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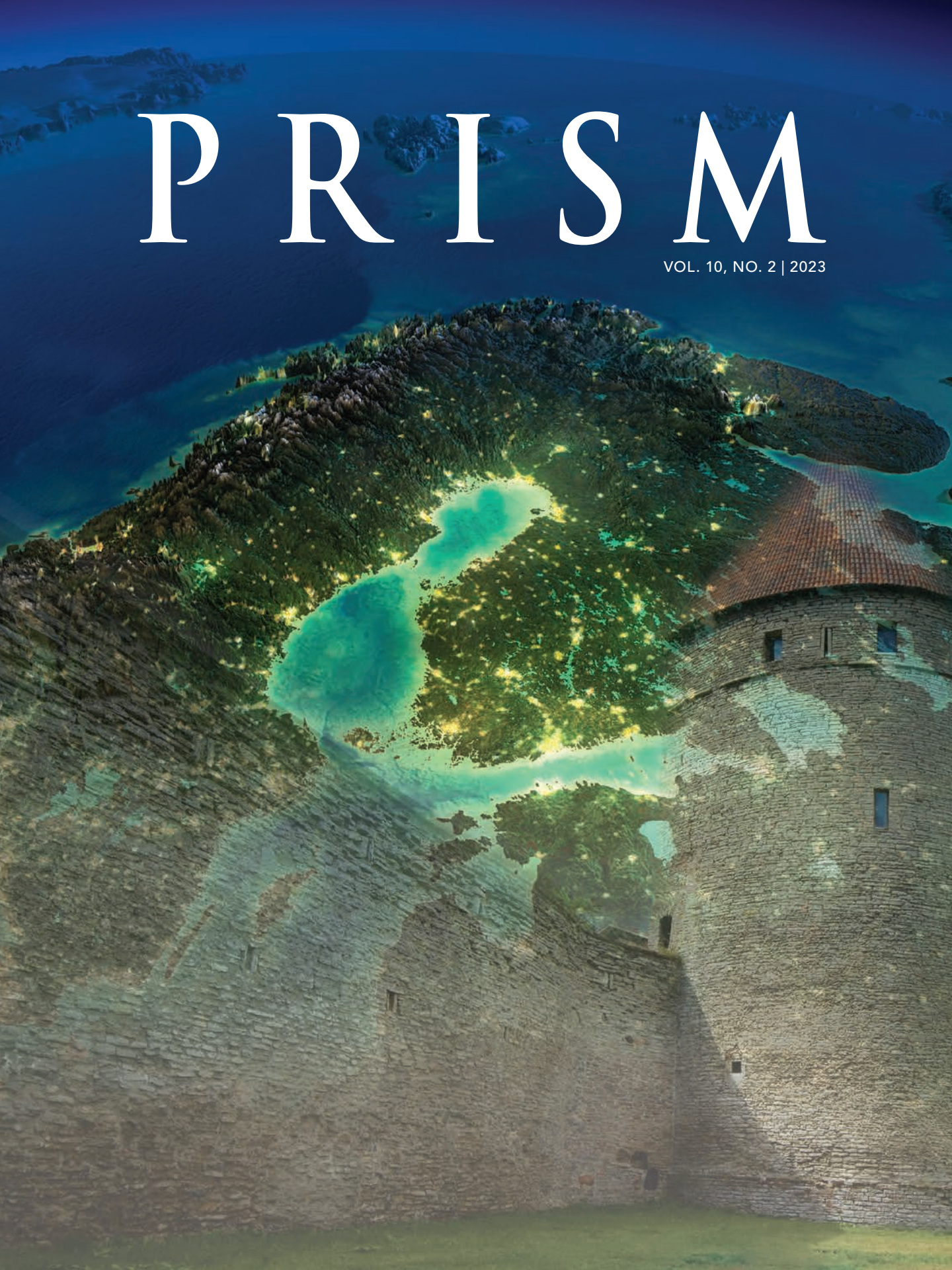

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ABOUT

PRISM is National Defense University's (NDU) flagship journal of national and international security affairs. PRISM's mission is "To provide unique insight for current and future national security leaders on emerging security challenges beyond the strictly military domain of the joint force, including transnational, multi-domain threats, gray zone conflict, the technological innovation challenge, and geoeconomic competition among the great powers."

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DISCLAIMER

FORWARD DEFENSE

Narva Castle in Estonia and Ivangorod Fortress Face Each Other Across the Narva River. Photo by Ad Meskens, May 17, 2018

Kungsholms Fort on the island in the Baltic Sea near Karlskrona, Sweden. Photo by rbrechko

If You Want Peace . . .

By Robert Egnell and Michael T. Plehn

The optimism widely felt throughout the West at the end of the Cold War was justified. Much that seemed impossible during the preceding 45 years suddenly appeared achievable. Europeans could envision a Europe whole and free. The tectonic shift in the dynamics of world power was breathtaking as Eastern Europe was freed from the yoke of communism, while the Soviet Union dissolved into 15 separate states, several of which—most notably the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—joined the liberal, rules-based world order choosing democracy, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Union.

There seemed so much potential—the possibility of making the liberal, rules-based global order universal. The costly architecture of Cold War defense that had deterred Soviet aggression could finally be dismantled along with the notorious Berlin Wall. Many Western countries jumped at the opportunity to seize a peace dividend and

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expand their commerce into the new markets of the post-communist world. But in their exuberance, did they forget why the Cold War never escalated into a hot war?

Defense spending in many countries decreased drastically; conscription was largely abandoned; armies, navies, and air forces dwindled; and defense industrial infrastructure atrophied. When the al Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001, occurred the global terrorist threat became the single focus of Western security attention. Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency replaced large-scale armed combat as the driver of military planning, strategy, and procurement. Russia's 2007 cyber-attack against Estonia was barely noticed. Neither the 2008 Russia-Georgia war nor Russia's occupation of Crimea and insurgency in eastern Ukraine in 2014 could divert Western attention from the challenges in the Near East and Central Asia.

Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 woke the world. After 75 years major war had returned to Europe, and European powers were shocked and unprepared. Only the three Baltic states, and to a lesser degree Finland and Poland, had warned of the persistent Russian threat in Europe. The overall transatlantic reaction was rapid and to the surprise of skeptics has remained aligned with a resolute refusal to allow Russia to prevail in its efforts to erase the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian nationality.

In no region of the world has the response been more notable than in the Baltic Sea region. This region—consisting of nine states, divisible into an eastern flank (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), a northern flank (Finland, Sweden, and Norway), and a southern flank (Poland, Germany, and Denmark)—has undergone a radical transformation, not just in arms materiel and strategy but in psychology, and in some cases even in identity, as well. For Sweden and Finland, the events of 2022 resulted in their applications for NATO membership, reversing historic non-alignment.

This issue of *PRISM*—titled "Forward Defense"—examines the security transformations taking place in these diverse but aligned countries. As distinct as these nine countries are they are each reinforcing, or in some cases rebuilding, their armed forces and reviving the Total Defense or Comprehensive Defense concepts they embraced during the Cold War. Total or Comprehensive Defense is a strategic approach that recognizes the multidimensional threat posed by autocratic countries and the existential threat to the liberal, rules-based world order. It understands that effective deterrence depends on both resistance and resilience and codes those into the respective security and defense strategies.

This issue of *PRISM* is the product of a multi-year collaboration between the U.S. National Defense University and Swedish Defense University, a collaboration that has helped forge closer relations between our two countries and that demonstrates the benefits of partnership. It is a step toward conceptual interoperability that might be emulated by others. Previous efforts have resulted in a series of exercises and the publication of "Baltics Left of Bang," a collection of policy briefs developed by the two universities upon which this current effort builds.

