitaj-stali-zheleznymi-bratjjami-297490-2018/?utm_source=belta&utm_medium=news&utm_campaign=accent

[7] "Lukashenko: China has played a decisive role in strengthening Belarus's defence capabilities," ["Lukashenko: Kitaj sygral reshajuschuju rol' v usilenii oboronosposobnosti Belarusi,"] April 06, 2018, http://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-kitaj-sygral-reshajuschuju-rol-v-usilenii-oboronosposobnosti-belarusi-297481-2018/

heavy weapons that are not vital for the defence of the country. The main priorities for the Belarusian leadership are air defence, special operations forces (SOF), the system of territorial defence, and missile formation. While the first sector is developing in many ways for the sake of and with the assistance of Russia, Minsk is developing the last three on its own.

There is currently a practical assessment of the territorial defence system underway, focusing on its ability to solve key problems in the country's defence. At the same time, special attention is being paid to the issues such as the supply of mobilisation resources and the coordination of units.

The Belarusian leadership seeks to build up its own defence capacity through domestic manufacturing of high-priority types of weapons and equipment, such as strike drones and the Belarus-China Polonaise multiple launch rocket system further tested in Kazakhstan.

Official Minsk pursues a multi-vector security policy to the maximum extent possible. The participation of the Defence Ministry in the SCO summit, joint exercises with Kazakhstan, ongoing cooperation with NATO, and implementation of the CFE Treaty provisions testify to this. Belarus's aspiration to maintain neutrality is also gaining recognition, as evidenced by the invitation of Belarusian observers to army exercises in Lithuania and Estonia.

In February 2018, Belarusian high-ranking officials and government agencies made a number of statements pointing to the revision of the defence policy towards greater self-sufficiency. In his speech on February 22, President Lukashenka stated: "In the event of a military threat, we must be ready to ensure the nationwide protection of Belarus. Seventy thousand military men of our army will not ensure the defence of the state ... the land should be protected by everyone. For this purpose, the system of territorial defence is being improved. In the event of a military conflict, we are capable of calling up for military service half a million people within a short period of time in order to defend the most important facilities by territorial defence forces. This is the essence of our defence doctrine."[8] In his speech, the president

[8] "Lukashenka tells about new arms for the army," ["Lukashenko rasskazal o ovejshem vooruzhenii postavliaemom v armiju Belarusi,"] *BelTA*, February 22, 2018, http://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-rasskazal-o-novejshem-vooruzhenii-postavljaemom-v-armiju-belarusi-291139-2018/

mentioned cooperation with Russia, but de facto he stated that any aggression should be repelled by the Belarusian forces, without mentioning the Russian ally at all. The same position is presented in the article by Minister Raukou in the February issue of the magazine "Bielaruskaja Dumka".[9]

This practical revision of the doctrine is reflected in the real defence policy – firstly, in the focus placed on the creation of a small mobile army and the priority development of special operations forces; secondly, in the procurement of arms – Belarus not only embarked on its own missile programme in response to difficulties in obtaining short-range attack missiles from Russia, but also minimised purchases of armoured vehicles from Russia. Instead of buying the BTR-82A armoured personnel carrier, which had been discussed for a long time, in 2017, Minsk decided to pass three models of armoured vehicles (the advanced BTR-70MB1, Cayman, MZKT-490100) into service. Also, the modernisation of the T-72 (T-72BM1) is being conducted internally, without exclusively relying on Russia for upgrades of the tank, as in the case of the T-72BZ.

Earlier in 2018, Defence Minister Raukou announced that the commencement of deliveries of the new Su-30SM fighters from Russia to the Belarusian army would be postponed until 2019. The respective contract for the supply of 12 aircraft was signed on June 20, 2017, and the first aircraft was due to arrive this year. According to Raukou, the delay is due to the aftermath of Western sanctions against Russia, which brought about the necessity to replace certain imported parts in those aircraft. There are grounds to doubt this substantiation, since Russia continues to manufacture such aircraft for both its own needs and for export.

Apparently, Minsk has still been unable to resolve the issue of payments for the aircraft. The Belarusian side has repeatedly pointed to the fact that it would be logical if Russia provided the maximum discount for such machines, as they would be used, among other things, to ensure the security of the most important region of Russia as part of the Unified Air Defence System. In addition, Minsk voiced its desire to pay for the supplies in kind, which is not an

[9] Raukou Andrei. "Army of the Belarusian People," ["Armija belorusskogo naroda,"] *Belaruskaja Dumka,* February 2018, http://beldumka.belta.by/ru/issues?art_id=2035

extraordinary payment scheme, since Russia itself has been selling the most advanced combat aircraft to Malaysia in exchange for goods, specifically for palm oil. By all appearances, in this situation, the Kremlin has chosen to take a tough stance, because even back in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Minsk reached an agreement with Moscow on the organisation of assembly production of the previous modification of these fighters in Belarus.

Overall, the behaviour of high-ranking Belarusian officials – from the President to the Defence Minister and the commander of the Air Force and Air Defence – serves as an indication that the issue is not settled. In recent months, their statements about the supply of new fighters no longer sound as confident and specific as they did last year, and in a number of speeches the topic was quite illustratively missing.

It appears that this situation illustrates the drop in the level of military and technical cooperation between the two allies and attests to a number of unresolved issues that produce a profound negative effect on not only the defensive capacity of the army, but also the operation of the Belarusian military-industrial complex. The problem of the Kremlin's consistent desire to replace the Belarusian components and even ready-made samples of military equipment with Russian counterparts is well known. It is noteworthy that non-Russian entities account for 46% of the "engagement" of Belarusian companies in the field of military and technical cooperation.

In April, the Minister of Defence of the People's Republic of China, Wei Fenghe, visited Belarus. Following this visit, a new stage in military-technical cooperation (primarily in the field of missile weapons and air defence) can be expected. Among the most promising areas of cooperation are "joint combat training, military education, provision of free military assistance, as well as cooperation within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation through military departments". Also an agreement between the Ministry of Defence of Belarus and China was signed on the provision of free military assistance to Belarus.[10]

[10] "The results of the official visit of the Minister of Defence of China," ["Ob itogah oficialjnogo vizita ministra oborony KTR,"] *Vo slavu Rodini*, April 10, 2018, Issue No. 66, https://vsr.mil.by/2018/04/10/ob-itogax-oficialnogo-vizita-ministra-oborony-knr/

Later Belarus also demonstrated an intent to continue the cooperation with Beijing. In particular, the Chief of the General Staff, Belakoneu, took part in a regular meeting of the CSTO Military Committee in Astana, and he participated in a regular meeting of the Committee of Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of the CIS Member States. Belarusian delegation, headed by Defence Minister Raukou, also took part in a meeting of the heads of military departments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States in Beijing.

In May 2018, a delegation of NATO Headquarters visited Belarus for an annual meeting concerning the participation of Belarus in the Planning and Review Process of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme. New cooperation goals were agreed upon. It is noteworthy that after a meeting with the Belarusian foreign minister, his Russian counterpart said on May 29 that Minsk and Moscow shared the aspiration to improve relations with NATO, although NATO's activity on the borders of both countries, especially in the Baltic states and Poland, was a matter of concern.[11]

Thus, in the recent years, Belarus has significantly changed its foreign policy approaches and adapted its security and defence policy to the new challenges. Minsk has improved its international image as a negotiating platform for resolving the conflict in Ukraine; it started to pursue a multi-vector approach in foreign policy more openly and diversify exports. In the security and defence sphere, Belarus aims to build a compact and mobile army, according to its own needs and national interests.

Nevertheless, Belarus remains a close military, political and economic ally of Russia and clearly sees all the red lines in bilateral relations with its eastern neighbour. For Minsk, the example of Ukraine was a good lesson of mistakes to avoid.

