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MEETING THE RUSSIAN CONVENTIONAL CHALLENGE

**EFFECTIVE DETERRENCE
BY PROMPT REINFORCEMENT**

Franklin D. Kramer
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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This report proposes that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization should enhance its deterrent and warfighting posture in Europe by establishing “Effective Deterrence by Prompt Reinforcement,” specifically in reference to Russian activities that have increased the conventional challenge to the Alliance.

At its Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO concluded that:

Russia has breached the values, principles and commitments which underpin the NATO-Russia relationship, as outlined in the 1997 Basic Document of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, and 2002 Rome Declaration, broken the trust at the core of our cooperation, and challenged the fundamental principles of the global and Euro-Atlantic security architecture.¹

The Russian challenge has been multifaceted, including the periodic use of force to occupy parts of Ukraine and Georgia; cyberattacks and information warfare campaigns in, among other places, the United States, France, Germany, Estonia, and Lithuania; the use of economic tools such as energy geopolitics affecting the flow of natural gas to Europe; low level use of force as in Montenegro and Estonia; and threats involving nuclear forces. The buildup and threatening exercise of conventional forces has also been an important component of Russia’s anti-Western campaign, and it is on the issue of conventional forces and the importance of deterrence that this report focuses.

NATO has the inherent capacity to deter, or if necessary prevail in, a conventional conflict. Its forces, however, while large, are currently neither adequately ready nor oriented to ensure that such deterrence is fully credible or that a warfighting campaign could be promptly successful. Accordingly, to enhance such deterrent and warfighting capabilities, this report recommends that at the forthcoming NATO summit in 2018, NATO adopt the strategy of Effective Deterrence by Prompt Reinforcement including the following actions.

1) Utilize planned spending and investment pledges to support a “readiness initiative” focused on munitions and other materiel as developed by the supreme allied

commander Europe (SACEUR) so that NATO forces could conduct effective wartime operations if ever required; and coordinate with the European Union’s (EU’s) Permanent Structured Cooperation initiatives on logistics and mobility efforts to enhance the rapid movement of forces.

2) Enhance its intelligence capabilities by establishing an “eastern hub,” focused on Russia, for strategic and operational analysis; develop an effective intelligence and warning system; and create and incorporate open source and private sector intelligence.

“At the forthcoming NATO summit in 2018, NATO [should] adopt the strategy of Effective Deterrence by Prompt Reinforcement.”

3) Increase its ability for prompt decision making by delegating to the secretary general and the SACEUR authority in circumstances preapproved by the North Atlantic Council to move designated forces and undertake pre-conflict deterrent options.

4) Build an effective warfighting force for the Baltics, consisting of an initial force of seven to ten brigades plus air and maritime forces, by establishing a mechanism for reinforcements to arrive within approximately ten days. This can be accomplished by utilizing the three US brigades currently in Europe and one heavy brigade each from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK), which would add to the host nation and Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) forces. Reinforcement can also be supplemented by additional brigades from Poland and the United States (including the Marines based on the prepositioned equipment in Norway), as well as battalions from some of the small northern European NATO nations. Arrangements should be made for the Baltic countries to work in combined formations and also to convert some of their forces to heavier capabilities over a five-year period, and NATO should utilize exercises to keep forces near or in the Baltic area.

5) Revise the NATO Response Force to be a sustaining force as part of a second wave of reinforcement after ten days and reconstitute the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force for immediate reinforcement, doing so in each case to avoid double counting forces committed to the first wave of reinforcement.

¹ NATO, “Warsaw Summit Communiqué,” July 9, 2016, para. 9, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

6) Establish appropriate reinforcement for the Black Sea area, with the SACEUR determining the nature and sources of reinforcement, which might include United States forces based on US prepositioned stocks, Polish forces, and Germany's 10th Armored Division and Rapid Response Forces Division as Germany has signed agreements to have those forces work closely with the Czech Republic's 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade and Romania's 81st Mechanized Brigade.

7) Enhance the ability of air power to contribute to deterrence by ensuring the prompt availability of a large NATO air presence as determined by SACEUR built around the combat capabilities of US, French, German, and UK forces, and most importantly fully-supported with the necessary ready airfields, sufficient and sustainable munitions and other required logistical capabilities (fuel, storage, etc.), as well as appropriate air and other airfield defenses.

8) Develop NATO maritime force and command and control capabilities for the Atlantic, Baltic Sea, Black Sea, and Mediterranean Sea, including the ability to respond to Russia's planned bastion defense in the north and submarine warfare in the Atlantic and Baltic Sea. A particular focus should include anti-submarine and counter-cruise missile capabilities.

9) Establish effective cyber capabilities by integrating highly cyber-capable nations' capacities into NATO planning and operations and establishing cyber collective defense where the framework nations (the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, United States) leading the Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltics and Poland assist those nations in establishing enhanced cyber resilience for their telecommunications, electric grids, and reception facilities that are critical to warfighting and thus a key requirement for deterrence.

10) Task SACEUR to develop an integrated plan for the multi-domain defense of Europe based on the foregoing, which would be presented to the North Atlantic Council for approval.

I. THE RUSSIAN CHALLENGE

A. The Geopolitical Background

The Russian conventional challenge is best understood in the context of Russia's worldview and overall approach to the West. Generally, there appear to be at least four overlapping factors that motivate Russia's

decidedly anti-Western animus. Broadly speaking, they demonstrate a "geopolitics of resentment" as first exhibited in President Vladimir Putin's 2007 speech at the Munich conference and reiterated multiple times since. The key elements include undoing the loss of the Cold War and the chaos of the 1990s; regaining "top-tier" status as a world power; achieving "Eurasianism," that is, substantial influence and/or dominance in the countries of Eurasia; and ensuring that there is no regime change in Russia (i.e., preventing a scenario similar to that of 1991) whether via color revolution or otherwise.²

Russia's national security strategy makes clear its concerns about the West and NATO, stating:

The strengthening of Russia is taking place against a backdrop of new threats to national security that are of a multifarious and interconnected nature . . . [including] opposition from the United States and its allies, who are seeking to retain their dominance in world affairs. The policy of containing Russia that they are implementing envisions the exertion of political, economic, military, and informational pressure on it.³

NATO is specifically referenced:

The buildup of the military potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the endowment of it with global functions pursued in violation of the norms of international law, the galvanization of the bloc countries' military activity, the further expansion of the alliance, and the location of its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders are creating a threat to national security.⁴

Russia's strategy as a consequence of its worldview includes a variety of efforts, including building alliances and partnerships such as the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and strengthening its bilateral relationship with China; periodically using force as in Ukraine, Georgia, and Syria; seeking to weaken adversaries through hybrid and other actions as has taken place in Europe and the United States, including diplomatic and informational

2 While Russia seemed initially to accommodate itself to NATO's first enlargement, including through the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council, it has since raised the enlargement issue as a major aspect of contention, as well as issues such as the United States' withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the invasion of Iraq as factors generating international instability and threatening Russia.

3 "Russian National Security Strategy," via Masaryk University, December 2015, Para 12 (trans.), <https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2016/POL361/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.txt>.

4 "Russian National Security Strategy," December 2015, Para. 15.

efforts to weaken the unity of the Alliance; taking advantage of instability particularly in the Balkans and Mideast; utilizing energy geopolitics for advantage as in Ukraine or with the proposed Nord Stream 2 Pipeline; and periodically offering cooperation on Russian terms as in the Iran nuclear deal, Afghanistan, or Syria.

One key aspect of Russian activity based on its view of the international system has been creating a conventional “force in being” through a significant military buildup, with a focus on Europe.

B. The Conventional Force Challenge

1. The Russian Force Buildup

Overall, Russian active duty military forces number approximately 830,000 including conventional ground, air, sea, and airborne/special forces of 270,000, 165,000, 150,000, and 45,000/1,000, respectively.⁵ It is those forces that present the conventional deterrent and warfighting challenge to NATO. However, as NATO active duty forces of approximately 3,200,000 are much larger,⁶ a look beyond the numbers is necessary to understand the nature of the military threat.