The articles in this issue of *PRISM* are not official statements but reflect the official and unofficial statements and efforts by governments and peoples in the Baltic Sea region to preserve peace by preparing for war. PRISM

Putin attacks, there is war in Ukraine, Explosions in Kiev, missiles on other cities. Photo by Giovanni Cancemi, February 24 2022

Russian tank on ruined Ukrainian city. Photo by: Art Father.

The Baltic Sea Region at an Inflection Point

By G. Alexander Crowther

The unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, catapulted conventional military operations to the forefront of Western security thinking, re-kindled serious contemplation of major war in Europe, and galvanized dramatic re-thinking among Western countries about how to secure and protect democratic governance which has become the norm in the transatlantic region. Alarm and fear are perhaps most acutely felt in the Baltic Sea and adjoining regions which share extended borders with Russia and have suffered Russian and Soviet domination for centuries. Russian President Vladimir Putin, seeking to reverse the tide of NATO expansion and to dominate a sphere of influence resembling that of the defunct Soviet Union, has inadvertently catalyzed what German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called "Zeitenwende"—a major inflexion point in global geopolitics resulting in fundamental political re-alignments.

The Putin regime uses all the elements of Russian national power to gain its political and strategic objectives. However, the most immediate threat to peace, stability, and security in the Baltic Sea region is Russian political warfare. This warfare is waged in the so-called gray zone, where actions though aggressive do not cross the threshold of armed attack or a use of force as defined and proscribed in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Russia and its accomplices including China, Iran, and North Korea utilize a variety of deniable and difficult-to-attribute means including information operations, cyber operations, and criminal operations to achieve strategic advantage. The complexity of this challenge can only be fully appreciated by examining the many elements of national power including diplomatic, information, military, economic, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, political, social, and infrastructure. Western analysts commonly refer to this model by the acronym DIMEFILPSI.

Putin clearly seeks to destabilize states in the transatlantic alliance and to fracture the two organizations that provide the greatest challenge to Russian influence: the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While the Baltic states themselves are the most directly threatened by Russia,

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the Baltic Sea "north shore"—comprised of Sweden, Finland, and Norway—is also challenged: Sweden and Finland are members of the EU but not NATO while Norway is a member of NATO but not a member of the EU. Sweden and Finland have historically cooperated closely with NATO and are currently in the queue to join the alliance while Norway is closely integrated into the EU common market via the European Economic Area (EEA). There remain substantial differences of perspective—though in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine these may be converging.

A leitmotif within Russian strategic thinking is that war is the natural state of relations between states and that the West has been at war with Russia—historically and especially since the 1990s—and deploys information operations to achieve regime change in states aligned with Russia and in Russia itself. This perception of a constant state of war justifies doing whatever is necessary to achieve Russian political goals: "the ends justify the means." This belief obviates any need for separate strategies for different means; there is one comprehensive strategy using techniques ranging from non-violent competition to kinetic operations. Examples include cyber-attacks against Estonia in 2007, conventional warfare against Georgia in 2008, a combination of information and deniable military operations against Ukraine in 2014, and ongoing conflicts in Syria and Libya as proxy attacks on Western interests. Such operations have been described over the years as "active measures," "reflexive control," "hybrid warfare," the "Gerasimov Doctrine," and "gray-zone operations." Each term has its advocates and critics. The Russian label for these operations is "New Generation Warfare."

As these operations do not exceed the threshold of armed combat—typically resulting in damage or destruction of property and infrastructure as well as human casualties—international law does not sanction military retaliation. As states committed to the rule of law EU and NATO countries are bound by these constraints of international law. Conversely, authoritarian states such as Russia use law as a tool of oppression—they are sometimes referred to as "rule-by-law" as opposed to rule of law states—and are not so constrained.

Prior to Russia's February invasion of Ukraine, not everyone agreed that the Russian Federation was a strategic threat. Even today, states have diverse perceptions of the Russia threat, and attitudes towards engaging Russia range from "NATO should intervene in Ukraine" to "we should not humiliate Russia." The three Baltic states, Poland, and Finland feel Russia's recent bellicosity vindicates their past insistence on focusing on Russia as the main strategic threat. Finland, unlike so many others, never disarmed or dismantled its defense architecture at the end of the Cold War.

As might be expected, Russians have a different perspective on the region and its history. The regime sees itself as the victim and the guardian of Christianity, conservative values, and Orthodox civilization. They also believe that the current global system was designed by the West and operates to marginalize them. Putin's response is to seek to destabilize that system using political warfare.

Political Warfare

Russia has historically been an active practitioner of political warfare. Its recent, somewhat surprising, military shortcomings in Ukraine have taken the imminent threat of conventional intervention off the table for the foreseeable future, leaving Putin even more dependent on political warfare. The Western allies and partners must recognize and prepare for this and continue working tirelessly to frustrate those efforts.

The Soviet Union used political warfare from the very beginning. According to American expert Stephen Blank:

> *The legendary tactical flexibility of the Soviet regime derives from their conceptualization of conflict as being waged on all fronts or across the board—whence the internal structure of the protagonists becomes the center of gravity. The Bolshevik vision of politics as another form of warfare endowed its practitioners with the maximum feasible number of instruments with which to wage their struggle even in the face of superior enemy military power.*[1]

The American diplomat George Kennan pioneered the American concept of political warfare. Kennan wrote:

> *Political warfare is the logical application of Clausewitz's doctrine in time of peace. In broadest definition, political warfare is the employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives. Such operations are both overt and covert. They range from such overt actions as political alliances, economic measures (as ERP [the Economic Recovery Plan, better known as the Marshall Plan]), and "white" propaganda to such covert operations as clandestine support of "friendly" foreign elements, "black" psychological warfare and even encouragement of underground resistance in hostile states.*[2]

Building on Kennan in a way, but trying to analyze and describe evolving tactics and military operations in the first decade of the 21st century from a military perspective, American strategist Frank Hoffman wrote:

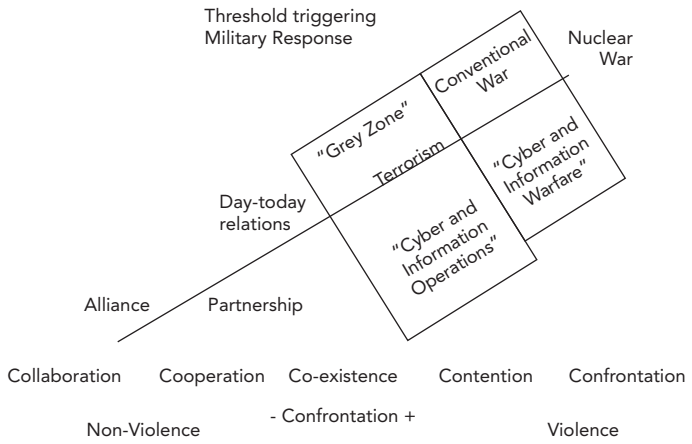
> *Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder . . . to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of conflict. The effects can be gained at all levels of war.*[3]

Though Hoffman was not describing a Russian approach to conflict Russian strategists viewed this concept through the lens of what they thought the United States was inflicting on them, particularly in the guise of "Color Revolutions." To this Russian strategists then added significant elements of information operations, reflecting their long historical use of information as a weapon, and the belief that the USSR collapsed due to a concerted information campaign directed against it. This potent mix resulted in what could be called "hybrid warfare with Russian characteristics."