[11] "Russia, Belarus agree to seek improvement in relations with NATO," *Tass*, May 29, [2018], http://tass.com/politics/1006991

Beyond the Traditional Regional Security Challenges

Returning Strength in Storyline: NATO, Strategic Communication, and Double-faced Narrative of 2018

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The Narrative and The Story – those concepts traditionally drawn from fiction now are coming into the language of politics, strategic communication, and security and defence. Fairy tales from childhood started with the classic stock phrase – "once upon a time"... Within the informative landscape of post-truth, "once upon a time" is changing daily, pressing every participant of the "tale" to recount and retell their story again and again, and again – to others and to themselves. Winning over hearts and minds is not a single battle anymore – it is an everyday routine. It is an All-time, All-Things, All-Places *modus operandi*.

Now to move from literature to analysis. What is Strategic Communication as a concept for NATO today? "Once upon a time" strategic communication for NATO was dominantly military communication, linking military operation with information activities of the organisation delivering particular operational targets.[1] It was an integral coordinated way of in-communication and out-communication of particular activities and the organisation's mission. The link between "real action"/operation and communication is crucial here:

> *"...concept [which] refers to the military sphere. Potentially lethal operations – this is a feature that distinguishes military communication from communication at a political level, on which the content of*

[1] Ieva Dmitričenko. "Stratēģiskā komunikācija," *AZPC stratēģiskais apskats* 4, March 2013. http://www. naa.mil.lv/~/media/NAA/AZPC/Apskats_Nr.4.ashx

the communication is mostly words and images, therefore military communication can have an infinitely higher impact on individual perception."[2]

In a military strategic communication rules of the game are clear – it is an algorithm of communique that goes hand in hand with deeds in battlefield and beyond that. But, that was once upon a time – when the strategic communication of NATO was perceived as a military narrative or a narrative created and delivered by militarists. Now, additional field of strategic communication has grown – slowly, step by step, backed with post-truth era, digital technologies, and omnipresent "truth fights". NATO has additionally responded to that with redefinition and broadening of strategic communication in it's own understanding:

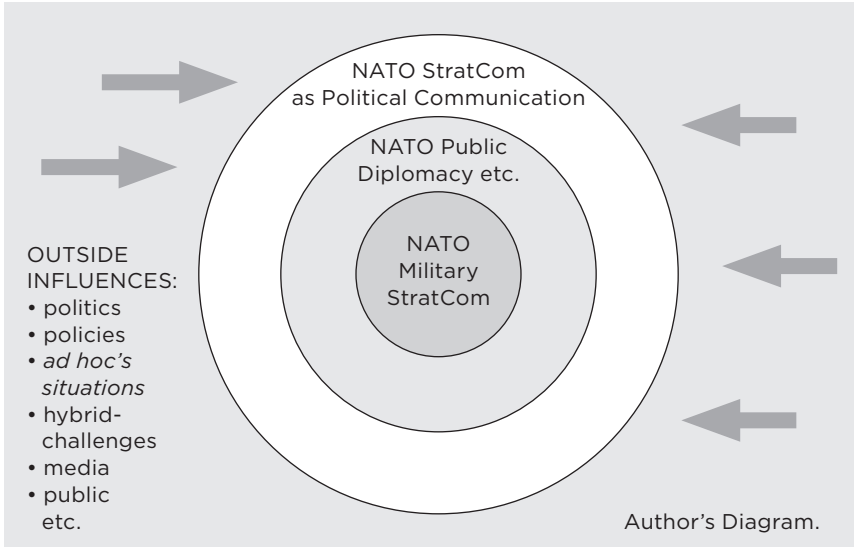
"...The coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (info Ops), and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate – in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims..."[3]

So far, so good... With the only problem – NATO public diplomacy and public affairs are, in fact, challenged, questioned and tested not only by third parties, but by NATO member states' actors themselves, political leadership included. Public diplomacy considering NATO has grown out of reach of NATO, or, putting this into a more precise form – the discussions what NATO is and where it goes are covered in the noise of politics, and lacking the message of the "core", or a military reality behind the political one. It is possible to say that NATO Strategic Communication has grown into Political Communication. From the public perspective this means that from a military alliance NATO transforms into a primarily political entity. To fully understand the scope, politics always has been present in NATO; only this time – there is much more politics in delivering the NATO narrative than in NATO military and public diplomacy aspects.

[2] Mārtiņš Vargulis. "Importance of Strategic Communication Matters and Their Development in the Latvian Security Policy," *Latvian Foreign and Security Policy, Yearbook 2017, ed.Sprūds A., Bruģe I., Bukovskis K.,* Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga, 2017.

[3] PO(2009)0141 (2009) NATO Strategic Communications Policy, Brussels: NATO

To explain this point with visuals – the diagram shows that outside influences – like politics, policies, hybrid-challenges, etc., – mainly influence the outside layer of NATO's **Strategic** Communication. Outside layer is where info-battles, discussions of identities, etc., are happening. Unfortunately, the public sees and evaluates the NATO role from this "StratCom as Political Communication" or outside layer either. Deeper to the core – StratCom of NATO as a military organisation – suffers from proper representation in public, and is largely overshadowed by political discussions.



To back mentioned assumptions within narrative of this particular article, author will outline the year 2018 in the Strategic Communication of NATO; and will open the discussion on how the "political" is stealing the show from the "military" NATO; and why it is not serving the best interests of NATO and its member states.

Politics and NATO: year 2018 – the game of personalities

Analysing NATO in the 2018 from the political communication perspective, we can definitely outline that personality role was predominant over institutional or organisational discourse. Possibly the highest attention considering NATO alliance was to the Brussels Summit in July of 2018. It was not a surprise that political issues were dominant – political communication has been an integral part of NATO summits since forever – speaking on role, identity, purpose and future of organisation. Nevertheless, the difference of the 2018 communique was the enormous dependence on personal sympathies and antipathies between the political leadership. As it was formulated by the Bloomberg columnist James Stavridis:

"Donald Trump's open dislike of Germany's Angela Merkel, the UK's Theresa May and Canada's Justin Trudeau, for example, feels deeply rooted and intractable… […] This personal animosity between the alliance's most important national leaders comes at an especially infelicitous time, with Vladimir Putin's Russia applying pressure around NATO's periphery…"[4]

The show was stolen by the inter-argumentation of alliance member state leaders sending puzzling signals to the public and international society, largely translated into a signal of weakness. It is possible to conclude that NATO Summit 2018 was conducted under a sense of threat – generated not so much by outside challenges than inner viewpoint contradictions. Words in the Strategic Communication narratives matter – and global headlines before summit with the common theme – *President Trump challenges NATO allies* – was interpreted as a challenge for NATO itself. This narrative was not only multiplied by mass media, third countries and parties, but by political elite of NATO member states itself – looking for arguments and backing their own position considering the increase of member state spendings. Where the paradox lies – the demand for a spending increase to reach the "famous 4%" does not signalise the weakness of NATO

[4] James Stavridis. "NATO Has Two Big Problems: Putin and Trump," *Bloomberg Opinion*, July 5, 2018.

as an alliance, it is more a question of inner loyalty within the organisation.

Even the representatives of Trump's administration admitted that his remarks came as he was urging leaders to increase their outlays on defence and were not a formal proposal.[5] Nevertheless, discussions on increasing strength turned into talks of weakness. In some sense, the tweet of president Donald Trump gives a characterisation of the narrative from his perspective:

"I had a great meeting with NATO. They have paid USD 33 billion more and will pay hundreds of billions of dollars more in the future, only because of me. NATO was weak, but now it is strong again (bad for Russia). The media only says I was rude to leaders, never mentions the money!"[6]

And, it is truth from the perspective that NATO gains in financial and military progress; with addition – it was a strong organisation already before, by dealing with challenges in an effective and adaptive manner. The message: strong – and even stronger; is pretty different from: weak – strong again. Especially if so many stakeholders within NATO share their position from different perspectives only puzzling the common perception.