Modernization is one key element (along with geographic proximity and potential for rapid deployment). Since its poorly effectuated use of force against Georgia in 2007, Russia has embarked on a major conventional-force buildup. One analysis has described the buildup as follows:

The Russian military today is on the rise—not as the same Soviet force that faced the West in the Cold War, dependent on large units with heavy equipment, but as a smaller, more mobile, balanced force rapidly becoming capable of conducting the full range of modern warfare.⁷

In 2009, . . . Moscow began developing a more modern military force capable of power projection outside Russia’s borders. The New Look reforms instituted structural and organizational reforms and the State Armaments Program emphasized development of modernized platforms and weapons’ systems. In 2013, readiness became an additional area of emphasis with institution

of no-notice ‘snap’ exercises and accompanying mobilization and deployments. Moscow’s long-term goal is building a military prepared to conduct the range of conflicts from local war through regional conflict to a strategic conflict that could result in massive nuclear exchange.⁸

Another report emphasizes Russia’s focus on ground forces and the possibility of launching a significant attack:

It is likely that Russia will retain a large ground operations-centric force in the coming decade. Major changes in the balance between the services seem unlikely. The Armed Forces will most likely continue to be able to launch at least one—possibly two—large-scale JISCOs, joint interservice combat operations, with thousands of vehicles and aircraft and around 150,000 servicemen in each.⁹

This buildup does not mean that Russia is fully a peer competitor. As one analysis states:

While Russia maintains a small force of well-led, highly ready, and well-trained and -equipped units, most of the 260,000 ground troops operate less modern and capable weapons and are at a lower state of readiness. Moreover, although some sectors of Russia’s defense industry are modern, efficient, and productive, the industry has many facilities that are antiquated, inefficient, and unproductive. As a result, Russia’s conventional forces will continue to lag behind the United States and even some NATO allies in important technologies that are critical to the success of modern warfare, including state-of-the-art command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance abilities and conventional precision strike weapons. In addition, a declining population base and other problems with recruitment and retention will make it difficult for Russia to meet its target of 1 million members in its armed forces comprised mainly of nonconscripted and contract personnel. These problems are reflected in continued reports of low morale, high desertion rates, and lack of discipline.¹⁰

5 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2017*, Russia chapter, 211. Russia’s Strategic Rocket Forces are approximately 50,000. Id.

6 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2017*, Europe and North America chapters, 63-182 and 27-62.

7 Defense Intelligence Agency, *Russia Military Power*, 2017, 13, <http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Russia%20Military%20Power%20Report%202017.pdf>.

8 Defense Intelligence Agency, *Russia Military Power*, 46.

9 Gudrun Persson, ed., *Russian Military Power in a Ten-Year Perspective*, FOI, 2016, 192, <https://www.foi.se/en/pressroom/news/news-archive/2016-12-08-russian-military-capability-is-strengthened-and-increasing.html>.

10 Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, Paul Stronski, and Andrew S. Weiss, *Illusions versus Reality*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 2017, 27, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_300_Rumer_Sokolsky_Weiss_Task_Force_Final_Web.pdf.

2. The ‘Opening Attack’ and the Problem of Local Force Imbalances

In light of the force differential between Russia and NATO, a long war—while obviously highly undesirable for either side—would favor NATO’s much more substantial forces. Russia’s doctrine, however, focuses on gaining immediate advantage for a short war. As one analysis describes:

The vital period for future war’s conduct will be the opening salvos each side delivers. The Russians appear to believe they initially will be in the form of information battles followed by aerospace operations. War’s conduct will also include nonmilitary actions, information environment battles, biological weapons and nonlethal fights, the use of extensive reconnaissance with unmanned aerial vehicles or spy satellites or covert sources before battle begins, the use of robots and, if research so dictates, weapons based on new physical principles, whether they be hypersonic weapons (two types of which are already in testing and openly discussed in journals), directed energy, quantum, or laser weapons.¹¹

Thus:

Many Russian analysts believe the IPW [initial period of war] will be decisive element in any new conflict due to the ability of cyber methods to destroy infrastructure or command and control assets surreptitiously and with speed. The presence of overwhelming weaponry or even demonstrations of new weaponry are considered as deterrence means. If an IPW does not seem prudent at the moment, then military operations short of war (nonmilitary, indirect, asymmetric, etc.) are introduced.¹²

Finally, it is useful to keep in mind that Russian doctrine includes the potential of moving from hybrid war and low-level conflict to a conventional battle. The link between hybrid and conventional conflict, with an emphasis on the former, was discussed by the Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov:¹³

In the 21st century we have seen a tendency toward blurring the lines between the states of war and peace. Wars are no longer declared and, having begun, proceed according to an unfamiliar template The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures—applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special-operations forces. The open use of forces—often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation—is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict.¹⁴

In the context of hybrid conflict and the “initial period of war,” Russia is likely to utilize its significant cyber capabilities to reduce the effectiveness of NATO defenses before or in conjunction with conventional attack. Russia’s cyber capabilities are very substantial and include the possibility of use against critical infrastructures such as the electric grid, communications, and reception facilities. Such attacks would significantly affect NATO’s military capabilities unless appropriately countered.¹⁵

In sum, an “opening attack” approach is potentially feasible given the forces that Russia could bring to bear in the Baltic region, as well as Russian cyber capabilities and the country’s extensive use of hybrid efforts. The most well-known analysis of the consequences of such an attack, given the NATO force deployments of the time (2014 and 2015), was undertaken by the RAND Corporation. RAND’s analysis assumed a one-week warning:

In a series of wargames conducted between summer 2014 and spring 2015, the RAND Corporation examined the shape and probable outcome of a near-term Russian invasion of the Baltic states. The games’ findings are unambiguous: As currently postured, NATO cannot successfully defend the territory of its most exposed members. Across multiple games using a wide range of expert participants in and

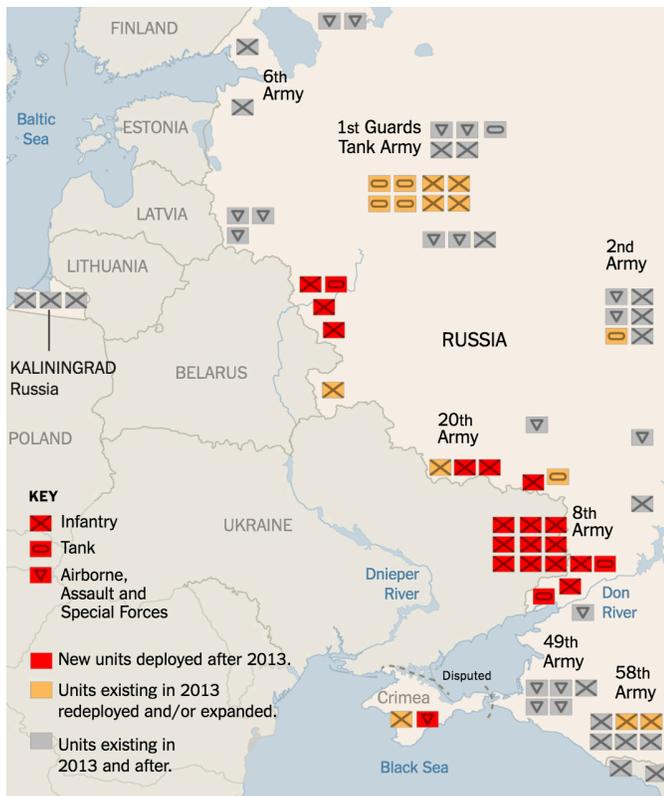
11 Timothy Thomas, *Thinking Like a Russian Officer*, May 2016, 3, <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/194971>.

12 Ibid., 2.

13 Though Gerasimov’s discussion ostensibly focused on Western actions, the hybrid approach has been incorporated into Russian doctrine. See Franklin D. Kramer and Lauren Speranza, *Meeting the Russian Hybrid Challenge*, Atlantic Council, June 1, 2017, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Meeting_the_Russian_Hybrid_Challenge_web_0530.pdf.

14 Mark Galeotti, “The ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’ and Russian NonLinear War,” *In Moscow’s Shadows*, February 2013, both a translation and a commentary, <https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/>.