Political warfare is often described as operating in the "gray zone." The term was used by then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work in an April 2015 speech at the U.S. Army War College.[4] Scholar Michael Mazarr identifies those who are operating in the gray zone as "revisionist or dissatisfied powers … in the market for options to transform the status quo."[5] Gray zone operations are those below the threshold of "use of force" or "armed attack" as described in the Charter of the United Nations.[6] If and when an offending state crosses that threshold the target state is then permitted to deploy all its elements of national power including armed force in self defence (see figure).

Political warfare, hybrid warfare, and gray zone conflict all attempt to describe "a form of strategy that leverages all of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic capabilities at a nation's disposal to achieve its strategic objectives."[7] Throughout the Cold War the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Peoples Republic of China all used political warfare extensively. After a brief interval following the end of the Cold War, during Russia's re-building, and China's integration into the global political and economic marketplace, this war

Figure: The Spectrum of Competition and the Grey Zone



is being waged again, and with intensity. As Putin burns through the Russian military and Russia suffers from international isolation and economic sanctions political warfare will be Putin's most dependable tool against the West. Therefore, the Western countries must prepare for more, not less, political warfare.

A problem for the West is that its strongest tool, NATO, is not designed to deter or to wage political warfare. Although military forces obviously play an important role in deterring the more violent elements of competition, it is the EU that possesses the tools necessary to face the challenges of political warfare, namely internal hard power, internal soft power, and external soft power. Although the EU has to date not been successful in deterring Russian political warfare, it holds the keys to success due to its control of these distinctive forms of power.

Deterring political warfare is very challenging as the United States and its allies and partners have discovered the hard way in recent years. Deterrence by punishment has proven ineffective as Russia appears willing to absorb the escalation-adverse, constrained retaliation of economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation allowed by international law. What is left for the West is deterrence by denial—preventing Russia from achieving its political objectives through political warfare. Although the military has a place in this deterrence, "left of bang analyses" emphasize non-military preparedness, focusing on resilience, as part of a so-called "comprehensive approach," "comprehensive defense," or "total defense."

The Baltic States

As states that were violently occupied by the Soviet Union, the three Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—believe Russia to be an existential threat; they share this point of view with several other EU and NATO members. They fear however that many in the EU and NATO still do not understand the extent of the Russian threat and its potential consequences; therefore, they have conducted a coordinated awareness campaign to convince their allies and partners that Russia is indeed a serious threat not only to the Baltic states but to Europe and other democratic states as well.

Estonia's application of the instruments of power in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has mirrored its peacetime practices. It has invested most heavily in building resilience, especially in the military domain. It has also sought to work closely

with international partners, often taking forward-leaning positions with Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

Russia's escalation in Ukraine gave Latvian leaders a political opportunity to develop and deepen Latvia's defense strategy and build resilience. It resulted in greater political support for implementing certain internal policies to reduce Russian influence while at the same time deepening the reorientation of the economy to the West. It also resulted in Latvia assuming a more prominent role in external affairs, working closely with its Baltic neighbors and Poland to achieve common strategic goals.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine redeemed Lithuania's long-standing threat assessment of Russian expansionism while signaling that the country's security policy direction—to deploy total defense initiatives, modernize armed forces and deepen NATO interconnectivity—was correct all along. The war merely accelerated Vilnius' decision-making on defense and sped up the implementation of key priority policies.

The Baltic states have a lot in common, yet each is unique with three different languages bearing legacies of distinct cultures. Estonia is Finno-Ugric and looks north. Lithuania, a millennium-old nation, was once in a commonwealth with Poland and looks south. Estonia and Latvia have large Russian minorities while Lithuania has small Polish and Russian minorities which are ideologically more in line with the native Lithuanians than typically is the case of Russian minorities. All three were part of both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union; all three are now members of both NATO and the EU.

Like all post-Soviet/Warsaw Pact states, they cherish their independence. They are all small states geographically and demographically. Estonia is twice as large as New Hampshire with a population of 1.3 million; roughly the same as Dallas, Texas or Hannover, Germany. Latvia is slightly larger than West Virginia with a population of 1.9 million making it larger than Phoenix, Arizona, or Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Lithuania is also the size of West Virginia and has a population of 2.8 million, roughly as large as Chicago or Munich.

Although they are developed countries, their small size makes it difficult for the Baltic states to field large militaries. They therefore maintain modest professional forces, augmented in times of crisis by large-scale mobilization. Their militaries share the common mission to deter Russian overt kinetic operations by denial, holding off Russian advances until reinforcements arrive under NATO's Article 5 collective defense clause. Each hosts a multinational NATO battle group as part of the Enhanced Forward Presence mission. All three depend on the "whole-of-society" approach in which the armed forces have *a* role but not *the* role in achieving resilience to prepare for and respond to Russian aggression. Externally, they each participate in international frameworks and organizations as part of a whole of international society approach. They also cooperate with each other. None seeks to lead the trio; nor would any tolerate the others doing so. However, they have worked together closely diplomatically and on synchronized awareness and advocacy campaigns in Europe and the United States achieving favorable policy outcomes within both NATO and the United States.

The North Shore

The north shore countries—Sweden, Finland, and Norway—have much in common, yet they have not always aligned in international relations. Norway was a founding member of NATO but is not a member of the EU while Finland and Sweden joined the EU in 1995 and resisted NATO membership until Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Their application for NATO membership signifies a fundamental shift in security relations in the region and one of the biggest changes for modern Finland and Sweden.

The north shore countries share a common concern about the security challenge posed by Russia, but their threat perceptions vary somewhat. As with the south shore countries—Poland, Germany, and Denmark—even modest distance from Russia diminishes threat perceptions. History also plays a part in this. Russia defeated Sweden in the Northern Wars in 1721 however friction continued between the two until 1809 when Sweden was defeated in the Finnish War and Russia annexed Finland. The Grand Duchy of Finland remained a principality in the Russian Empire from 1809 until achieving independence in 1917. Finland fought two wars with the Soviet Union: the 1939–40 Winter War and the 1941–44 Continuation War. Though Finland put up fierce resistance these ended with Finland losing 10 percent of its territory to the Soviets. Together these experiences led Finland to an extremely cautious attitude toward Russia and to invest in hard power to deter a third war with its giant eastern neighbor, a practice they continued in the post-Cold War era.

Sweden viewed the Soviet Union as the main threat during the Cold War, but when the Cold War ended Swedish defense policy stopped focusing on Moscow and Sweden began to dismantle its extensive Cold War defense apparatus. This changed drastically in the wake of Russia's aggressive operations in Ukraine in 2014 which served as a wake-up call and reminder of the Russia threat. Swedish defense leaders understand that they own the key terrain of the Baltic Sea with the island of Gotland which was demilitarized in the wake of the Cold War; the Gotland Regiment was reactivated in 2018, 13 years after its post-Cold War deactivation. Although historically Sweden has worked closely with Finland and partnered with both the United States and NATO the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine was a sufficient shock to reverse 200 years of Sweden's history of non-alignment when Sweden applied in May 2022 for NATO membership.

The Sweden/Finland diplomatic and security relationship is very close, and they coordinate their foreign policies, including their relationships with both NATO and the United States. Even before applying to join NATO, they cooperated very closely with NATO through the special "30+2" program while both stated that, were they to seek membership, they would strongly prefer to apply and join together, as they eventually did in May 2022. They also have a trilateral security relationship with the United States codified in an MOU signed in 2017 by the three Ministers of Defense.