The context of the summit or, simply saying, the calendar, plays an equally important role in the narrative of weakness for NATO – meeting of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, so contradictory evaluated in world media, was just one part of it. To compliment meeting results with Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump used as a benchmark summit experience with NATO:

"While I had a great meeting with NATO, raising vast amounts of money, I had an even better meeting with Vladimir Putin of Russia. Sadly, it is not being reported that way – the Fake News is going Crazy!"[7]

Taking into account sensitive tension between the Alliance and Russia, balancing success in comparison was a highly fruitful seed for narrative of weakness of NATO in the worldwide media. Of course, also the context of Trump critics of NATO and Germany

[5] "Trump tells NATO leaders to up military spending to 4 percent of GDP," *CNBC/Reuters*, Published 12:19 PM ET Wed, July 11, 2018

[6] @realDonaldTrump, *Twitter*, July 17

[7] @realDonald Trump, *Twitter*, July 17

especially was creating dichotomy of views a long time before the summit – with the famous statement of NATO being "obsolete" from Trump's perspective.[8]

Then the question remains – from the narrative perspective on the political level – could there be any other options than spinning the buzzwords of weakness and strength (more weakness than strength)? Probably not.

Were there any means on the public politics level to re-construct the narrative, taking into account the role of stakeholders and personalities? Probably not.

Thus, the only solution for NATO Strategic Communication as a common means for the organisation, is to intensify other fields of strategic communication – in fact, if we know that operational StratCom is for military ends; only one field is left to work on – NATO Public Diplomacy and narratives of "all actors within NATO, except political level". Or, re-quoting this argument – taking the show back from politicians into hands of militarists and NATO as a military organisation. The reason behind this is simple – "on field" NATO is perhaps stronger than ever before; things left to do – to tell, to show, to spread the message. To act it out. *To Act the NATO out*. From speeches to deeds, and their representation.

Public Diplomacy and delivered reality behind the headlines

There are several deeds behind the scandalous headlines that in fact serve as proof of NATO in development that can be identified during the summit. Despite the tensions apparent throughout the Brussels Summit, these new initiatives demonstrate the commitment the allies still have to building a stronger NATO alliance that addresses the many changing threats facing the West. As David Wemer outlined, the initiatives can be grouped around 6 achievements of the summit.[9]

[8] "Trump worries Nato with 'obsolete' comment," *BBC News*, January 16, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38635181

[9] David Wemer. "Here's What NATO Achieved at Its Brussels Summit," *Atlantic Council*, July 12, 2018, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/here-s-what-nato-achieved-at-its-brussels-summit

1. A New Member of the Family – "the Republic of Northern Macedonia" or the Former Yugoslav Republic Macedonia after taking steps toward the name dispute resolution is moving to full membership in the Alliance. This shows a clear strength of a collective organisation, because from the perception and narrative perspective it symbolises the attractiveness of NATO's soft power, and the hard power at the same time.[10]

2. A Continued Commitment to Afghanistan – On July 11, NATO allies reaffirmed their commitment to the mission by agreeing to financially support the mission through 2024. Furthermore, British Prime Minister Theresa May announced on July 12 that the United Kingdom would be sending an additional 440 non-combat personnel to support the mission.[11]

3. New Support to Iraq – Announcement of a new mission in Iraq to help domestic services train and build capacity shows clear and focused ability of member states to deal with the "chronic" issues of Alliance. On July 11, the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced hat his country would lead the mission and provide half of the estimated 500 troops for the mission.[12] NATO's representative in Iraq estimated that the mission would last between three and five years, beginning this fall.[13]

4. A Speedier Alliance – NATO allies finalised long-standing plans to improve the readiness of military forces in the NATO Readiness Initiative, also known as the "Four Thirties" programme.[14] This initiative would aim to have thirty heavy or medium manoeuvre battalions, thirty major naval ships, and thirty air squadrons, available for use on the battlefield within thirty days notice. This initiative can be seen as crucial to maintain

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[10] Sabina Strimbovschi. "NATO as a Hard Power and EU as a Soft Power over the Shared Neighborhood. Case Study: Georgia," *The National School of Political and Administrative Studies*, Romania, Bucharest,2012.

[11] "NATO summit tries to move past transatlantic tensions," NewsRoom, *France24*, July 12, 2018, *http://www.france24.com/en/20180712-nato-summit-afghanistan-troops-trump*

[12] Steven Chase. "Trudeau announces Canadian-led NATO mission in Iraq as Trump complains about defence spending," *The Globe and Mail*, Ottawa, July 11, 2018.

[13] Jessica Donati, Pauli Vieira. "NATO Ramping Up Efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan Amid Trump Criticism," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 11, 2018, https://www.wsj.com/articles/nato-ramping-up-efforts-in-iraq-and-afghanistan-amid-trump-criticism-1531331047

[14] David Wemer. "Here's What NATO Achieved at Its Brussels Summit," *Atlantic Council*, July 12, 2018, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/here-s-what-nato-achieved-at-its-brussels-summit

the Alliance's ability to deter potential military threats from adversaries.[15]

5. Countering Hybrid Threats – overall recognition among NATO leaders of the issue of wide range hybrid threats like cyber attacks, disinformation, and propaganda, and linking it together with NATO's Article 5 common defence obligation that can be triggered in the case of a hybrid attack, and announcement of the launch of Counter Hybrid Support Teams is a huge step toward tackling the 21st century security and defence challenges.

6. New Command Centres – NATO announced the establishment of three new command centres for the Alliance. The first, a Cyber Operations Centre in Belgium, will help coordinate NATO's cyberspace operations. A new Joint Force Command centre in Norfolk, Virginia, will assist the Atlantic Command and ensure open transatlantic lines of communication, while the final centre in Ulm, Germany, will coordinate logistics within Europe.[16] Command Structure Reform goes hand in hand with Military Mobility of Alliance ensuring real capacities and capabilities to implement actions behind the commitments.[17]

All mentioned achievements prove not only the ability of Alliance's member states to make common decisions, but also a sustainable NATO development path outlined at Strategic summits before. From a headline and political rhetoric's perspective – it can be seen as a rocky boat, but in fact it is a steady ship. And the narrative of steadiness and strength is particularly important to maintain to balance the narrative of weakness.

[15] Ian Brzezinski. "Defining Success at NATO's Summit: Political Unity and Military Readiness," *The Atlantic Council*, July 3, 2018, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/defining-success-at-nato-s-summit-political-unity-and-military-readiness

[16] David Wemer. "Here's What NATO Achieved at Its Brussels Summit," *Atlantic Council*, July 12, 2018, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/here-s-what-nato-achieved-at-its-brussels-summit

[17] Ian Brzezinski. "Defining Success at NATO's Summit: Political Unity and Military Readiness," *The Atlantic Council*, July 3, 2018, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/defining-success-at-nato-s-summit-political-unity-and-military-readiness

Strategic Communication, Baltic states, conclusion

How to bind together the previous argumentation, Strategic Communication and Baltic states? Well, elementary. Baltic states is a specific "microcosm" of longterm experience with mixed narratives considering strength and weakness of NATO – largely used and maintained by different hybrid-warfare methods and propaganda tools. And strengthening the Public Diplomacy field, "spilling it over" to political narrative is the way how to keep a boat steady. Previous years of particular experience in Baltic security and foreign policy had developed "common sense" that all involved players and institutions have settled on the same page concerning the significance of strategic communication.