15 See the discussion in Franklin D. Kramer, Robert J. Butler, and Catherine Lotrionte, *Cyber, Extended Deterrence, and NATO*, Atlantic Council, May 25, 2016, 2-3, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Cyber_Extended_Deterrence_and_NATO_web_0526.pdf.



Credit: Philip Karber, "Russia's Military Drills Near NATO Border Raise Fears of Aggression," The Potomac Foundation, August 1, 2017. <http://www.thepotomacfoundation.org/russias-military-drills-near-nato-border-raise-fears-of-aggression/>

out of uniform playing both sides, the longest it has taken Russian forces to reach the outskirts of the Estonian and/or Latvian capitals of Tallinn and Riga, respectively, is 60 hours.¹⁶

Of course, even a quick attack has uncertainties. Importantly, given current force posture, there would be indications and warnings to which NATO could respond. Most of Russia's forces in its western military district are not postured immediately adjacent to the Baltics, and many are in the south of the district adjacent to Ukraine, as the map shows.

One recent analysis has pointed out the logistical implications of current Russian force deployments, though also concluding there may well be changes in the future:

As Russia's annual strategic exercise, titled

Zapad-2017, approached, media reports (and plenty of Western officials) contended that Moscow was engaged in a military buildup along NATO's borders, with particular trepidation over security considerations in the Baltics. Ironically, Russia's military modernization and force structure expansion had been ignoring the Baltic region until quite recently. Despite provocative air and naval activity concentrated in the area, Russian forces based there are principally defensive, and aging to boot. There are indicators that a change in the size and strength of Russian forces is inevitable, but it will be gradual, in part informed by what forces NATO chooses to deploy.

Moscow's chief fixation of late has been on establishing large unit formations along Ukraine's borders, expanding its footprint in Crimea, and upgrading the military equipment distributed across the country's five military districts. Having achieved some success under the previous state armament program, the Russian General Staff is shifting its attention to the Baltic region, slowly but surely upgrading the antiquated forces based there and deliberating a larger military presence.¹⁷

A key consideration for NATO is Russia's anti-access/area denial capabilities (A2/AD). Russian A2/AD includes capabilities in its Western Military District that ranges from the Kola Peninsula in the north to the Black and Crimean Seas in the south, and perhaps Syria depending on which Russian forces remain there. It is also worth underscoring that Russian submarines with torpedo and submarine-launched cruise missiles are "building increasing capacity to threaten Western ships and submarines,"¹⁸ which, of course, would affect reinforcement via the Atlantic and the Baltic. However, Russian A2/AD is often discussed in the context of Kaliningrad. This raises valid issues as there has been a buildup of forces in the Kaliningrad district:

Russia's available military assets have continued to increase. In Kaliningrad, unit manning levels have improved, increasing the capability to launch joint inter-service combat operations. All three Ground Forces manoeuvre brigades and the fire support units are probably fully combat-capable by Russian MoD [Ministry of Defense]

¹⁶ David A. Shlapak and Michael Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank; Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics*, RAND Corporation, 2016, 1,4, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1200/RR1253/RAND_RR1253.pdf. The Enhanced Forward Presence battalions now in the Baltic countries and Poland had not been created at the time of the analysis, but they are too small to have affected the outcome.

¹⁷ Michael Kofman, "Russian Military Buildup in the West: Fact versus Fiction," *Russia File*, Wilson Center, September 19, 2017, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/russian-military-buildup-west-fact-versus-fiction>.

¹⁸ Jane's by IHS Markit, 'Game changer: Russian sub-launched cruise missiles bring strategic effect', p.5 http://www.janes.com/images/assets/147/70147/Game_changer_Russian_sub-launched_cruise_missiles_bring_strategic_effect_edit.pdf

standards. Last autumn, the Oblast also received stand-off warfare capability—that is the ability to strike targets at distances over 300 kilometres. The deployment of Oniks anti-ship cruise missiles in August 2016 was followed by Iskander missiles and Buyan-M-class corvettes carrying the Kalibr land-attack cruise missile in October 2016. These capabilities also strengthen strategic deterrence by military means.¹⁹

On the other hand, Kaliningrad is not entirely a Russian asset, as it is not easily defensible:

Kaliningrad has, however, also become a liability for Russia. The vulnerability of the Oblast is often overlooked in the West. Not so by the Russian political and military leadership. Becoming an exclave after the break-up of the Soviet Union, it was always difficult to defend. It is not large enough to provide operational depth for the forces deployed there and reinforcements need to cross two other countries. The number of advance routes for larger reinforcements is limited and the air and sea lanes will be unreliable in the event of an armed conflict. The Oblast is moreover surrounded by NATO countries and it is becoming more exposed, due to the enhanced NATO and US forces' presence in the Baltic states and Poland. The so-called Suwalki gap is as much a headache for Russian reinforcements to Kaliningrad as it is for NATO reinforcements to its Baltic members.²⁰

To sum up, Russia has capable forces that are modernizing. Its doctrine contemplates the use of both hybrid and conventional capabilities, possibly with some sequencing. Finally, while not all its relevant forces are immediately adjacent to the Baltics, the possibility of local force imbalances exist, especially if Russia uses exercises as a cloak.

II. DETERRING RUSSIA (AND WINNING THE WAR IF NECESSARY)

A. The Deterrent Status of NATO Forces

Given the Russian conventional challenge, NATO needs to demonstrate an effective deterrent posture, so

that any military conflict in Europe would clearly be a losing effort for Russia.²¹ NATO has been rhetorically clear about this, stating:

We will ensure that NATO has the full range of capabilities necessary to fulfil the whole range of Alliance missions, including to deter and defend against potential adversaries, and the full spectrum of threats that could confront the Alliance from any direction. In line with our defence planning priorities, we are committed to delivering heavier and more high-end forces and capabilities, as well as more forces at higher readiness. The primary responsibility for achieving this remains with Allies, individually. Multinational approaches are valuable in meeting these vital needs.²²

But the actual posture has not yet reached the necessary level of capability. To be sure, NATO has moved forward. For much of the post-Cold War years, NATO's deterrent posture might have been described as "Existential Deterrence," that is, NATO exists, it has significant conventional and nuclear capabilities, and it has a commitment to defend all allies. This was the nature of NATO's deterrent posture prior to the 2014 Wales Summit. Russia was not yet seen as a significant threat, so a higher stage of deterrence was not needed. By 2014, and particularly after Crimea, NATO enhanced its posture through what could have been called "Deterrence through Reassurance."

At the 2014 Wales Summit, the Alliance agreed to create the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and to strengthen the NATO Response Force (NRF) as part of the Readiness Action Plan. In addition, NATO Force Integration Units were deployed forward to help organize reinforcement efforts. At the same time, the United States began deploying company-sized army units in the Baltic states and Poland, though they were not NATO designated units. As Russian capabilities continued to increase along with frequent Russian adversarial behavior, NATO undertook its current posture, "Deterrence by Tripwire," notably by deploying four NATO multinational battlegroups in the Baltic states and Poland. These battlegroups, entitled Enhanced Forward Presence, currently have forces from twenty-two NATO nations²³ and can act as the forward element of a war-fighting capability.

19 Fredrik Westerlund, "Russia's Military Strategy and Force Structure in Kaliningrad," FOI, RUFBS Briefing No. 40, May 2017, 1, <https://www.foi.se/download/18.bc6b81b15be852194d71d/1494413062692/RUFBS+Briefing+No+40+Kaliningrad+by+Fredrik+Westerlund.pdf>.

20 Westerlund, "Russia's Military Strategy and Force Structure in Kaliningrad," 2.

21 For example, see Hans Binnendijk and Anika Binnendijk, "Deterring the Unthinkable, NATO's Role along the Eastern Flank," *Defense News*, November 2, 2017.

22 NATO, "Warsaw Summit Communique," July 9, 2016, Para. 45, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

23 NATO, "NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence," Factsheet, November 2017, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/

However, there are a number of factors that undercut the deterrent value of NATO's forces in the Baltics and the East more generally. As described below, these are not bars to establishing a more effective deterrent, but need to be understood in order to develop an appropriate approach.