Much like Finland, Norway has pursued a dual policy of deterrence and "reassurance" towards Moscow since the 1940s, seeking security by membership through collective defense in NATO but also by considering Soviet/Russian security sensibilities. Norway has never fought a war with Russia and the Finnmark region (the region of Norway abutting Russia) was the only territory liberated by the Soviets that was freely and quickly returned at the end of World War II. Norway has sought pragmatic cooperation with Russia on several areas of common interest, such as fishing, environmental issues, and search and rescue. This does not mean that Norway's national security policy is accommodationist, indeed they invest heavily in military capabilities (including purchases of the F-35 and the P-8), maintain war plans to defend Norwegian territory from Russian attack, have expanded the security apparatus on their border with Russia, and participate in the German-led NATO Enhanced Forward Presence battle group in Lithuania.

Externally, Norway tends to focus on the North Sea and partnerships with other Atlantic naval players, particularly the UK and the United States. Both their national treasure (in the form of North Sea oil) and their lines of communication for external support run west. Norway also hosts the U.S. Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway (MCPP-N) brigade combat set that serves to support U.S.

operations and exercises in Europe and the Middle East as well as serving as prepositioned equipment in case of regional combat operations.

While there are differences between the three north shore states there are many similarities. They share a common Scandinavian heritage. Both Finland and Norway were ruled by Sweden at one point, indeed Norway only became independent from Sweden in 1905. Unfortunately, this as well as Sweden's dismantling of its total defense system after the Cold War and its skepticism toward NATO membership have sometimes strained Norwegian-Swedish security cooperation. The very word "union" has a negative connotation in Norwegian because it is so closely associated with the 1814-1905 union with Sweden. Nevertheless, the three states do cooperate (together with Denmark and Iceland) very closely through the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) framework. NORDEFCO is designed to encourage cooperation, strengthen the participating nations´ national defense, explore synergies, and facilitate efficient common solutions. Since 2014 NORDEFCO has also emphasized working together in crisis and wartime, to strengthen defense and deterrence vis-à-vis Russia.

Another factor that binds these three countries is that they each use some variant of what can be called the comprehensive approach, based on a whole-of-government or more ambitiously a whole-of-society approach to security threats.

The South Shore

The south shore countries—Poland, Germany, and Denmark—have significantly distinctive views on Baltic Sea security. While the Baltic countries are strictly focused on the Russia threat and the north shore countries have similar outlooks on security as well as enjoying important cultural alignments as Scandinavians, the south shore is culturally heterogeneous and has different historical, geographical, and economic perspectives on national, regional, and global security. While Poland tends to have a regional focus seeing Russia as pacing threat, Germany has a more global perspective and has internal divisions over whether Russia is a threat at all. Denmark is more closely aligned with the North Shore states sharing their Scandinavian history and culture and like Norway is west- and Atlantic-oriented.

These perspectives are the result of both geography and history. Russia and Poland share a mutual hatred going back centuries; Poland took advantage of the Russian "time of troubles" and occupied Moscow from 1610 to 1612, and the Polish king sought the Russian throne. Russians remembered this and (together with Austria and Prussia) dismantled Poland in the late 18th century, integrating the rump of Poland into the Russian Empire and sought to extinguish Polish identity by such measures as forced conversion to Russian Orthodoxy. After a brief period of Polish independence between 1918 and 1939, the Soviet Union occupied Poland towards the end of World War II and imposed a Soviet-style communist government integrated into the Warsaw Pact. Since the demise of the Warsaw Pact in 1989, Poland has focused on maintaining its hard-won sovereignty while also keeping an eye on the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad on the northern border.

Germany, on the other hand, has emerged from its history of aggression between 1871 and 1945 reluctant to develop or deploy hard power and has tried to partner with Russia, perceived by many Germans as an inevitable strategic economic partner. Although West Germany was fully armed throughout the Cold War when it was a front-line state divided by the victors of World War II, today Poland is the front-line state, which diminishes German perceptions of the Russia threat. German politicians are not unanimous in perceiving Russia as a strategic threat, some still viewing it as an economic partner; this despite that Russia has not hesitated to use hard power on German territory, as

Political Map of the Baltic Sea. Image by: Nations Online Project

with the August 2019 assassination of Zelimkhan Khangoshvili in Berlin. Russia's aggression against Ukraine since 2014, but particularly since its 2022 invasion has forced a reckoning in Germany which has not yet played out. On 27 February 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Sholtz spoke of "Zeitenwende" (literally "times-turn").[8] He was unequivocal announcing "a one-off sum of €100 billion" for the Ministry of Defence and promising to invest more than two percent of gross domestic

product for German defense and to provide weapons to Ukraine. He even called for making two percent for defence part of the Basic Law, the German constitution. Political reality, however, takes its toll; due to factional dissent within the Social Democratic Party Germany has not fully funded its defense promises and has balked at providing some arms and muntions to the Ukrainians. Indeed, according to mid-2022 NATO estimates German defense expenditures will reach only 1.44 percent of GDP.[9] This internal friction will prevent Germany from fully supporting Ukraine for the foreseeable future.

Denmark was also a frontline state during the Cold War and allied itself closely with NATO and the United States; this alignment still serves as the cornerstone of Danish security and defense policy. As a maritime nation with a North Sea coast and territory in the north Atlantic, Denmark emphasizes links to the UK and United States.

Baltic Sea Shield

Putin and his regime appear intent upon recapturing regional hegemony with the former Soviet Republics subordinate to Russia and enclosed within a sphere of influence that includes much of eastern Europe. Although Russia has avoided behavior that would justify a NATO military response, it constantly wages political warfare against Western states with operations in the information- and cyber-spaces in particular as well as the weaponization of energy resources and of refugees, all intended to destabilize the West. The nine Western-aligned states of the region are faced with such Russian political warfare daily.

With its military setbacks in Ukraine and the overall degradation of its military Russia can be expected to continue waging political warfare against Europe and North America into the indefinite future. It will continue to use all the elements of national power to weaken both national and international organizations, particularly using influence campaigns, often facilitated through cyber operations.

Prior to Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine there was significant diversity in national threat perceptions within the region. Those states farther east, particularly those that had been occupied by the Russian Empire and/or the Soviet Union, were singularly focused on Russia as an existential strategic threat, while those farther west tended toward an attitude balanced between Russia as threat, opportunity, or even potential partner.

Although all these states are targets of Russian political warfare, those in closer proximity to Russia unsurprisingly focus more intensely on Russia. The Baltic states and Poland focus entirely on the Russia threat (which they see as existential). Finland focuses on Russia but does not presently see the threat as existential. Germany sees Russia more as a challenge than a threat, and Denmark and Norway both understand that Russia is a threat to both the EU and NATO and therefore one of several challenges for Copenhagen and Oslo. These differences in perspectives complicate issues for the organizations that these states belong to. Because both the EU and NATO tend to work on a basis of unanimity, both can be blocked from action if any member dissents from an agreement. Although decisions based on unanimity can be very powerful, getting to a decision can be quite difficult, and decisions on Russia policy have been particularly difficult. While Europeans responded robustly to Russia's aggression in the Don River Basin, the annexation of Crimea, and the attempted assassination of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, neither the EU nor NATO are unanimous in their attitudes toward Russian information operations (particularly interference in the democratic process) and cyber operations. This is changing based on the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, however Europeans remain divided.

The security of the Baltic Sea region ultimately

depends on the strategies, approaches, and national security elements of the nine Baltic Sea regional states. NATO alone is not enough. They have each adopted distinct approaches to combating Russian gray zone aggression and political warfare. Each state in the region has undertaken significant reforms and strategic initiatives in response to the recently revived existential threat posed by revanchist Russia. None any longer wishes to be seen as a free-rider hiding behind U.S. power, and a sense of national and regional strategic autonomy has emerged. The reforms and initiatives of the individual states are critical. Yet there is still keen awareness of the strength in numbers and the power of confederacy. The Baltic states banded together to gain support through international frameworks and organizations (focusing on the EU and NATO). They work with their neighbors and they seek to influence larger partners (e.g., the U.S. and NATO) to achieve security. Their divergent interests and perspectives will need to find the most appropriate multilateral form to achieve policy goals: sometimes as NORDEFCO, the Baltic Three, as part of the Visegrad Four, and sometimes not.