Alongside the prospect of NATO's strategic communication, the outlook of the European Union's strategic communication clearly stands out on the agenda, albeit just at the starting phase, but still with the explicit potential for development. Strategic communication research – both in the NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence in Riga and in the performance of Baltic academic and research centres – is developing rapidly and in accordance with the clearly visible growth criteria of state and public resilience in the field of strategic communication. Nevertheless, promotion of openness and cooperation with the media, non-governmental organisations, the research sector, maximising public education and promoting sustainability in terms of core values and the specifics of the 21st century of information consumption and hybrid risks – the acquisition of knowledge and skills in all groups of society, thus contributing to the societal sustainability against informational pressures in the context of hybrid threats, is considered to be essential.

And, this experience should be continued on all appropriate levels – with the shared understanding of common strategic communication goals within NATO and the EU; understanding of difference between politics and public diplomacy of NATO; bringing NATO closer to people every day. Thus, the NATO narrative should restrain itself from "once upon a time" to "happily ever after".

Prospects of the American Shale Gas and LNG Export to the Baltic States

Reinis Āboltiņš

Natural gas in EU's energy portfolio

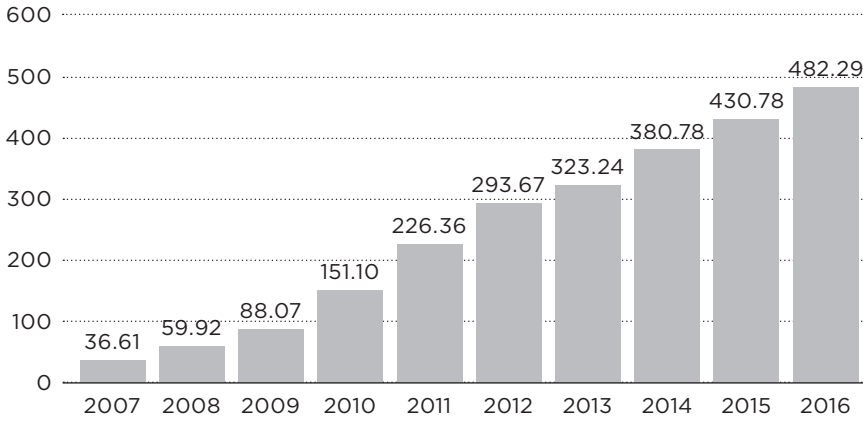
Natural gas has an important role in the energy mix of the EU. Natural gas is particularly instrumental in a number of EU countries which rely on imported natural gas heavily. Two biggest single suppliers of natural gas to the EU are the Russian Federation and Norway. The two countries deliver around 70% of all natural gas supplies. The biggest issue, however, has been the tactics of the biggest supplier, Russia, until recently pursued vis-à-vis different European countries in terms of gas supply and gas pricing policy. Dependence of EU member states on one dominant gas supplier has been a matter of concern for a long time.

Gas market liberalisation allowing natural gas to be supplied on the free market from whichever source of supply from all over the World has been the key strategy of the EU, which has been working persistently to diversify energy supplies and improve energy security of its member states. This has included diversification of natural gas supply, including through the introduction of market rules.

Natural gas plays an important role in the energy portfolio of many EU member states. Plenty of heating and electricity is produced in combined heat and power plants (CHPs). Due to climate concerns, natural gas is the preferred fuel in situations where coal-fired power plants have to get phased out and replaced by other technology and energy resource. Thus, natural gas is going to have significant impact on energy production in the EU for years to come and until fossil fuels are replaced to a large extent or completely by renewable energy resources, which are preferably also local.

US shale gas production and LNG export capacity

Shale gas production in the U.S. has been growing steadily since 2007, which is the year which the U.S. Energy Information Administration refers to as a key moment for significant commercial volumes of shale gas. Production of shale gas has grown by stunning 1238% from 2007 till 2016.



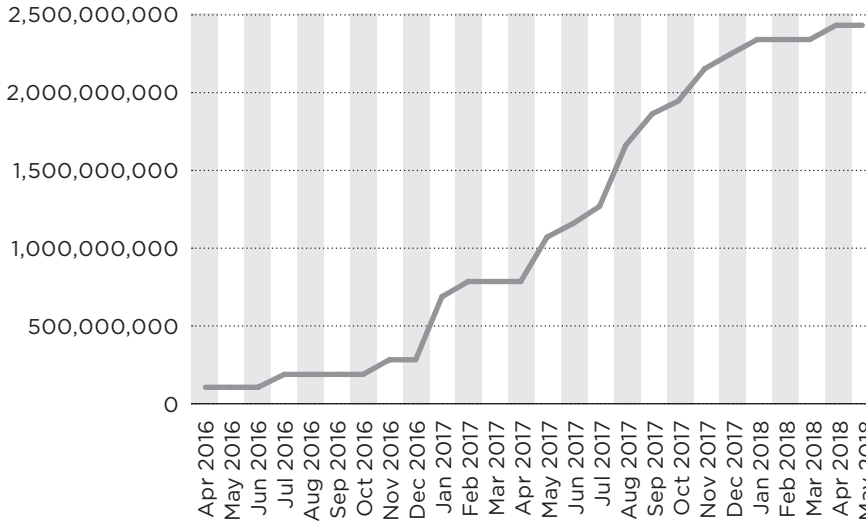
U.S. Annual Shale Gas Production, bcm.
Data: U.S. Energy Information, Analysis: Reinis Āboltiņš

This, however, does not mean that all of this volume goes to export, as domestic demand for natural gas is high enough and export capacity is currently limited. The U.S. has become a gas exporting country very recently and has already managed to supply notable volumes of LNG to a number of destinations in Europe[1]. LNG imports from the U.S. have experienced growth since the first supplies were delivered to Portugal in April 2016, cumulatively reaching just under 2,5 bcm by May 2018.[2]

Detailed analysis of data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that LNG deliveries have been made to

[1] "Growth in domestic natural gas production leads to development of LNG export terminals," *Energy Information Administration*, March 2016, https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=25232

[2] "US Natural Gas Exports and Re-Exports by Country," *Energy Information Administration*, July 2018, https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng_move_expc_s1_m.htm



Cumulative U.S. LNG export to European destinations, in cubic metres.
Data: U.S. Energy Information, Analysis: Reinis Āboltiņš

seven European destinations, some of the countries receiving just one vessel (Malta, Poland) while others – as many as eight (Portugal) and nine deliveries (Spain), the second half of 2017 being the most intense time for deliveries.

It should also be noted that while total LNG exports from the U.S. have been growing, the share of LNG supplies to European destinations has generally remained low. The highest share of export to European destinations was reached in April 2016, January 2017, and August 2017. April 2016 stands out as the very beginning of LNG exports by the U.S., therefore it was easy to reach over one third of exports out of total 283 million cubic metres going to Portugal. Two other occasions saw the U.S. LNG deliveries going simultaneously to more countries than usually – in January 2017 LNG was supplied to Spain, Portugal and Malta, while in August 2017 – to Spain, Lithuania, Portugal, and Italy.

Total U.S. LNG exports increased between October 2017 and May 2018, reaching 2,68 bcm globally. Figures illustrate that the potential to export LNG is significant and it is up to buyers and sellers to agree on price, volume and timing of deliveries.