First, the local forces in the Baltics are very small and mostly quite light. The total active-duty military forces of the three Baltic nations number approximately 6,400 for Estonia, 5,300 for Latvia, and 17,000 for Lithuania.²⁴ They have limited mechanized, artillery, counter-armor, and air defense capabilities. Perhaps most importantly, they are also not regionally organized so they lack the advantages that a coordinated multinational approach could bring.

Second, the Enhanced Forward Presence multinational battle groups are also limited in size—each slightly over one thousand²⁵—and capability. They provide a very sensible trip-wire force along with the local brigades with which they are engaged, but are not a force capable of major warfighting without reinforcement. Among other key issues are command and control, appropriate rules of engagement, and air defense and anti-armor capabilities.

Third, NATO's presence in the southeast is also limited in size and capability. NATO has established a "tailored force presence" that "includes troops from Romania and Poland, [and] is helping to coordinate Allied training and exercises in the region. Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Spain are also providing staff to the brigade headquarters."²⁶ The unit is only brigade-sized, however, and key issues include defined command and control, rules of engagement, and forces configured to meet the Russian threat.

Fourth, there are substantial constraints to NATO's current prompt reinforcement capability. The two

"There are substantial constraints to NATO's current prompt reinforcement capability. The two key issues are mobility and readiness."

key issues are mobility and readiness. As to the first, while Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, commanding general of the US Army land forces in Europe, regularly identified speed of assembly and transportation issues as key factors for NATO's deterrent posture,²⁷ a RAND study focused on the three key nations of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom found that they could not provide prompt capabilities at the brigade level:

Britain and France would be able to marshal and sustain at least one battalion-size combined arms battle group within a few weeks, with Germany perhaps taking longer. The French probably would get there first, possibly within the first week. Surging more forces to get the deployments up to brigade strength would take more time: a few weeks in the French case and possibly more than a month in the British or German case.²⁸

Another study focusing on force readiness concluded that European forces lack the sustainability for a significant warfighting effort. The EU's European Defence Agency evaluated the sustainability of European forces²⁹ for the 2013-14 period, determining that most European nations could sustain fewer than three thousand forces; France and the United Kingdom could sustain fewer than fifteen thousand.³⁰

Finally, while NATO has decided to establish a so-called rear area command to enhance the necessary

assets/pdf/pdf_2017_11/1711-factsheet-efp.pdf; NATO, "Boosting NATO's Presence in the East and Southeast," August 11, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en. The Czech Republic plans to join in 2018.

24 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2017*, Europe chapter, 63-182.

25 As of February 2018, the United Kingdom-led battle group in Estonia was 1001, the Canada-led battle group in Latvia was 1170, the German-led battle group in Lithuania was 1404, and the United States-led battle group in Poland was 1117. NATO, "NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence," https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_02/20180213_1802-factsheet-efp.pdf

26 NATO, "Secretary General Meets with Romanian President and Prime Minister, Visits NATO Troops," October 9, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_147693.htm?selectedLocale=en.

27 Jen Judson, "Outgoing US Army Europe Commander Pushes for 'Military Schengen Zone,'" *Defense News*, 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/>.

28 Michael Shurkin, *The Abilities of the British, French, and German Armies to Generate and Sustain Armored Brigades in the Baltics*, RAND Corporation, 2017, 1, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1600/RR1629/RAND_RR1629.pdf.

29 German and Italian figures were not shown.

30 European Defense Agency, *National Defence Data 2013-2014 and 2015 (est.)*, 66, [https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/documents/eda-national-defence-data-2013-2014-\(2015-est\)/5397973fa4d264cfa776ff000087ef0f.pdf](https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/documents/eda-national-defence-data-2013-2014-(2015-est)/5397973fa4d264cfa776ff000087ef0f.pdf).

logistics efforts,³¹ there are issues of host nation support and transportation requirements ranging from road and bridge improvements to purchasing of carriers for heavy armor to legal issues needed to remove obstacles to prompt movements.³²

Fifth, air forces, while large, lack sufficient capability to fight an intensive high-end battle, including munitions and other logistical support such as in-place fuel and ready airfields. The recent NATO Joint Air Power study found:

NATO nations, unfortunately, have drastically reduced their air power capabilities in recent years to the extent that there is a sincere risk that NATO will not have the required Joint Air Power capabilities and competencies to support the whole spectrum of Alliance operations and missions. This existing Joint Air Power problem . . . has reinforced the need for the Alliance and its Member States to urgently address the shortfalls in the field of NATO Joint Air Power capabilities and competencies.³³

Sixth, NATO is at significant risk of high-end cyberattacks by Russia. Many nations, and especially the frontline nations, have key critical infrastructures, including telecommunications and the electric grid, with substantial vulnerabilities to cyberattack. Such attacks would have major impacts on the ability to reinforce and to engage in numerous wartime actions including command and control, communications, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. Moreover, while cyber capabilities have become an Alliance focus, particularly with the recent establishment of the Cyber Operations Center, there remain important issues regarding both resilience and the integration of national cyber capabilities into the Alliance's planning and wartime efforts.³⁴

B. Building the Deterrent Force

To achieve its deterrent objectives, NATO needs a full-up conventional capability, which is able to accomplish

Alliance warfighting aims if ever required. While the discussion above has described concerns with, and deficiencies in, NATO's posture, resolving them through prompt reinforcement is entirely within the capacity of the Alliance. For example, the RAND study noted above described what a sufficient initial force would encompass:

a force of about seven brigades, including three heavy armored brigades—adequately supported by airpower, land-based fires, and other enablers on the ground and ready to fight at the onset of hostilities—could suffice to prevent the rapid overrun of the Baltic states. While not sufficient to mount a sustained defense of the region or to achieve NATO's ultimate end state of restoring its members' territorial integrity, such a posture would fundamentally change the strategic picture as seen from Moscow. Instead of being able to confront NATO with a stunning coup de main that cornered it as described above, an attack on the Baltics would instead trigger a prolonged and serious war between Russia and a materially far wealthier and more powerful coalition, a war Moscow must fear it would be likely to lose.³⁵

The recommendations set forth below are designed to provide a comprehensive road map for NATO to establish a fully effective multi-domain deterrent and war-fighting force.

Before turning to the specifics of reinforcement, however, it will be important for NATO to arrive at a consensus on the key framework issue of the scope of any warfighting effort including attacks into Russia. There has been a substantial amount of discussion of the impact of Russian anti-access/area denial capabilities, including from Kaliningrad as noted above. In the event of conflict, effective warfighting would require reducing the impact of such capabilities including those coming from Russia proper (such as cruise missiles and air forces). Accordingly, as a prior analysis discussed:

[I]t should be apparent that once a military conflict starts a proper defense will require the capacity to target military activities emanating from Russia, including Kaliningrad. Two examples may make the point. In terms of A2/AD, the air-defense forces located in Kaliningrad will pose a significant threat to NATO forces. Similarly, as part of an invasion of the Baltics, Russian combat air would fly from bases in Russia. There are multiple ways to respond to such actions. For example, for Kaliningrad, possibilities include

31 Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of defense ministers, February 14, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_151504.htm.

32 Matthias Gebauer, Konstantin von Hammerstein, Peter Müller, and Christoph Schult, "NATO Grapples with Serious Organizational Shortcomings," *Spiegel Online*, October 20, 2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/nato-faces-serious-shortcomings-in-command-revamp-a-1173947.html>.

33 Joint Air Power Competence Centre, *Joint Air Power Following the 2016 Warsaw Summit*, NATO, Forward, vi, https://www.japcc.org/wp-content/uploads/Joint_Air_Power_Following_Warsaw_Summit.pdf.