Through their individual and collective efforts and initiatives the countries of the Baltic Sea region have created a robust Baltic Sea shield against Russian aggression. They have jointly strengthened Europe's northern flank; and while this Baltic Sea shield is not an iron-clad guarantee against Russian aggression, these efforts have substantially changed the strategic calculus vastly increasing the predictable cost to Russia of any incursion. The collective effort is well worthy of close examination and possible emulation in other regions vulnerable to autocratic aggression. The Baltic Sea region is an important example of states that are committed to working together and cooperating in order to protect their commonly accepted democratic freedoms, values, and "way of life." PRISM

Notes

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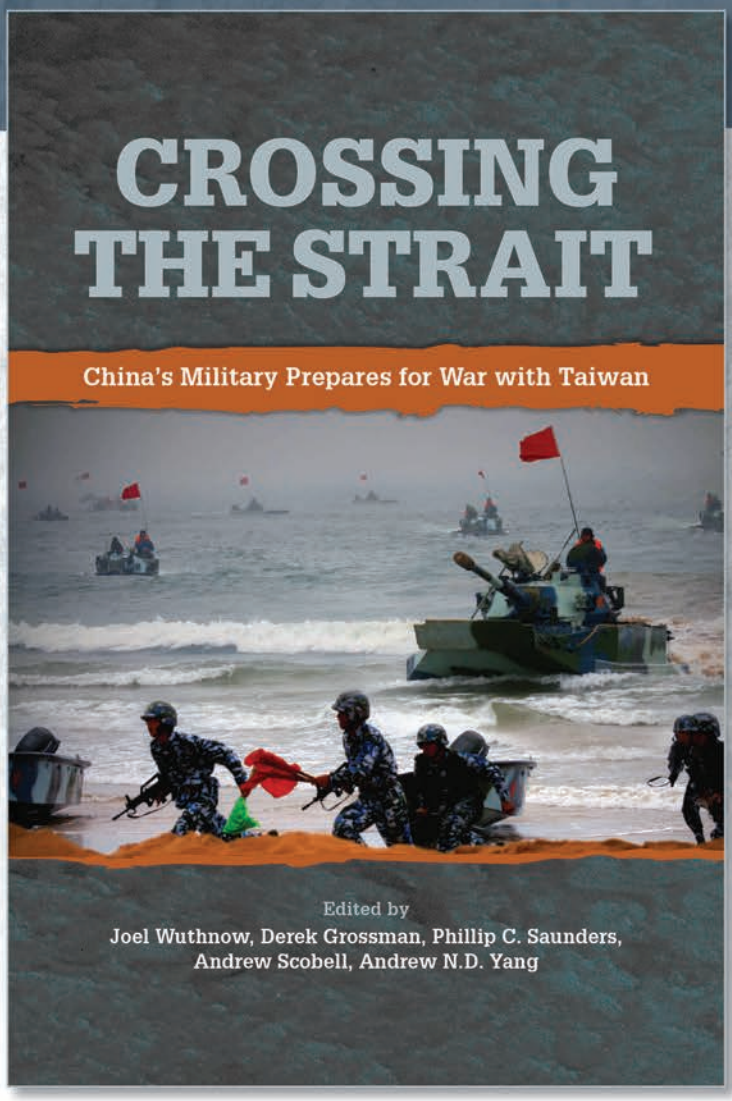
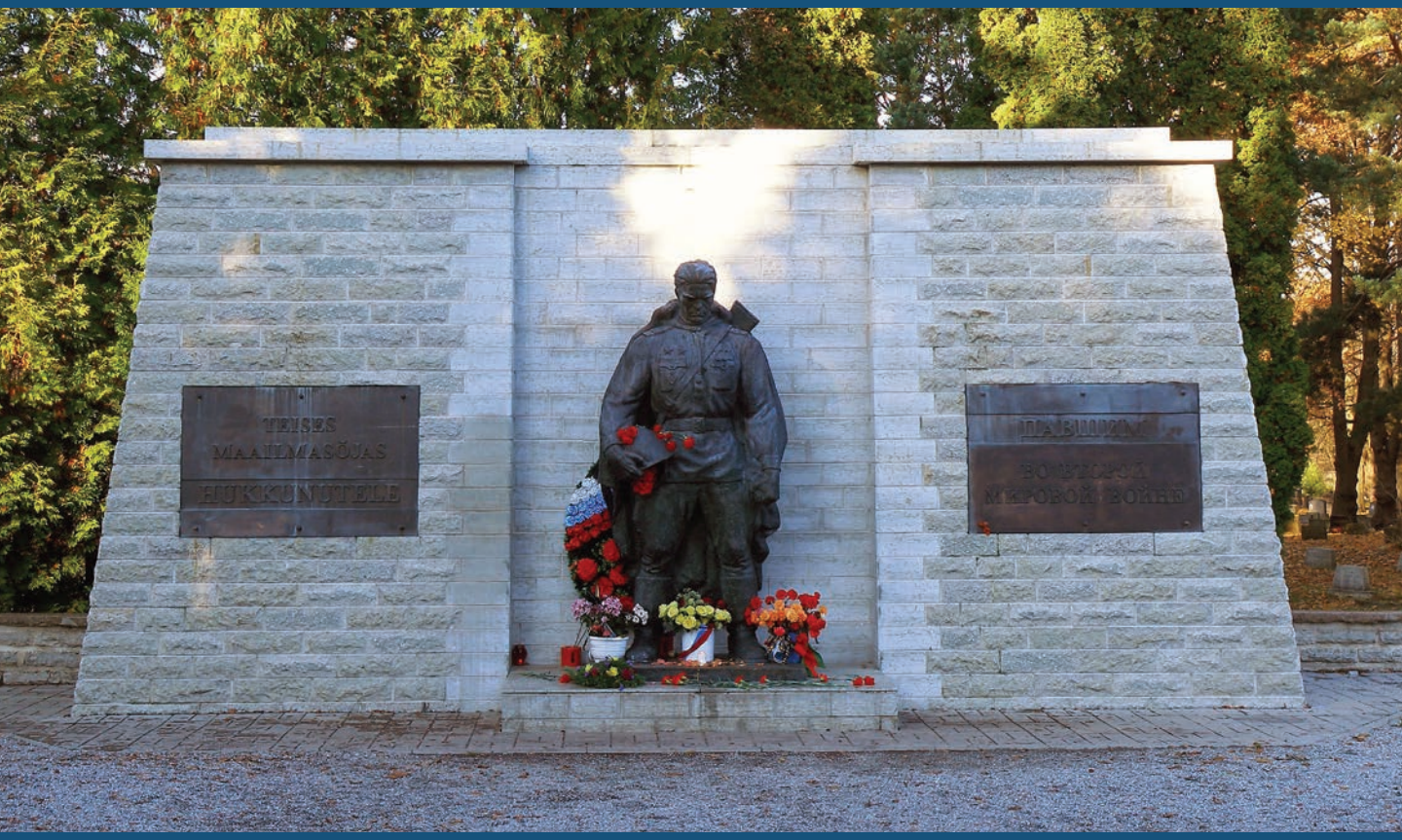


Both the U.S. and Chinese militaries are increasingly focused on a possible confrontation over Taiwan. China regards the island as an integral part of its territory and is building military capabilities to deter Taiwan independence and compel Taiwan to accept unification. Based on original research by leading international experts, *Crossing the Strait: China's Military Prepares for War with Taiwan* explores the political and military context of cross-strait relations, with a focus on understanding the Chinese decision calculus about using force, the capabilities the People's Liberation Army would bring to the fight, and what Taiwan can do to defend itself.