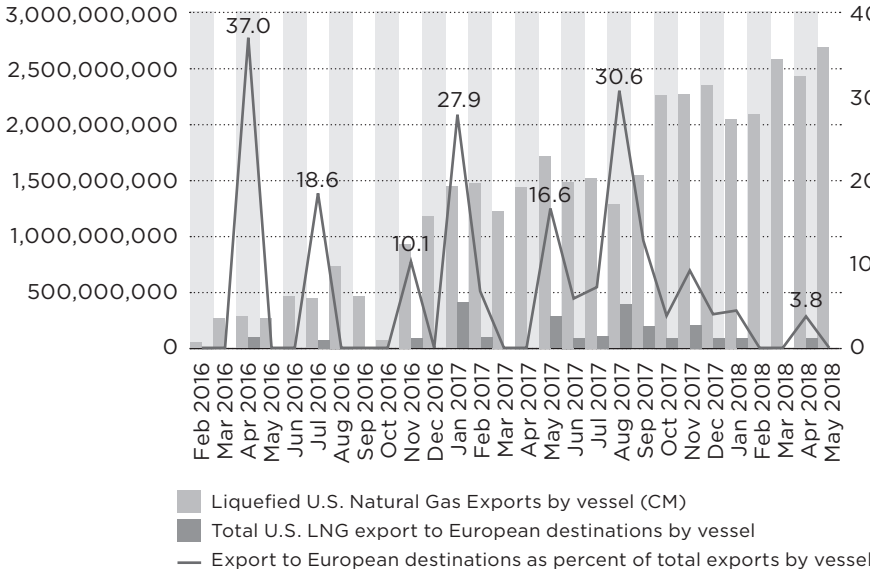
Liquefied U.S. natural gas exports by vessel to European destinations, cubic metres. Data: U.S. Energy Information, Analysis: Reinis Āboltiņš

Date	Liquefied U.S. Natural Gas Exports by Vessel (CM)	Italy	Lithuania	Malta	The Netherlands
Feb-2016	56.492.096	0	0	0	0
Mar-2016	269.208.198	0	0	0	0
Apr-2016	283.536.519	0	0	0	0
May-2016	278.666.022	0	0	0	0
Jun-2016	465.047.463	0	0	0	0
Jul-2016	444.885.873	0	0	0	0
Aug-2016	735.784.771	0	0	0	0
Sep-2016	473.712.416	0	0	0	0
Oct-2016	83.732.896	0	0	0	0
Nov-2016	932.416.908	94.238.444	0	0	0
Dec-2016	1.183.190.843	0	0	0	0
Jan-2017	1.451.436.268	0	0	24.550.700	0
Feb-2017	1.472.419.046	0	0	0	0
Mar-2017	1.231.471.055	0	0	0	0
Apr-2017	1.432.803.787	0	0	0	0
May-2017	1.720.417.931	0	0	0	86.139.827
Jun-2017	1.485.020.040	88.348.541	0	0	0
Jul-2017	1.516.310.148	0	0	0	0
Aug-2017	1.286.575.625	95.484.384	97.155.078	0	0
Sep-2017	1.548.336.494	0	96.673.692	0	0
Oct-2017	2.257.078.683	0	0	0	0
Nov-2017	2.265.715.319	0	0	0	0
Dec-2017	2.336.110.983	0	0	0	0
Jan-2018	2.048.949.909	0	0	0	0
Feb-2018	2.084.487.543	0	0	0	0
Mar-2018	2.590.594.424	0	0	0	0
Apr-2018	2.426.186.851	0	0	0	92.114.681
May-2018	2.684.181.580	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	37.044.769.692	278.071.369	193.828.770	24.550.700	178.254.508

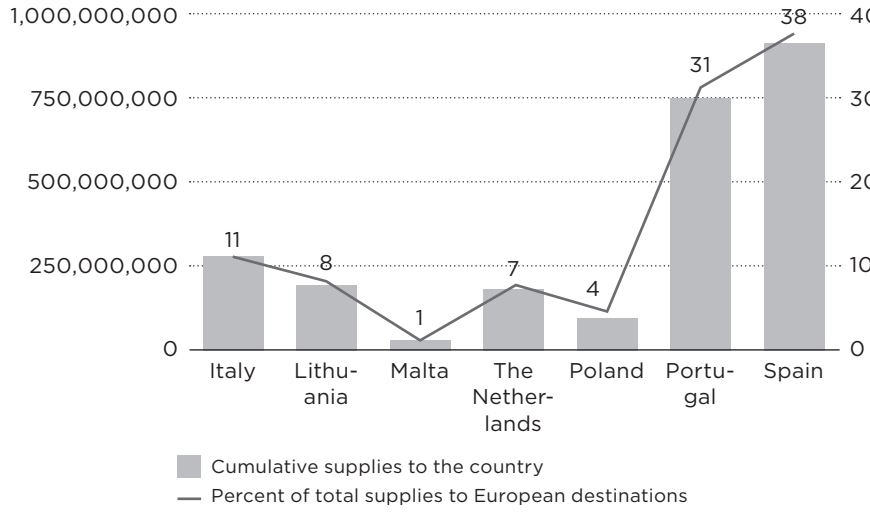
So far the volume of U.S. LNG deliveries to different destinations has varied significantly. The following graph illustrates that Spain and Portugal have by far exceeded the rest of recipients totalling approximately 70% of all U.S. LNG supplies to European countries. Italy, Lithuania, and The Netherlands have followed closely with 11,

Poland	Portugal	Spain	Total U.S. LNG export to European destinations by vessel	Export to European destinations as percent of total exports by vessel
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	104.772.308	0	104.772.308	37,0
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	82.968.341	82.968.341	18,6
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	94.238.444	10,1
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	97.466.563	283.225.034	405.242.297	27,9
0	47.912.093	50.007.539	97.919.633	6,7
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	0	0,0
97.409.930	102.648.545	0	286.198.302	16,6
0	0	0	88.348.541	5,9
0	103.696.268	6.144.754	109.841.022	7,2
0	96.248.939	105.112.110	394.000.512	30,6
0	0	103.809.535	200.483.227	12,9
0	0	84.384.183	84.384.183	3,7
0	104.828.942	102.422.010	207.250.952	9,1
0	0	95.427.751	95.427.751	4,1
0	91.944.779	0	91.944.779	4,5
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	0	0,0
0	0	0	92.114.681	3,8
0	0	0	0	0,0
97.409.930	749.518.438	913.501.258	2.435.134.973	6,6

8 and 7% respectively, leaving Poland with 4 and Malta with 1% of all U.S. LNG that has been shipped to Europe. Spain and Portugal can be characterised as an open and free gas market with natural gas coming in almost equal shares as LNG supplies and through pipelines from North Africa.



Liquefied U.S. natural gas exports by vessel to European destinations, in cubic metres, and as percent of total exports by vessel.
Data: U.S. Energy Information, Analysis: Reinis Āboltiņš



Liquefied U.S. natural gas exports by vessel to European destinations, cubic metres, and as percent of all supplies to European destinations, April 2016 – May 2018. Data: U.S. Energy Information, Analysis: Reinis Āboltiņš

The potential role of LNG

Total EU gas demand is circa 490 bcm, providing a good opportunity for LNG imports from LNG exporters and the U.S. in particular, allowing to diversify away from currently dominant sources of supply, namely the Russian Federation, especially in those countries which have the highest share of natural gas supplies from Russia. It is also important to note that diversification of supplies does not necessarily mean getting rid of, say, Gazprom as a supplier. The ultimate goal is to minimise risks associated with being reliant on one supplier and making this dominant supplier play according to the rules, or, in other words – establish a level playing field for all gas market participants. Thus LNG supplies from the U.S. have a very good potential to contribute also to the diversification of gas supply to the Baltic states via the Klaipeda LNG import terminal.