34 See Kramer, Butler, and Lotrionte, *Cyber, Extended Deterrence, and NATO*.

35 Shlapak and Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank*, 1-2.

the use of artillery, cruise missiles, cyber and electronic warfare, special forces, air-to-ground weapons, land forces, or a combination. The military planning should be done by the SACEUR, but the key point for political leaders is that a successful military effort would require actions taken against Russian forces inside Russian borders.³⁶

The scope of such potential warfighting efforts will also impact NATO's command and control arrangements. As noted, at the February 2018 NATO Defense Ministerial there was agreement to revise the command structure.³⁷ The revisions include establishing an Atlantic command and a support command focused on logistics, reinforcement, and military mobility. As the issues of A2/AD imply, the command of forces that may engage in Russian territory also needs to be discussed. Furthermore, NATO cannot assume that any conflict would be limited to the Baltics, so the forces for NATO's southern regions including the Black Sea and the Mediterranean need to be under effective command and control. NATO has far more forces than does Russia, so NATO should be able to establish an effective defense if the forces are properly ready, sustainable, and deployed correctly.

1. Resources and Readiness

NATO's deterrence depends on providing adequate resources and using them wisely to support required capabilities. The Alliance has agreed on the need for enhanced resources, with a pledge for all allies to achieve at least 2 percent of gross domestic product spending on defense with 20 percent of that for defense investment. At the 2018 NATO summit, all allies should present plans to achieve the spending and investment pledges, which, if accomplished, would add approximately \$100 billion annually by 2024 to non-US NATO defense expenditures. It would be particularly valuable to accelerate the achievement of those pledges, as doing so would be, in and of itself, a valuable addition to deterrence and would complement the United States' expenditures on the European Deterrence Initiative.³⁸

³⁶ Franklin D. Kramer and Bantz J. Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, Atlantic Council, May 2016, 11, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Effective_Defense_of_the_Baltics_0516_web.pdf.

³⁷ Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of defense ministers, February 14, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_151504.htm.

³⁸ The European Deterrence Initiative for fiscal year 2018 is \$4.8 billion, and includes funds for increased presence (\$1,732.7 million), exercises and training (\$217.7 million), enhanced prepositioning (\$2,221.8 million), improved infrastructure (\$337.8 million), and building partnership capacity (\$267.3 million). EUCOM, *2018 European Deterrence Initiative (EDI)*

a. Readiness Initiative: The readiness, including the sustainability and logistical capabilities, of any force is a key deterrent requirement. The U.S. Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasizes “rebuilding military readiness” as a crucial line of effort.³⁹ As noted above, however, European forces have very limited sustainability capacity. Resolving this requires the use of the planned increase in budgets to buy the necessary munitions, logistical, and other readiness and sustainability materiel. Balancing readiness and sustainability with modernization and force structure is always a complicated task, but European forces are so low on readiness and sustainability that it should become a top priority. The summit should create a “Readiness Initiative” and charge SACEUR with creating the necessary requirements for the task. Nations should pledge to achieve Readiness Initiative requirements just as they have pledged to achieve overall spending and investment goals.⁴⁰

Relatedly, it will be crucial to ensure that host nation reception facilities and other logistics support are adequate and resilient. An important step will be to undertake a thorough inventory of military requirements and analysis of the capacity of the Baltic states to receive and support significant forward deploying forces. NATO might also utilize its advisory support team structure to assist that effort. It is likely that there will be significant gaps, which NATO should address by using its planning process to direct national infrastructure spending to the problem areas—and, as noted below, to seek EU assistance to help remedy mobility and logistical deficiencies.

b. NATO and the EU: NATO needs to take account of quite recent actions by the European Union of important consequence to deterrence. Under the EU's recently approved Permanent Structured Cooperation,

Fact Sheet, October 2017, <http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/article/36102/2018-european-deterrence-initiative-edi-fact-sheet>.

³⁹ Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States, p.7 <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Kramer and Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, 8-9: “The combat capabilities of the Baltic national, ‘in place,’ and early-arriving NATO forces must be sustained throughout what can be expected to be a mid-to high-intensity combat environment to create the time duration necessary for reinforcing NATO formations to arrive. This sustainability will necessarily take the form of replaceable combat systems, fuel, and ammunition. The same level of detailed planning and preparation must be undertaken for reinforcing NATO formations. The expected breadth and depth of sustainability packages needed for these forces can be substantial, but large pre-stock points and facilities are inherently more easily targeted, and thus more vulnerable. Sophisticated preparations must be made to counter both direct and indirect targeting of sustainment packages, and include the consideration of mobile packages on a large scale.”

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(Top) German Eurofighter intercepting a Lithuanian C-27 during a COMLOSS (Loss of Communication) scenario for BRTE 22. *Photo credit:* NATO HQ AIRCOM. (Bottom) French Soldiers conduct vehicle recovery operations during a chemical attack at the Strong Europe Tank Challenge, co-hosted by US Army Europe and the German Army, May 7-12, 2017. *Photo credit:* 7th Army Training Command.

PESCO, the twenty-five PESCO nations have agreed to mobility and logistics initiatives described as follows:

This [Military Mobility] project will . . . simplify and standardize cross-border military transport procedures . . . to enhance the speed of movement . . . [and] guarantee the unhindered movement of military personnel and assets within the borders of the EU . . . avoiding long bureaucratic procedures to move . . . be it via rail, road, air or sea.

The Network of logistic Hubs in Europe and support to Operations . . . aims at establishing cross-border solutions for more efficient, seamless military transport/logistics and . . . is expected to enhance logistic planning and movement as well as to deliver common standards and procedures, that will greatly improve the EU's and NATO's capability to conduct even the most demanding missions.⁴¹

NATO's recent decision to establish a rear area command focuses on precisely these kinds of issues. The expectation is that Germany will lead the NATO rear area command, and the Netherlands, whose forces are closely aligned with Germany, has been designated as leading the PESCO mobility and logistics initiatives.⁴² Accordingly, there is a clear opportunity for effective coordination, and mobility should also be a focus of the upcoming NATO summit. Moreover, Germany, which has large budgetary surpluses and which is far from NATO's 2 percent spending goal, should consider utilizing some of those moneys to enhance infrastructure.

First Collaborative PESCO Projects – Overview, December 10, 2017, 2, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32082/pesco-overview-of-first-collaborative-of-projects-for-press.pdf>.

42 Jacopo Barigazzi, 'EU unveils military pact projects', Politico Europe, <https://www.politico.eu/article/macron-eu-to-unveil-military-pact-projects/>.

41 European Council, *Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)*

On the research and development/acquisition side, the EU has undertaken a European Defence Action Plan including planning for budgeting approximately 500 million euros annually for research and development and approximately 5 billion euros annually for capability development.⁴³ While these are not very large numbers, properly utilized, they can enhance the warfighting capabilities of those countries that are both EU and NATO members and increase interoperability.

A coordinated discussion that matches EU plans with NATO requirements is very important to both prompt reinforcement and to interoperability. As also discussed below in the contexts of intelligence and cyber security, EU actions can be highly complementary to NATO efforts, resulting in an overall benefit to deterrence.

2. Intelligence

A critical requirement for the Alliance is effective intelligence. NATO has made a valuable step forward with the establishment of an assistant secretary general for intelligence and security. For the office to be most effective, three steps should be taken—an organized focus on Russia through the establishment of an eastern hub; the deployment of an effective indications and warning (I&W) system; and the incorporation of open source and private sector intelligence into the NATO system.

a. An eastern hub focused on intelligence could be important both for strategic and operational reasons. Understanding Russia is a complex enterprise and adopting a strategic view that goes beyond military analyses would be invaluable. In addition to military issues, the eastern hub's focus could include Russian economic and informational efforts as well as diplomacy and provide a deeper understanding of Russian intentions, capabilities, and activities. Inputs could be included from those nations that already follow various aspects of Russian behavior closely. Ideally, NATO could partner with the European Union—as key EU states “such as Sweden and Finland . . . would bring valuable contributions.”⁴⁴

The EU also has valuable institutional capabilities, including:

43 Jacopo Barigazzi, David M. Herszenhorn, and Harry Cooper, “After Years of Talk, EU Plans Defense Spending Spree,” *Politico*, June 6, 2017, <https://www.politico.eu/article/after-years-of-talk-eu-plans-defense-spending-spree/>; European Commission, *European Defence Action Plan: Towards a European Defence Fund*, November 30, 2016, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4088_en.htm.