Monument to the Warrior-Liberator of Tallinn from Nazi invaders. It was moved to a military cemetery in April 2007, amidst great controversy. Photo by: Maxim Nedashkovskiy (Wikimedia Commons).

Estonia
Size Matters

By Tony Lawrence

Estonia is a very small state, with limited resources to counter hostile Russian activities. Like any small country, it must concentrate on some instruments of national power more than others and use them as intelligently as possible.

Estonia has thus followed two complementary approaches to applying elements of national power since regaining independence in 1991:

1. participating in international frameworks and
2. using elements of national power to insulate itself from hostile Russian actions.

Within international frameworks, Estonia uses diplomatic, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, legal/law enforcement, political, social, and infrastructure (DIMEFILPSI) instruments to counter Russia in two ways. The first is to directly target Russia in coordination with others to create an impact that would be unachievable should Estonia act alone. The second is to enhance Estonia's profile by influencing allies within the international framework, increasing the chances that these allies will support Estonia's agenda and interests regarding Russia. Such indirect use of the instruments of national power is frequently seen in small states' efforts to "punch above their weight" by developing and marketing particular skill sets that may be attractive or useful to others.

Estonia's second, more inward-facing approach to applying elements of national power is to use them to insulate itself from hostile Russian actions.[1] This approach might be labeled resilience-building; examples include programs to erase uneven development across Estonia's regions, as well as strategic communications policies to engage and inform the population about national-security-related activities. The importance of resilience in modern security thinking is evident in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s recognition that it is "an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and effective fulfillment of the Alliance's core tasks."[2]

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This second approach is more important for Estonia's security on a day-to-day basis. Resilience-building measures can increase societies' abilities to deal with a range of risks, making them able to counter Russian political warfare. Russia has a clear, long-term objective to achieve a more prominent place in the European and global security systems, so it acts to weaken the current Western-dominated architecture. It finds and exploits opportunities that challenge Western security structures and Western cohesion, such as its ongoing aggression against Ukraine, 2008 attack on Georgia, military intervention in the Syrian civil war, and probable orchestration of the 2007 cyber attacks against Estonia. Although such major challenges are rare, Russia also pursues its long-term objective by subjecting Western states to a steady stream of low-key antagonistic actions to create uncertainty and confusion, undermining the targeted states' confidence.

Russia's day-to-day hostile actions against Estonia include regular incursions into its national airspace, cyber intrusions, allegations of discrimination against the 23.7 percent of the Estonian population that is ethnic Russian, and hostile information policies such as alleging that Estonia's Russophobic attitudes caused the failure to ratify the Estonia-Russia border treaty.[3] These actions are well thought out and often well timed. For example, Russian operatives kidnapped an Estonian agent from the Estonian side of the Estonia-Russia border during NATO's 2014 Wales Summit and just two days after U.S. President Barack Obama's reassurance-building visit to Tallinn.[4]

Russia may thus be considered to be waging political warfare—"a form of strategy that leverages all of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic capabilities at a nation's disposal to achieve its strategic objectives"[5]—on the West. This malign statecraft has the potential to create unease and undermine security in the target states, requiring vigilance and an appropriate response from state authorities.[6] DIMEFILPSI instruments provide a range of possible resources.

Concepts and Context

Estonia's national security approach is outlined in its National Security Concept, first published in 2001 and updated in 2004, 2010, and 2017.[7] Shortly after regaining independence, the Baltic states rejected options such as neutrality, some form of alliance with the Nordic or Central European states, and an association with Russia within the "near abroad." They agreed that their security could be ensured only as part of the West and within NATO. The presidents of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania issued a joint statement to this effect in 1993, even while Russian troops remained on their territories.[8] They recognized that the Baltic armed forces could not resist a large-scale Russian military invasion and that their main function was as a tool of integration with NATO.[9] Estonia's parallel push for membership in the European Union (EU) required diplomatic, legal, and economic efforts to reform its economy and adapt legislation to meet the requirements of the EU's *acquis communautaire*.

During this period, state resources were limited, and security thinking focused mostly on military considerations and the military as the major instrument of national power. Much such thinking continues today, with aspects of Estonia's overall concept of defense commanding broad political and public consensus: defense should be funded in accordance with NATO targets, involve the whole of the state, and be based on universal male conscription. Estonia's aspiration for NATO membership demanded substantial diplomatic efforts to persuade the skeptical West of the merits of NATO enlargement. Unsurprisingly, these integration efforts were the focus of Estonia's 2001 National Security Concept, which devoted particular attention to the role of the defense forces. The concept's discussion of EU integration was largely framed in terms of

Estonia's prospective military participation in the EU's developing European Security and Defense Policy and operations that might be conducted under it. Because of this, "support the achievement of Estonia's Euro-Atlantic integration goal"[10] was added as a second task for the defense forces. But the 2001 concept also recognized the importance of other instruments of power in building resilience (although it did not use any term resembling "instrument of power," nor did it recognize "resilience" as a concept). The rule of law, human rights, a strong free market economy, and internal security and law enforcement were all cited as important components of national security—as were health, agriculture, and environment policies.

The three later versions of the National Security Concept were adopted after Estonia joined both NATO and the EU, in 2004. These versions each outlined a broader concept of security threat, which in turn required a broader response. Much of the focus of these documents was on the use of DIMEFILPSI instruments to build societal resilience and on Estonia's overriding objective of conducting security policy within international frameworks.

By mid-2004, Estonia was under the umbrella of both the world's most powerful military alliance and one of its largest economies. The postmodern threat assessment and range of responses set out in the 2004 concept reflected the sense of euphoria that accompanied these changes. But Russia, though barely mentioned in the concept, remained Estonia's primary security concern. The concept was a strong signal to Estonia's new allies that it shared their postmodern outlooks and concerns and was ready to contribute to solutions along with the rest of the club, illustrating how declared security policies may also be informational instruments of national power.

The 2010 concept covered similar themes to those of its predecessor—working within alliances and building societal resilience—although placing greater emphasis than before on resilience. The term "resilience" was used in this version and discussed in a chapter that outlined, in very broad terms, the requirements for securing critical services, electronic and cyber assets, transport infrastructure, energy infrastructure and supply, the environment, the financial system, and public health, and for having appropriate policies in place for regional development and integration. The 2010 concept also introduced the idea of "psychological defense," a controversial and ambiguous idea broadly understood in hindsight by the research community as intended to "protect the mentality and values of Estonia's society against hostile information-based (influence) operations."[11] The concept did not, however, provide any guidelines as to how psychological defense should be generated.

The 2017 National Security Concept is the most recent and maintains a similar approach but includes language that more closely reflects the DIMEFILPSI model in its prescriptions for resilience-building:

> *Countering security threats and risks calls for preventive measures and if they do not prove sufficient, [the] state should be ready to take active steps. The cumulative impact of diplomatic, informational, military, economic and social measures must create sufficient deterrence to prevent attacks against the state and its citizens and maintain stability.*

The concept also notes, "In addition to political, diplomatic, informational and economic means, Russia has used military power to achieve its objectives." Although the current concept thus nods to the DIMEFILPSI paradigm, it is only partly used as an organizing principle for the material therein. The main operational chapter—"goals and guidelines"—contains subchapters dealing with diplomacy, military defense, protection of the constitutional order and law enforcement, conflict protection

and crisis management, economic security and the supporting infrastructure, cyber security, protection of people, resilience and cohesion of society, and the distant future (demography, sustainable development, and technology). The concept continues to stress the importance of psychological defense and introduces the related notion of "strategic communication."