For alternative supply routes to function a number of elements are needed. On the supply side infrastructure is needed to produce, liquify and transport gas to the client. The U.S. has plenty of natural gas largely due to what is often referred to as "the shale gas revolution". Since the U.S. authorities decided to enter the global market from the supply side, a number of natural gas liquefaction facilities have been built and more are under construction. Liquifying gas and exporting LNG to destinations all over the world is technically possible, politically accepted, and legally allowed.

In the Gulf of Mexico, Sabine Path LNG facility in Louisiana owned by Cheniere has four production trains, making it the largest LNG export facility in the U.S. by August 2018. It is quite obvious that this LNG terminal has been key to the process of establishing the U.S. as a player on the global LNG market which has plenty of participants already.

On the East coast, Cove Point liquefaction facility has begun operation, it has one production train and a relatively small capacity. Four other LNG projects are under construction – Elba Island LNG in Georgia, Freeport LNG in Texas, Corpus Christi in Texas, and Cameron LNG in Louisiana.[3] All of the mentioned have

[3] "US liquefied natural gas exports have increased as new facilities come online," *Energy Information Administration*, December 2017, https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=34032

significant capacity according to the technical information and all four are estimated to come online by the end of 2019, providing plenty of additional export capacity.

On the receiving side, infrastructure for importing, transporting, storing and distributing natural gas is needed as it makes supplies physically possible. A free gas market is needed to make supplies commercially viable and interesting for gas suppliers. There also has to be a fair deal of political will to be willing to welcome LNG supplies in the region.

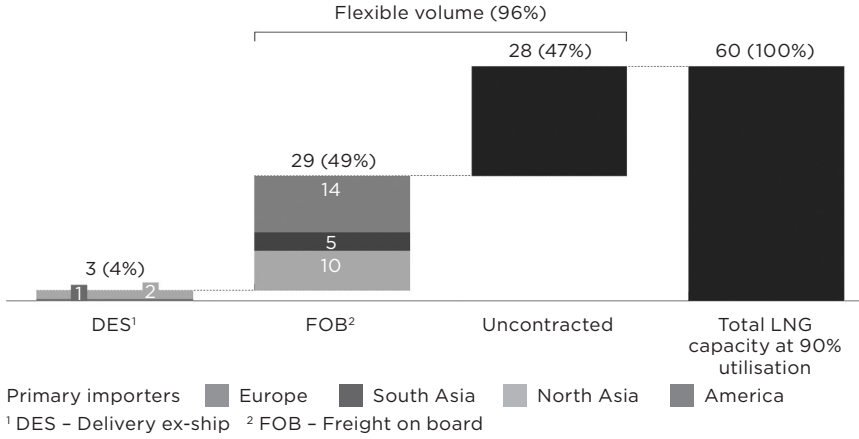
In the Baltic states, Lithuania did its part of the job by commissioning the construction of a LNG gasification vessel, which has been functioning successfully for a number of years already and demonstrating that LNG supplies are possible physically and commercially. The paradox is that in terms of minimising risks associated with the supply of natural gas, the Lithuanian LNG vessel is the only energy security project already implemented and working, and it was implemented with no European co-funding. The EU, however, provided co-funding for upgrading the gas transmission network in Lithuania by increasing the technical capacity of pipelines and compressor stations that play an important role in transporting natural gas from Klaipeda to the rest of Lithuania and in the direction of Latvia.

LNG future flow forecasts

One can say that there is too much optimism about the U.S. LNG supplies to European destinations. However, market analysis indicates that deliveries to buyers in Europe might constitute roughly a quarter of all U.S. LNG deliveries globally as soon as in the year 2022.[4] The overall utilisation of existing LNG liquefaction facilities is expected to average 80% in 2017 and 79% in 2018, based on LNG export projections by EIA.[5] It means that there is

[4] Renjun Chong, Dumitru Dediu, Gillian Boccara. "How US LNG may create new pricing fundamentals over the coming 5 years," *Energy Insights*, McKinsey, February 2018, https://www.mckinseyenergyinsights.com/insights/how-us-lng-may-create-new-pricing-fundamentals-over-the-coming-5-years/

[5] "Short-Term Energy Outlook," *Energy Information Administration*, August 2018, https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/report/natgas.php



U.S. LNG contract breakdown in 2022, million tons.
Illustration from Energy Insights, by McKinsey[6]

capacity available now already and it is just a matter of time when the U.S. gas producers and LNG exporters will become rightful players on the global LNG market.

Putting together growing demand for natural gas in Europe and decreasing domestic production, there is a good chance that U.S. LNG could supply as much as 20% of annual European gas demand in 2030.[7] Gas demand and therefore LNG prices in East Asia will be setting the trend, with higher demand being followed by higher prices and more LNG flowing to Asia instead of European hubs.

Conclusion

Given the trends in global LNG flows, there is plenty of flexibility around the globe to channel LNG deliveries towards destinations where it is needed the most and can be received based on either

[6] Renjun Chong, Dumitru Dediu, Gillian Boccara. "How US LNG may create new pricing fundamentals over the coming 5 years," *Energy Insights*, McKinsey, February 2018, https://www.mckinseyenergyinsights.com/insights/how-us-lng-may-create-new-pricing-fundamentals-over-the-coming-5-years/

[7] Conglin Xu. "US LNG for Europe," *Oil and Gas Journal*, March 24, 2018, https://www.ogj.com/articles/print/volume-116/issue-4c/regular-features/journally-speaking/us-lng-for-europe.html

completely commercial considerations or with a bit of political context. If, for example, LNG demand in traditional prime markets in East Asia decreases, most likely LNG spot prices in Europe will become attractive for buyers. Under such conditions there might not even be any need to politically facilitate LNG flows from the U.S. to European destinations.

On the other hand, countries like the Baltic states, Finland, and Poland, have been heavily dependent on gas supplies from Russia for many years. This has also meant no choice when it came to gas prices, until recent developments with gas market liberalisation in the Baltic states and construction of a number of LNG import terminals in the Baltic Sea in Finland, Lithuania, and Poland. Markets have been functioning for a very short time yet and might potentially be vulnerable to external manipulation. Establishing and functioning of a common gas market in the Baltic states is still a task ahead of the regulatory authorities as well as transmission system operators in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Under current circumstances, a friendly assistance in the form of advice and facilitated interest to supply LNG for a friendly, but fair price, would be a good learning scenario. Even more so because there would be learning by doing on both sides of the Atlantic.

Postface.
Security Gap: Reflections on a Turbulent Decade

Edward Lucas

When I wrote "The New Cold War" in 2007, the threat from the ex-KGB kleptocracy in Russia was stilly largely unknown in the West. The book received a generous reception in the countries most in Russia's shadow–including Latvia, where it was a best-seller. But elsewhere, its main message went unheard.

The war in Georgia in the summer of 2008 partly vindicated the book's thesis. But it also distracted attention from its main point: I was far more worried about Russian banks than Russian tanks. Money, I wrote, was the West's Achilles heel. "If you think that only money matters, then you are defenceless when people attack you using money".

In "Deception", published in 2011, I returned to the attack. I started the book with an account of the life and death of Sergei Magnitsky, the whistleblowing Russian auditor who was beaten to death for exposing a tax fraud perpetrated by corrupt Russian officials. Magnitsky is now a household name, thanks to the efforts of Bill Browder, the American-born financier who has devoted his life and his fortune to avenging Magnitsky's death.

Some of my colleagues wondered if I was wise to devote a whole chapter to the story of one man, who would most likely be forgotten before long. In fact, Magnitsky's fate has haunted the Russian regime, not least thanks to Mr Browder's own book-length account of the case, "Red Notice". Mr Browder has lobbied tirelessly to encourage more than a dozen countries to introduce sanctions on the people who benefited from the fraud that Magnitsky exposed, and those who were involved in his torture and murder. These sanctions infuriate the Putin regime.