44 Kramer and Speranza, *Meeting the Russian Hybrid Challenge*, 14.

the EU's Intelligence Analysis Center (INTCEN), which provides in-depth analysis, early warning, and situational awareness for EU decision makers and member states. Another asset is the EU's Hybrid Fusion Cell, which acts as ‘a focal point for indicators and warnings of hybrid attack that are noted by the EU institutions.’⁴⁵

NATO has established a “southern hub”⁴⁶ to focus on key issues to the south, and an eastern hub would have great benefit in dealing with the Russian challenge. Such a hub would not have to be in the east but could be at NATO headquarters under the assistant secretary general for intelligence and security or at NATO Joint Forces Command Brunssum or some combination or other approach—but the key is to implement the concept of greater focus on Russia.

b. An indications and warning system would have both strategic and operational benefits. On the strategic side, as one NATO study concluded,

The most effective way to alert Alliance leadership to emerging crisis is a set of strategically informed, operationally focused I&W. A strategic I&W process will warn leadership to weakening deterrence and could identify the beginning of adversary preparation for conflict. The I&W should be presented to leadership at regular intervals with the purpose of inspiring action or accepting risk. In short, an I&W system would identify the requirement to begin operational level planning and if necessary, execute a COA [course of action].⁴⁷

Likewise, effective I&W is necessary for an Alliance reinforcement strategy to operate promptly in the event of threatening Russian action.

c. Open source and private sector intelligence should be incorporated into NATO's intelligence system. Open source intelligence capabilities have dramatically improved in recent years, including both surveillance, such as through commercial satellites and analysis of digitized information generally available on the internet. Reflecting this trend, nations such as the United States maintain open source centers, but often private sector reports—for example, various reports

45 Ibid.

46 Officially designated as “NATO Strategic Direction South (NSD-S) Hub.” See, NATO, “NATO Strategic Direction South Hub Officially Opens,” September 2017, <https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2017/nato-strategic-direction-south-hub-officially-opens>.

47 Joint Air Power Competence Centre, *Joint Air Power Following the 2016 Warsaw Summit*, NATO, 2016, 92-93, https://www.japcc.org/wp-content/uploads/Joint_Air_Power_Following_Warsaw_Summit.pdf.

on cyber intrusions—are key information factors. Establishing a capacity to incorporate open source intelligence under the new assistant secretary general for intelligence and security would be particularly valuable for NATO as it seeks to understand and respond to hybrid threats where military forces and traditional intelligence methods are less central.

3. Prompt decision making is a critical requirement for NATO because of the relative proximity of Russian forces and the potential local force imbalances.

This requirement in the context of collective defense is different than NATO's general focus since 1991 on crisis management, which allows for much greater deliberation. The greatest deterrent may be a prompt demonstration of resolve through the movement of forces. Not all scenarios will necessarily require force movements, but some may. NATO should discuss various potential scenarios and determine what authorities might be delegated. While delegation is often put in terms of authority to the SACEUR, an effective approach, which NATO has used before, would be delegation to the secretary general and the SACEUR jointly. That would maintain joint civilian and military decision making.⁴⁸

Additionally, it would be useful to require the North Atlantic Council (NAC) to make a decision very promptly once SACEUR asks for further authority. Of course, should they choose to, nations may act prior to a NAC decision, alone or in coalition.⁴⁹ Indeed, in other theaters, such as South Korea, the United States has developed “flexible deterrent options” that both enhance capability and demonstrate resolve. Flexible deterrent options could usefully be developed by the United States and other reinforcing nations for the Baltics. But, ultimately, the best deterrent—and the best warfighting posture—will arise from a prompt NATO decision.

4. Prompt reinforcement is the critical ingredient of deterrence.

The U.S. 2018 Summary of the National Defense Strategy sets forth an operating model that includes

the capability to “delay, degrade, or deny enemy aggression” and to “surge war-winning forces.”⁵⁰ As a key element of such an effort in the context of the European theater, a force of approximately seven to ten brigades with appropriate air and other support would provide a significant initial warfighting capability. Ensuring that force can be promptly available—in fighting positions in approximately ten days—is well within NATO's capability so long as it undertakes to “move lots of stuff fast.”⁵¹

a. In-place forces: The local forces from the three Baltic countries, while having a force structure of on average about one active duty brigade in each country, are currently quite light and therefore have limited fighting power. They are complemented by the existing eFP multinational battlegroups, but for the eFP and local forces to be effective, they need to work closely together, including to establish command and control and undertake combined training with an interoperability focus. Most importantly, the forces of the three Baltic nations should operate on a combined basis to maximize effectiveness. NATO needs to put in place the required command and control and training efforts.

Additionally, the Baltic forces need improved capabilities. As has previously been proposed:

To enhance their capabilities, the Baltic nations should undertake a two-step effort. In the near term, their forces should continue to acquire and train on short and intermediate range anti-armor and air-defense systems. There are numerous such systems, such as Javelin and Stinger, in the inventories of NATO and partner countries, and the Baltic countries have begun such training and acquisition programs. . . . In the medium term, the Baltic nations each need to convert their light forces to heavy forces. Each country should convert existing forces and slightly expand them, so each has one heavy brigade—mechanized, armor, or a mix. However, it should be recognized that these are small countries and their defense budgets are likewise small . . . Accordingly, the proposed conversion will require some outside funding assistance. Such costs would be entirely

48 Kramer and Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, 9: “to ensure that the Alliance takes advantage of indications and warnings that the Alliance may receive . . . it may not always be timely to wait for full consultation by the NAC. In order to ensure that forces are maximizing their deterrence factor, the Secretary General, in consultation with the SACEUR, should have the authority to move forces under designated circumstances. In particular, a major buildup on the border of a [Baltic] nation could be a trigger authorizing such movements at the request of the affected nation.”

49 Article 5 of the NATO treaty allows for individual nations taking action as well as fully collective actions.

50 Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States, p.7, <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

51 Jennifer-Leigh Oprihory, “US Army's Hodges on Lessons Learned from Russia's Zapad 2017,” *Defense and Aerospace Report*, October 11, 2017, <http://defaeroreport.com/2017/10/11/usaer-chief-deterring-russia-lessons-learned-zapad-2017/>.

manageable if undertaken over a five-year period . . .⁵²

b. Prompt reinforcement: In addition to the eFP and host nation forces in the Baltic countries, to meet the seven-to-ten-brigade prompt reinforcement requirement, the additional initial forces need to come primarily from the United States forces in Europe and from the three most significant European militaries, namely those of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, with potential support from Poland and battalions from some of the small northern European NATO nations.

Specifically, the United States should plan the necessary transportation and associated logistics to be able to move the three brigades it maintains in Europe—the “heel-to-toe” brigade that operates in Eastern Europe, the 173rd Airborne Brigade located in Italy, and the 2nd Cavalry Regiment (Stryker) in Germany. An important issue will be whether the Marines should plan to fall in on their prepositioned equipment maintained in Norway with the capacity to then reinforce the Baltics; if so, it might be important to put the equipment on a Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron.

For the Europeans, the three large European nations of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom should create prompt reinforcement capabilities. As one potential approach, one heavy brigade each from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom could undertake to provide reinforcement within ten days.⁵³ Important readiness and logistical efforts will be required to accomplish this goal, and all three states are fully capable of achieving these levels so long as the necessary resources are applied. Finally, SACEUR should determine whether forces from Poland and other nations could be promptly available and useful for initial reinforcement.

c. Utilize exercises to enhance reinforcement: Exercises are a key component to deterrence. Using a robust exercise schedule for NATO forces in and around the Baltics would be a strong signal to Russia and would also help resolve some issues of prompt movement. As one analysis noted, “[A]n exercise schedule could be developed that maintains significant forces in or near the Baltic; this could help resolve the time/distance equation necessary to respond to Russian short-notice actions.”⁵⁴ Such exercises could be part of a program specifically focused on negating Russian A2/AD capabilities.