Finally, it is worth noting the evolution of material related to Russia in successive versions of the National Security Concept. Whereas the 2004 concept barely mentioned Russia, the 2010 version (written after Russian cyber operations against Estonia in 2007) noted Russia's use of political, economic, military, and energy tools to achieve its goals. Nonetheless, the 2010 concept remained optimistic about relations with Russia and stated Estonia's wish for open dialogue and pursuit of practical cooperation. The 2017 concept, written after Russian illegal operations in Ukraine, however, makes clear that Russia is a source of instability: "Russia's unpredictable, aggressive and provocative activity, e.g., airspace violations, offensive military exercises, and nuclear threats, is generating instability." While it continues to advocate open dialogue and practical cooperation, this version also supports "continued enforcement of the restrictive measures imposed until their reasons have been eliminated," explicitly recognizing for the first time the value of the direct use of DIMEFILPSI tools to counter Russia.

Iga Okas Loeb/Every Quill Counts: The Military

Estonians place great value on the military as an instrument to directly influence Russia, as well as allies, and to support resilience-building. Estonia's system of comprehensive defense aims to involve the whole of society with an integrating effect, all of which serves to counter Russia, either directly or indirectly.

The importance of the military as an instrument of national power reflects more broadly the privileged position it holds in Estonian society. The roots of this position are deep and may in part be traced to the events of 1940, when Estonia's political class naively expected that it could avoid war by acquiescing to a Soviet ultimatum demanding the stationing of forces on Estonian territory. In fact, this submission to Moscow led to the Soviets' annexation of Estonia, its involvement in WWII, and its subsequent 50-year Soviet occupation. Many Estonians believe bitterly that had the politicians permitted the military to resist, Estonia could have preserved its independence as its brother nation Finland did.[12] Of course, this notion was never tested, but still the armed forces are viewed—and have sometimes viewed themselves—as the true guardians of the Estonian Republic and more patriotic than feckless politicians. That Estonia found itself alone in 1940 caused a debate about the extent to which the country should rely on a collective defense system, versus the extent to which it should rely on itself through the mobilization of a massive reserve. In general, the civilian Ministry of Defense has preferred a more cooperative model of defense while the Estonian Defense Forces have tended to advocate greater self-reliance.

One effect of this situation has been the placing of defense and the military in a very visible and influential position in society and the accordance of special importance to Estonia's defense forces, as manifested by the defense forces' attempts to influence legislation and even claims to a constitutional standing equal to that of the state's legislative, executive, and judicial bodies.[13] The forces' status is also evident in the post-military careers of the five chiefs of defense staff: three have been elected to Parliament and one elected to the European Parliament.

More broadly, the prevalence of military thinking in society is evident through legislation requiring all men to serve as conscripts for 8 to 11 months and

A female member of the Estonian Defence League, a voluntary national defence organisation. Photo by the Estonian Defence League.

then enter the reserve, where they remain for years. Furthermore, national defense is an elective subject in the national curriculum for upper secondary schools, and the Ministry of Defense financially supports 70 courses inside and outside the classroom.[14] The voluntary Estonian Defense League has 17,000 members, and there are 11,000 members altogether in three affiliated organizations: the Women`s Volunteer Defense Organization, the Young Eagles, and the Home Daughters.[15]

There is a strong public consensus on defense matters in Estonia. Eighty percent of the population see the defense forces as trustworthy, behind only the rescue service and the police. The ethnic breakdown is revealing: 89 percent of ethnic Estonians and 63 percent of the Russian-speaking minority trust the defense forces.[16] Sixty percent of the population is ready to participate in defense activities if attacked (Estonians, 66 percent; non-Estonians, 46 percent), and 91 percent of the population believes that conscript service is somewhat or completely necessary (Estonians, 93 percent; non-Estonians, 83 percent).[17]

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that Estonia emphasizes the military as an instrument of national power. The likelihood of a large-scale Russian military attack may be small, but it is not negligible. Since 2008, Russia has invested substantially in the reorganization and modernization of its armed forces. Although NATO has a substantial advantage over Russia in military capability globally, before its war in Ukraine Russia had (and it will later likely wish to reconstitute) a considerable local advantage: according to the assumptions of a RAND Corporation wargame series, it would be able to field at short notice almost two-and-a-half times the number of combat troops as NATO, almost six

times as many main battle tanks, and over 10 times as many self-propelled howitzers for a conflict in the Baltic region.[18] A determined Russia could rapidly seize one or more of the Baltic states and use its extensive investments in long-range weapons to execute an anti-access/area-denial strategy to prevent NATO forces from expelling it.[19] Estonia's military would be an indispensable, and most likely the primary, response to an aggressor. Its determination to fight to the end is clearly stated in its national defense strategy:

> *Estonia will defend itself in all circumstances and against any adversary, no matter how overwhelming. Should Estonia temporarily lose control over part of its sovereign territory, Estonian citizens will still resist the adversary within that territory. . . . Military defence planning will incorporate paramilitary operations, such as guerrilla activity and resistance movements.*

To further build credibility for its independent defense, Estonia has for several years achieved defense expenditures above 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).[20]

The military's second role as an instrument of national power is to ensure Estonia's commitment in international crisis response operations. Estonia has participated in operations in the Middle East, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and central Africa since its first deployment, in 1995, to the United Nations Protection Force in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.[21]

In the early days of independence, Estonia operated abroad to demonstrate its readiness to assume the obligations of NATO membership. After joining, Estonia did so to press the case, alongside Latvia and Lithuania, for its own interests within the Alliance—for example, regional defense plans, the conferral of permanent status on the Baltic Air Policing mission, and a permanent Allied presence in the region. Baltic officials strongly believe that this indirect use of the military instrument has been important in giving them the confidence to pursue their own agenda in the Alliance and to steer NATO policies in directions favorable to Baltic interests in countering Russia.[22]

Intelligence

The fact that Estonia's Foreign Intelligence Service exists under the Ministry of Defense reinforces the emphasis placed by society on the military. Given the necessarily secretive nature of intelligence organizations, it is hard to assess their value as an instrument of power. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that Estonia's intelligence services are well regarded and respected for their knowledge of Russia, which is valuable to allies and partners.[23]

Russia treats Estonia as a priority intelligence-gathering target. Russian intelligence services are certainly active in Estonia. A number of high-profile agents have been arrested and sentenced[24]—which could suggest that Estonia's intelligence services suffer from a high level of Russian penetration,[25] or, alternatively, may reflect the effectiveness of Estonia's domestic intelligence service, known locally as the Kaitsepolitseiamet ("Kapo"), which is considered to be one of the best services of the former Eastern Bloc.[26] Kapo reports its activities in an annual review, which describes Russia's attempts at intelligence gathering in Estonia and Kapo's successes in defeating them, as well as identifying organizations and individuals suspected of cooperating with Russia. Kapo thus also acts as a valuable information domain instrument.[27]

Diplomacy

Before Russia's full-scale attack on Ukraine, diplomatic relations between Estonia and Russia had been cool but at least stable, and neither side had any expectations that this situation would improve at any fundamental level.[28]

Protest against the removal of the Bronze Soldier of Tallinn, a World War II memorial reminding Soviet occupation to the Estonians, and the fall of Nazi Germany to Russians. Photo by: Leena Hietanen. April 26, 2007

Russian diplomats do not, and never did, take Estonia seriously. Pressure from the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United States was instrumental in getting the Russians to withdraw from Estonia following the restoration of independence, revealing how a small state has few means to influence an obstructive neighbor without international backing.[29] Today, Russia shows no interest in resolving a longstanding disagreement about the Estonia-Russia border treaty.