It is shocking that ten years after Magnitsky's death, the Russian authorities have not made the slightest effort to hold his killers to account. Instead, they continue to persecute Mr Browder, chiefly by trying to have him arrested and extradited to Russia using Interpol "Red Notices", which are meant to be used to apprehend criminal fugitives.

Having established the horror of the Russian regime in the reader's eye I then tried to explain how it works, and in particular the overlap between organised crime, the intelligence services, and xenophobic ideology. I wanted readers to understand that the Medvedev-Putin switch was purely decorative. Nobody should be fooled that Russia was still run by the same kind of ex-KGB kleptocrats, whose influence had been growing since the early 1990s.

That was a controversial approach, regarded as "unhelpful" by those trying to reset east-west relations. But I was right. The Medvedev "thaw" proved insubstantial and temporary. Just as the first edition of the book was published in March 2012, Mr Putin came back as president; he has ruled Russia ever since.

The central feature of his regime is that stability at home can come only through revisionism abroad. Accommodating the Kremlin's interests, therefore, is not about changing outcomes within an existing set of rules. It would mean accepting new rules dictated by Russia. This is hard for many Westerners to understand, because we believe implicitly that the European security order dating back to the Helsinki process in the mid-1970s is stable, because all sides regard it as fair.[1] This assumption is profoundly mistaken. The Kremlin regards the Western-dominated security order as unfair and over-ripe for change. It believes that the rules were drawn up without regard to Russian interests and that the West is hypocritical in the way it implements them: dressing up self-interest with phoney talk about human rights and the rule of law.

[1] The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 established that borders in Europe would never again be changed by force. The Paris Charter of 1990 established common principles of political freedom, human rights and the rule of law. The Soviet Union signed both. The Russian Federation is its the legal successor and is bound by the same undertakings, as well as the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, which guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity in exchange for its renunciation of its nuclear arsenal. Russia has flouted all these undertakings, and more besides.

Russia also believes that conflict and competition are central to international relations; talk of win-win outcomes is naïve at best and mendacious at worst. As far as Russia is concerned, conflict with the West is inevitable; the only question is who wins. In this outlook Russia, crucially, has the advantage of strategic coherence. Its decision-makers share a similar perception of the threat from the West. They have common priorities, appetites for risk and assessments of our vulnerabilities. None of that is true on our side.

The stakes are high. Russia does not believe that its neighbours should be fully sovereign, with the right to make independent decisions about their geopolitical future. In Russia, a former imperial power with a long history of invasion by (and of) its neighbours, such independent-minded behaviour is seen as an affront to history and geography.

The Kremlin does not want to reconquer these ex-colonies; that would be prohibitively costly. But it does want to constrain them. Russia particularly begrudges the former captive nations of the Soviet empire their freedom, their prosperity, and their sovereignty. Their success poses an existential challenge to the stagnant and autocratic model of government pioneered by the Putin regime. The Kremlin also believes that NATO encircles the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, a geopolitical trophy carved out of the pre-war German territory of East Prussia. This is strategically intolerable: Russia must have the capability to break this perceived encirclement. Russia's security, therefore, depends on its neighbours' insecurity.

To achieve that goal, Russia must change the European security order, replacing the rules-based multilateral system with a bilateral one in which strong countries do the deals that they can, and weak countries accept the outcomes that they must.

Russian security policy: aims and means

In pursuit of that strategic aim, Mr Putin has intensified what is often called "hybrid warfare" against the West.

If this term had been in use at the time I wrote "Deception", I would have assuredly used it. The main thrust of the book is

to warn the West about the complex mixture of tactics, usually coordinated by the intelligence services, which Russia uses against open societies.

It uses money, bolstering self-interested commercial and financial lobbies which profit from doing business with Russia and fears any cooling in political ties. Energy, economic and financial ties constrain Western responses to Russian revisionism. Overt and covert payments buy influence in political parties, think tanks, media outlets and academic institutions.

Russia also practises information warfare (propaganda) with a level of sophistication and intensity not seen even during the Cold War. It uses the immediacy, anonymity and ubiquity of the internet to confuse and corrode Western decision-making and public life.

Russia is prepared to threaten and use force, ranging from physical and cyber-intimidation of opponent, including assassination, to military saber-rattling. Where necessary–as in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria–it uses straightforward force of arms, backed up with huge military exercises to deter any outside interference.

Money, propaganda and force are the most salient features of the Russian approach. But there are many more. Aweaponising non-exhaustive inventory includes: the targeted use of corruption, cyber-attacks, diplomatic divide-and-rule games, the exploitation of economic, ethnic, linguistic, regional, religious, social and other divisions; economic sanctions such as import curbs and restrictions on exports and transit; energy blackmail; stoking financial panics; weaponising history to besmirch the reputation of a target country and hide Kremlin crimes, covert information operations such as hacking and leaking attacks, lawfare–the abuse of local and international legal procedures, such as issuing Interpol Red Notices to critics, mounting libel actions and vexatious lawsuits; the use of organised crime networks to demoralise and intimidate; the exploitation of religious sentiment, especially among Orthodox believers; sabotage and vandalism, subversion of social norms, public confidence and state institutions; and support for violent anti-social behaviour.

To complicate matters further, these tactics are not applied in a static or even linear formation. Russia's spymasters are not stupid.

They develop new approaches, especially new combinations and sequences of tactics, tweaking them based on what works and what does not. We think we are looking at a picture; our adversaries are writing a screenplay.

Human weakness means we find it is easier to admire problems than to solve them, to focus on the dangers we can see than worry about those that we can't, and to use the tools we have on hand rather than try to acquire the ones we actually need. We particularly over-focus on easy-to-see Kremlin propaganda, especially in English and other Western languages. In fact, information warfare–meaning deliberately misleading "fake news" plus the disorientating use of trolls and bots–is just one, albeit conspicuous, element of the arsenal outlined above.

Many in the West still assume, annoyingly, that this problem is somehow recent. It is not. All the tactics above have been tried in the frontline states in previous years, in many cases starting in the early 1990s.

Alarm calls from the east, unheard in the west

People in these countries–Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Central Europe, Georgia, Ukraine and elsewhere–warned us of the decay of democratic life in Russia, of election-rigging, of the resurgence of the old KGB, and of the growth of kleptocracy. They also warned us that Russia had not abandoned its arrogant, unrepentant imperialist attitudes towards the former captive nations of eastern Europe. They warned us about Russia's toxic cocktail of money, propaganda and force, and its use of espionage to find targets and exploit weaknesses. They warned us that though Russia was still economically weak back then, times would change, and trouble was on its way–not only for them, but for us.

We in the West did not just ignore those warnings. We patronised and belittled the brave men and women who delivered them. Now the warnings have been vindicated. The Baltic states, before and after their accession to NATO, have suffered repeated economic sanctions, military pressure and subversion. We in the "old" West have seen Russian mischief-making in the heart of our

political systems. The know-it-alls in the countries of the old West didn't listen, saying that they understood Russia much better than the former captive nations.

That arrogant complacency has been costly, and is now very dangerous. Influence operations are far more pernicious than kinetic warfare. If they succeed, military resistance is pointless. Russia's puny military can win a war only in its immediate neighbourhood. Its mischief-makers' battle-honours include Berlin, Bratislava, Budapest, London, Prague, Rome–and Washington, DC.

Much of the security debate now still misses the point. The biggest issue, reinforced by President Trump, is the need for higher defence spending. That is a good thing–but it is at best a necessary, not a sufficient condition, for preserving our safety and freedom. Worries about the dependability of the American security guarantee to Europe have begun discussion on a "Plan B", in which European countries would shoulder more, or all of the, responsibility for their own defence. But that discussion focuses mainly on plugging the conventional and nuclear gaps that would be left if America withdraws or winds down its presence in Europe. Territorial defence–and the doomsday thinking of the balance of terror–are only part of 21st-century security. Nuclear weapons are no answer to Russia's capacious and well-stocked hybrid-warfare arsenal.