It is worth noting that, in addition to NATO-led exercises, national exercises should be part of the overall exercise effort. The United States European Command maintains a significant exercise schedule that other nations join,⁵⁵ and other NATO countries also undertake valuable exercises.⁵⁶

d. Revise the roles of the NRF and VJTF: Prompt reinforcement as described above will not suffice to prevail in a conflict. A second wave of sustaining forces will also be necessary. Those forces should be provided by a revised NATO Response Force. The NRF would have to be adapted as the initial reinforcing force would include the US, French, German, and UK forces noted above. For second-wave reinforcement, the United Kingdom, which has three armored infantry brigades, could build its reinforcing capability around the remaining two brigades and the Joint Expeditionary Force that includes Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.⁵⁷ Germany could utilize the remaining four of its five brigades of mechanized or armored forces, and additionally include the Dutch and Czech forces integrated into the German structures. France might combine its efforts with Poland, which has ten armored or mechanized brigades.⁵⁸ The United States also has prepositioned

52 Kramer and Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, 6.

53 An alternative to relying fully on prompt reinforcement would be forward deploying three or more heavy brigades into the Baltic states. That approach, which could have value, would face several countervailing difficulties. First, it is unlikely that consensus could be reached within the Alliance for such deployments in peacetime. Several countries would consider this to be provocative and would object. Second, no European ally is likely at this time to agree to forward deploy a full brigade, leaving the mission to the United States. Third, should heavy brigades be moved to the Baltic states, they would probably be unavailable for other “flexible theater postures” for “increased strategic flexibility and freedom of action.” It may be that future developments will call for additional forward stationing of forces, but prompt reinforcement should be an effective deterrent and initial warfighting capacity, Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States, p.9 <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

54 Kramer and Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, 7.

55 “At any given moment, EUCOM and its components are actively engaged in more than 100 exercises and operations . . . Most exercises, and even many of the operations, partner EUCOM with other nations and U.S. government agencies . . .” EUCOM, “Operations and Exercises,” <http://www.eucom.mil/mission/operations-and-exercises>.

56 For example, Poland hosts Exercise Anakonda. See EUCOM, “Anakonda 16,” <http://www.eur.army.mil/anakonda/default.htm>.

57 Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are part of the Joint Expeditionary Force but their forces will already be engaged.

58 See Kramer and Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, 7: “Of course, other NATO nations are closer than the United States to the Baltics, and have significant heavy-fighting capabilities. In the North, for example, Germany has five brigades of mechanized or armor forces. Poland has ten armored or mechanized brigades, and the United Kingdom—which is the framework nation leading the Joint Expeditionary Force, as set forth in the 2014 Wales Summit Declaration—has three armored infantry brigades. The Netherlands, Denmark,

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equipment in Europe for another brigade. Such a force and perhaps also the 82nd Airborne could be a key element of a second wave, along with or as part of the NRF. It is possible that the United States will determine to deploy additional forces in Europe, in which event those forces would be available for reinforcement. Other forces should, of course, come from remaining allies just as multiple allies are part of the eFP.

As the foregoing suggests, it will also be necessary to reconsider the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force to maintain it as a highly ready force. As noted, certain US, French, German, and UK forces will already be engaged and not available to a VJTF. However, as the revised NRF is developed as noted above, a revised VJTF can also be established, including the necessary transportation and other logistical requirements. The key will be to not allow “double counting.” SACEUR should be tasked to undertake a proposal for both a revised NRF and a revised VJTF.

e. Plan for reinforcement of the Black Sea region: As noted above, NATO has established a tailored force presence for the Black Sea region. While the geography and positioning of Russian forces makes less likely the same type of Russian attack as could occur in the Baltic arena, the threat is nonetheless significant. Accordingly, a reinforcement plan for the Black Sea region also needs to be developed, especially as neither the Romanian nor Bulgarian forces have sufficient capacity to meet a concerted Russian attack. While the SACEUR should determine the nature and sources of reinforcement, more immediately available forces might include US forces based on prepositioned stocks, Polish forces, and Germany’s 10th Armoured Division and Rapid Response Forces Division, as Germany has signed agreements to have those forces work closely with the Czech Republic’s 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade and Romania’s 81st Mechanized Brigade.⁵⁹ As is true in the Baltic arena, air and maritime issues must also be resolved.

5. Air power

Air power will be a critical requirement for an effective deterrent and warfighting strategy. Air can be promptly available, so particularly useful to support NATO’s forward forces in meeting a first-wave Russian attack and to help sustain the fight while reinforcements arrive. Accordingly, a significant focus on air power

is warranted. As the recent Joint Air Power Study concluded:

NATO’s adaptation is ground centric. NATO Joint Air Power must be incorporated into adaptations in order to provide more credible deterrence and to set the theatre in preparation for collective defence. NATO Joint Air Power should incorporate GBAD [ground-based air defense] assets, deployable NATO CRCs [control and reporting centers], key air assets and capabilities, air focused logisticians to each NFIU [NATO forward integration unit] and a realistic VJTF and enhanced NRF exercise programme.⁶⁰

NATO can enhance deterrence through air power by ensuring that more air forces are promptly ready to respond in the event of a conventional attack. It can utilize an “enhanced air forward presence” to complement the current ground-based eFP. It can create a ready air operations center focused on a Baltic scenario.⁶¹ For reinforcement purposes, it can ensure that a large number of air forces are able to be engaged. A recent analysis (also by RAND) and focused on US forces proposed a force of “28 USAF fighter squadrons” and “7 squadrons of heavy bombers.⁶² To these, European militaries could add French, German, and UK forces that have respectively eight, eight, and nine fighter and fighter-attack squadrons, and smaller NATO nations could provide additional aircraft.⁶³ Forces would be required for both the Baltic and Black Sea areas, and SACEUR should then be tasked to develop the final numbers for nations to provide.

Effective airpower will also require considerable logistical efforts, including the development of adequate airfields:

Modern airfields are weapons systems and should be able to support high tempo combat

and Norway have forces that could usefully complement those of the larger countries. All these forces can be made available for expanded forward presence and reinforcement for defense of the Baltics.”

59 NATO, “Germany, Romania and the Czech Republic Deepen Defence Ties,” February 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_141113.htm.

60 Joint Air Power Competence Centre, *Joint Air Power Following the 2016 Warsaw Summit*, 97, https://www.japcc.org/wp-content/uploads/Joint_Air_Power_Following-_Warsaw_-_Summit.pdf. As an earlier study stated: “Third, in addition to land forces, NATO will need significant air capabilities, which its member nations have in substantial quantities. Again, SACEUR should develop the requirements for counter-air, air interdiction, and close-air support.” Kramer and Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, 7.

61 Joint Air Power Competence Centre, *Joint Air Power Following the 2016 Warsaw Summit*, 89ff.

62 U.S. Military Capabilities and Forces for a Dangerous World: Rethinking the U.S. Approach to Force Planning, by David Ochmanek, Peter A. Wilson, Brenna Allen, John Speed Meyers, Carter C. Price, Rand, 47 https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1782.html.

63 International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2017*, Europe chapter, 63-182.

operations. The list of airfield requirements is long and ambitious: fuel, fuel storage, weapons, weapons storage, ramps, parking, full instrumentation, communication, snow removal, deicing, sweepers just to name a few. In the end, runways and taxiways are a good start, but are not enough to support 24/7 high tempo combat operations.⁶⁴

As noted above, United States European Deterrence Initiative funds will be used to improve airfields,⁶⁵ and such improvement could also be supported by the European Union mobility and logistics efforts as well as by national funding by NATO countries.

A key issue will be determining where to position NATO air forces:

SACEUR will have to evaluate whether nearby bases will be more valuable—as they may be in range of Russian cruise missiles and other attack capabilities—or whether bases farther out, combined with air refueling, would be more valuable. A combination may well be best. In making this evaluation, SACEUR should consider bases in Sweden and Finland, as the two countries have signed memoranda of understanding with NATO that authorize the use of their bases.⁶⁶

6. Maritime

NATO has recently underscored the importance of the maritime domain with the decision to create an Atlantic command, and maritime efforts have been increased. However, the maritime issues include not only the Atlantic but also the Baltic Sea area; the Barents Sea and the Kola Peninsula in the north needed to deal with Russia's expected "bastion defense"; and the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea in the south.