Much of the hybrid-warfare arsenal was not easily visible when I wrote "Deception". I covered some aspects of cyber-security (which I followed up in my 2014 book "Cyberphobia"). I looked at some information-warfare stunts (of the kind that are now, misleadingly, called "Fake News"). I looked at the way in which Russia uses money to bribe politicians and acquire influence.

Spy wars then and now

But the central thread of the east-west conflict is intelligence. Russia is good at spying; our efforts are all too often marked by failure.

I used three case studies in "Deception". One was purely historical–the disastrous "Operation Jungle" in the Baltic states in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The second case study was based on my interviews with Herman Simm, the Estonian official who

was the most important Russian spy in NATO. He remains in jail, serving a 12-and-a-half-year sentence handed down in 2009; his application for early release was declined in June 2018.

The third study was of Anna Chapman and her fellow-illegals, who were arrested in 2010. Although her career has languished since her return to Russia in a spy swap, one of the Western intelligence assets who was brought to the West in the same exchange has since hit the headlines. Sergei Skripal, who spied for Britain while serving in the GRU military intelligence agency, was poisoned, along with his daughter Julia, with a Russian nerve agent, Novichok, in the quiet provincial town of Salisbury in March 2018. The spy swap in 2010 was conducted in great haste, in order not to disrupt Mr Medvedev's visit to Washington, DC. It now appears that Mr Putin regarded the deal as botched and unfair to Russia. Although Mr Skripal and his family lived under their own names in Salisbury, it seems that they were actually at greater risk than they or their British protectors realised.

It is little comfort to me that my warnings have been vindicated. Russia is able to attack the West in ways I barely glimpsed in 2011. And Western weaknesses are on increasingly stark display. I could not have imagined the success of the Russian attack on the American political system in 2015-16, or the seemingly effective intervention in Britain's Brexit referendum. Nor could I have imagined that an American president would have a one-on-one with Mr Putin, as Mr Trump did in Helsinki in July 2018, and follow it up by casually denouncing the central principle of NATO's collective-security treaty.

It is tempting to regard international politics now as a kind of soap opera or horror movie, in which the plot lurches towards disaster regardless of anything the audience can do. It is also tempting, conversely, to look on the bright side. Seventy years of transatlantic security are not going to disappear overnight. For all Mr Trump's strange views and behaviour, the U.S. administration is full of people who have gone into public service to do the right thing.

Both these approaches are wrong. Passivity and wishful thinking are equally dangerous. For a start, Mr Putin will be emboldened by the diplomatic detox he received from Mr Trump. The American president invested his personal prestige in maintaining friendly

relations with the Kremlin kleptocrat. That will hamper his response to the next Russian stunt. It may be in Ukraine–which received a stunning lack of diplomatic support. It may be in Western Balkans (especially given Mr Trump's unfortunate words about Montenegro). Or it may be in Belarus, a country which the West scarcely cares about and would be unwilling to defend. Russia, with its bold decision-making and high tolerance for risk and pain, has great scope for future action. Something nasty will happen, and soon.

Nor should we assume that Mr Trump's presence is an aberration. American politics, and international relations, were deeply troubled before he emerged as a politician. Those woes remain. Given the isolationist, resentful mood the president has exploited (and stoked) at home, we may have not just two more years of Mr Trump, but six. And his successor may be equally uninterested in the costs and benefits of Pax Americana.

Mr Trump's repeated use of lines such as: "Sometimes our worst enemies are our so-called friends or allies" have prompted an alarming drop in support for NATO among Republicans, who are now evenly split on whether the U.S. should remain a member of the alliance. What once looked like an unbreakable consensus in American politics has shattered. It will be rash to assume that it will be rebuilt soon, or indeed ever.

The inescapable and unpleasant conclusion is this. For all the president's bombast on trade, the U.S. is not going to become a strategic adversary for European, Asian and other allies in the foreseeable future. But America is no longer the West's unquestioned hegemonic power. Leadership rests on credibility, and Mr Trump has shredded that. For the first time since the Berlin airlift seventy years ago, European allies can no longer rely on the United States.

Complete fragmentation, though, is not inevitable. Britain and other European countries must now fight a defensive battle to save the transatlantic alliance, making whatever efforts we can to placate the president, and shoring up support for NATO in Congress, with public opinion, and in other parts of the American system. The struggle is far from lost and could yet be won. But defeat is possible and we have therefore to prepare for a plunge into a costly and risky new era of post-Atlantic defence.

Old threats, new responses

To see the future, look at recent trends. Old structures are blurring. NATO and the European Union used not to be on speaking terms. Now cooperation is intense. Sweden and Finland, though not NATO members, are increasingly close to the alliance. Western military cooperation with Ukraine is closer than many realise, not least because that country's blood-soaked expertise in dealing with Russian conventional and hybrid aggression is so valuable. Britain and France have each launched complementary multinational military initiatives to coordinate speedy and flexible deployment; a separate Anglo-French joint expeditionary force aims to be operational by 2020. Sweden and Finland have started unprecedented bilateral intelligence-sharing and military cooperation. Other countries are taking practical steps to pool and share scarce resources.

Progress is slow, but taboos are splintering fast. For decades, hawkish Atlanticists, notably British ones, resisted any independent European defence initiatives, seeing them as a plot (usually French-led) to undermine NATO. Now such moves are hampered only by Turkey, which objects to any NATO cooperation with the EU because it involves the government of Cyprus. In fact, as Turkey's autocratic leadership maroons that country on the diplomatic margins, EU-NATO cooperation is flourishing.

The advantage of the new security arrangements is speed and flexibility. Instead of the lumbering 29-country NATO bureaucracy (which is vulnerable to vetoes and delays from stroppy or squishy members), the new coalitions are of countries which share similar perceptions of the threat, and trust each other to contribute speedily and effectively in dealing with it.

We will need many more such security arrangements. Sometimes the U.S. will be a conditional partner, other times it will be absent. Some of these groupings will be loose; others such as those dealing with counter-terrorism, will be tightly knit. Intelligence sharing should be close too, though Mr Trump's strange relationship with Russia is a cause for alarm: allies no longer want their most hard-won secrets to appear in the Presidential Daily Brief, for fear of what may happen to them.

Dealing with these threats requires an upheaval in government and society, rethinking our silo-based approach to counter-intelligence, criminal justice, financial supervision, internet security and media regulation, while refashioning our threadbare security culture and developing next-generation deterrence. This process will be costly and difficult, with some painful trade-offs. It will be particularly difficult to do this at a time of increasing fragmentation and decreasing social trust. I am not optimistic, at least in the short term.

За вашу и нашу свободу – for your freedom and ours

Yet for all our detestation of the Putin regime and the threat it poses to us, we should not lose sight of its first and greatest victims: the Russian people.

Russia once regarded the collapse of the Soviet Union as a liberation from communism, the regime now pushes the line, with increasing success, that it was a humiliating geopolitical defeat. That is not only factually false; it is also a tragedy. The Russian people helped overthrow the Soviet Union, under which they had suffered greatly. But they have had the fruits of victory snatched away by the kleptocratic ex-KGB regime. The bread and circuses it offers are little consolation for the prize that Russians have lost: a country governed by law, freed from the shadows of empire and totalitarianism, and at peace with itself and its neighbours. Our endeavours to defend ourselves and our allies may also help bring that day a little nearer.

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LATVIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Security of the Baltic Sea Region Revisited amid the Baltic Centenary

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