An important issue for NATO is determining which areas to emphasize and what forces and warfighting plans are required. For the Atlantic, it can be expected that US, French, UK, and Norwegian forces will be in the lead. Anti-submarine warfare and counter-cruise missile capabilities will be particularly important as Russia has expanded its submarine and cruise missile forces, and, if unchecked, they would threaten both transatlantic reinforcements well as undersea

transatlantic cables critical to both military and civilian communications.⁶⁷ In the Baltic area, Germany has taken the lead under its naval commanders' conference effort, but that activity needs to be further developed into a working multinational force. As a previous study stated:

A valuable first step would be for the NATO countries surrounding the Baltic to create a maritime framework that would allow them to work together, improving their interoperability and providing a much-enhanced combined capability, which could then operate under NATO command in the event of conflict. Sweden and Finland could be invited to join.

SACEUR will also need to develop plans with respect to the bastion defense in the north, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean. At a minimum, it will be necessary to ensure that the Standing NATO Maritime Groups are fully subscribed, but even if that is done, warfighting will require more substantial capabilities. SACEUR should be tasked to provide the necessary planning, and the Alliance will need to ensure that the required naval forces are ready and sustainable (which should be part of the "readiness initiative" proposed above).

7. Cyber

NATO's decision to establish a Cyber Operations Center and to integrate national cyber capabilities into NATO's deterrent and warfighting capacities are important steps forward. Each of those decisions needs to be promptly implemented. In addition, NATO must focus on the vulnerabilities, of especially its frontline states, to cyberattack as such vulnerabilities will undercut the ability to promptly provide reinforcement. NATO should use the Cyber Operations Center as a way to move to "collective cyber defense," where more cyber-capable nations assist those less capable. In addition, at the national level, the countries that are framework nations for the multinational battle groups are also highly cyber capable and should work with the host nations to help effect greater resilience of host nation electric grids, communications, and reception facilities.⁶⁸

A series of actions could include developing command and control and rules of engagement for

64 Joint Air Power Competence Centre, *Joint Air Power Following the 2016 Warsaw Summit*, 98.

65 Shawn Snow, "US Plans \$200 Million Buildup of European Air Bases Flanking Russia (December 2017)," *Air Force Times*, December 17, 2017, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/flashpoints/2017/12/17/us-plans-200-million-buildup-of-european-air-bases-flanking-russia/>.

66 Kramer and Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics*, 7-8.

67 Michael Birnbaum, "Russian Submarines Are Prowling around Vital Undersea Cables. It's Making NATO Nervous," *Washington Post*, December 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russian-submarines-are-prowling-around-vital-undersea-cables-its-making-nato-nervous/2017/12/22/d4c1f3da-e5d0-11e7-927a-e72eac1e73b6_story.html?utm_term=.64bbd1075bdf.

68 Kramer, Butler, and Lotrionte, *Cyber, Extended Deterrence, and NATO*.

“A comprehensive multi-domain plan for the defense of Europe . . . [should] . . . be developed by the SACEUR and approved by the NAC.”

cyber use in conflict, including establishing a concept of operations for integrating cyber effects based on national capabilities; enhancing resilience for frontline states, including the identification of highest-priority national military cyber assets and support for telecommunication and power grid networks; extending/enhancing automated intrusion protection; increasing detection capabilities by provisioning shared threat intelligence capabilities; developing NATO cyber defense “playbooks” and training exercises for cyberattack response; and providing “fly away” cyber-warfare teams to provide NATO member states with “blue team” assistance.⁶⁹ Additionally, NATO and the EU have worked increasingly closely on cyber, and the EU could utilize its authorities to help improve the resilience of EU nation telecommunications and electric grid networks.

8. The Nuclear Dimension

While this paper focuses on enhancing conventional deterrence through prompt reinforcement, the nuclear dimension warrants a brief discussion here and further amplification elsewhere.

Nuclear deterrence has been complicated recently in several ways. First, Russia’s doctrine of “escalating to de-escalate” posits the first use of nuclear weapons to halt an attack on Russian territory. This would complicate efforts to deal with Russia’s conventional A2/AD capabilities and could lower the nuclear threshold. Second, some security analysts have expressed concern that Russia might see an opportunity to seize vulnerable Baltic State territory and then threaten nuclear retaliation to deter a counterattack, thereby dividing the Alliance. And, third, Russia has been modernizing its nuclear force and delivery systems, including in ways that violate the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.⁷⁰

69 Ibid.

70 Radio Free Europe, “Mattis Says NATO Seeks Russia’s Compliance with Nuclear Treaty After ‘Violations,’” last updated November 10, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/nato-mattis-russia-inf-treaty-violations/28844967.html>.

The 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit sought to warn Russia about efforts to lower the nuclear threshold by stating that nuclear use would “fundamentally alter the nature of conflict.”⁷¹ The effect is to put Russia on notice regarding NATO’s willingness to escalate if necessary. Moreover, NATO’s three nations with national nuclear capabilities—the United States, France, and the United Kingdom—are all planning modernizations of their national nuclear forces so the substance of nuclear deterrence is clear.⁷²

While nuclear deterrence will not be the focus of the 2018 summit, it is always important to underscore that NATO is a nuclear alliance. Accordingly, to complement efforts to enhance conventional force readiness at the 2018 summit, the Alliance should commit to enhance nuclear deterrence through:

- regular discussion in the Nuclear Planning Group of NATO’s nuclear posture and plans;
- commitment by member nations to modernize and upgrade the readiness of their dual capable aircraft (DCA), and commitment by the United States to modernize the weapons for the DCA; and
- the review and exercise of NATO nuclear response options by SACEUR.

9. A Comprehensive Multi-Domain Plan for the Defense of Europe

As the foregoing analysis and recommendations demonstrate, NATO is facing a significant threat from Russia. While each of the recommendations has specific value, they would be most useful if integrated into a comprehensive multi-domain plan for the defense of Europe that would be developed by the SACEUR and approved by the NAC. War is inherently uncertain, and no one can predict how an incident or what appears to be a localized conflict might drive a larger dynamic. Planning should include

71 NATO, “Warsaw Summit Communique,” July 9, 2016, Para. 54, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

72 NATO, “Warsaw Summit Communique,” Para. 53: “As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. The strategic forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States, are the supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies. The independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France have a deterrent role of their own and contribute to the overall security of the Alliance. These Allies’ separate centres of decision-making contribute to deterrence by complicating the calculations of potential adversaries. NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture also relies, in part, on United States’ nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and on capabilities and infrastructure provided by Allies concerned. These Allies will ensure that all components of NATO’s nuclear deterrent remain safe, secure, and effective.”

the possibility of responding to hybrid actions that might escalate into significant conflict. Russia has shown the capacity through exercises and real-world actions to operate throughout NATO's area of responsibility. Demonstrating a readiness to meet any such contingencies will maximize the effectiveness of NATO's deterrent capacity. Tasking SACEUR to develop the required planning and providing the capabilities to support such plans will be the greatest assurance that NATO nations can have that deterrence will succeed.

CONCLUSION

NATO is fully capable of deterring or, if required, defeating Russian conventional forces so long as appropriate steps are taken to upgrade NATO conventional force capabilities as described. Such actions are not a full strategy for dealing with Russia, as conventional force capabilities need to be integrated with hybrid and nuclear strategies, and dialogue, however difficult, should also be maintained.⁷³ Nonetheless, to avoid miscalculation by Russia and to ensure the freedom and security of NATO nations, enhanced conventional force capabilities are a critical requirement.

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⁷³ NATO rightly concluded not to conduct "business as usual" with Russia after the annexation of Crimea, Russian aggression in the Donbas, and Russian interference in Western elections. That remains in general a wise policy. During this period, national leaders of NATO nations have had discussions with Russia regarding Ukraine and multiple other matters, and the NATO-Russia Council has met. More recently, it has been announced that the SACEUR will meet with the Russian Chief of Staff. NATO should consider how to avoid misinterpretation and miscalculation, and what would constitute an effective dialogue. See Bryan Frederick, Matthew Povlock, Stephen Watts, Miranda Priebe, and Edward Geist, *Assessing Russian Reactions to U.S. and NATO Posture Enhancements*, RAND Corporation, 2017, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1800/RR1879/RAND_RR1879.pdf.

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