Estonia's diplomatic relations with its allies and partners have been considerably more successful. Joining both NATO and the EU in 2004 demonstrated Estonia's ability to sell the case for enlargement to these two organizations—which previously was by no means guaranteed.

Alongside traditional state-to-state diplomacy, Estonia makes efforts in what might be characterized as public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, or soft power, all of which involve building influence through attraction rather than coercion. Estonia is, after all, the home of the "singing revolution."[30]

Estonia's greatest success in this area, however, is in its promotion of itself as a digital state. Software services of Estonian origin, such as Skype and Wise, are globally known. Equally well known are the cyber attacks of likely Russian origin that Estonia suffered in 2007. The relocation of a Soviet

war monument from central Tallinn to the military cemetery led to rioting on Tallinn's streets and several days of distributed denial of service attacks on web sites of the Estonian government, banks, telecommunication companies, and so forth.[31] These events prompted Estonia to develop a pioneering cyber security strategy and institutions such as the Cyber Defense League (a voluntary organization aimed at protecting Estonian cyber space) and the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (a multinational organization that conducts research and provides training in the technological, strategy, operations, and legal aspects of cyber defense).[32] As an exercise in soft power, Estonia also makes efforts to advise and lead in the broader digital discipline of e-governance.[33] A digital Europe with free movement of data was one of the four priorities of Estonia's presidency of the Council of the EU in 2017.[34]

However, there are concerns that Estonia's lack of investment in digital infrastructure, shortages of information technology workers, and underinvestment in research and technology more broadly will undermine its ambitions and erode this soft power asset. In fact, international rankings of the digital economy have recently placed Estonia further down their lists than in earlier years.[35] While Estonia retains considerable standing in this field, this decline illustrates the challenge of maintaining long-term credibility for states that wish to market themselves based on particular knowledge and skill sets.

Fake News, Psychological Defense, and Strategic Communication

Global awareness of the importance of the information domain has grown in recent years as high-profile cases of Russia's use of information tools to pursue its objectives in other states have come to light. Estonia faces a somewhat different challenge from what most other Western states face, in that it has a large (23.7 percent) ethnic Russian population, which could be manipulated by Moscow's propaganda to act against Estonia's interests. Such concerns were amplified by Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, where the Russian-speaking population was persuaded by television messaging that they would be treated as second-class citizens in Ukraine and should rather favor secession to Russia.[36] Given the resonance of this messaging and the frequent Russian attacks on the Baltic states' supposed discrimination against, or even oppression of, Russia's "compatriots" in their countries, it is understandable that analysts and the media have fretted over the question "Will Narva be next?"[37]

RAND researchers have found that although Estonian and Latvian officials monitor potential Russian provocations in their predominantly Russian-speaking areas, they doubt that Moscow could sustain a mobilization of the Russian-speaking population. The researchers noted that their interviewees may have had hidden motives for their claims (for example, any reported dissatisfaction among the Russian-speaking population would make it harder to sustain Baltic reluctance to make concessions on citizenship and language issues), but also argued that the threat of NATO's involvement would deter Russia from escalating lower-order disruption into a full-blown crisis. Furthermore, Estonia and Latvia are "well-functioning states" with "effective internal security services and border guards that are more capable of protecting their territory than the ones Ukraine had."[38] The importance of well-functioning states was also underlined by RAND's interviews in non-Baltic countries and chimes well with the idea that Russian hybrid war is fundamentally a war on governance and is most successful where governance has failed; by corollary, hybrid defense is about ensuring legitimate and effective governance.[39]

Yet Estonia would prefer to be able to tackle mischief in the information domain before any

need for the security services and NATO to become involved. Efforts are complicated by the fact that the Russian- and Estonian-speaking populations exist in separate information spaces, with Russians tuning in to Russian-based television and social media channels. The effect of Russian disinformation messages on these channels is not fully clear, not least because there is no agency, either in Estonia or elsewhere, charged with the systematic monitoring of the consumption and impact of Russian disinformation.[40] Evidence seems to indicate, however, that while Russian disinformation messages may not persuade most Estonian Russian speakers to actively support the Kremlin's agenda, they do appear to increase levels of cynicism about news sources in general, risking the further alienation of disenchanted Russian speakers, and to distract consumers from other, perhaps more pressing, societal issues.[41]

Furthermore, the Russian-speaking community is not homogeneous, but socioeconomically fragmented. There is a sizeable ethnic Russian middle class, particularly around Tallinn, which has supported Estonia's EU membership and taken advantage of the opportunity to successfully engage in private entrepreneurship.[42] Yet at the same time, more than 66,000 Estonian residents still have undetermined citizenship, the northeastern counties where much of the Russian-speaking population is concentrated are among Estonia's least developed, and the labor market is ethnically and linguistically segregated, with doors effectively closed to sections of the population.[43]

It is also not clear that Estonians take the threat of disinformation sufficiently seriously. In part this may be because Estonian speakers have, or at least believe they have, a "cognitive shield of protection" when it comes to processing disinformation. As an anonymous independent media expert explained in a 2018 study, fresh memories of the Soviet occupation and anti-Russian narratives in many families have given ethnic Estonians an immunity to the lies propagated by today's Kremlin.[44] Or, as *The Economist* more succinctly puts it, "most disbelieve anything that sounds Putinny."[45] But most of Moscow's disinformation is not aimed at Estonian speakers, and it may be that this sense of immunity has allowed Estonians to become complacent about its impact. For example, a November 2018 Eurobarometer poll ahead of the 2019 European elections found that only 56 percent of the Estonian electorate was concerned about disinformation and misinformation on the Internet, compared with an EU average of 73 percent, while 43 percent were satisfied with the fight against false, exaggerated, or misrepresented stories in the media, compared with an EU average of 40 percent.[46] A local media expert characterized this situation thus: "Estonia is at the top of Europe's naive. We are very, very naive when it comes to false news."[47]

Estonia's strategy in the information domain is to focus its activity inward—on the building of societal resilience—rather than on the development of tools to directly influence Russia. Here, the notion of psychological defense is relevant. The strategy is somewhat loosely defined in the National Security Concept as "informing society and raising awareness about information-related activities aimed at harming Estonia's constitutional order, society's values and virtues."[48] The concept continues:

> *Psychological defence is needed to neutralize attacks by terrorist organisations as well as assaults proceeding from the military doctrine of certain states with the help of efforts to influence the society under attack with cognitive methods. Appropriate measures must be drawn up for this. The purpose of psychological defence is to prevent crises in Estonia, facilitate security awareness in society and neutralise information attacks that provoke violence in the population by manipulation and the provision of false information, or that promote crisis*

management with resources that are not compatible with constitutional order.[49]

In Estonia's security thinking, psychological defense has a more active counterpart, strategic communication, which "involves planning the state's political, economic and defense-related statements and activities, preparing a comprehensive informative whole on the basis of these, and transmitting it to the population."[50] Strategic communication is aimed at both Estonian society and foreign target groups and, in line with broader Estonian thinking on comprehensive defense, relies on the support of networks of people and the media.[51] It is managed centrally by Estonia's Government Office and, in line with Estonia's broader emphasis on hard security, is focused on national security and defense.[52]

In practical terms, the state strives to implement strategic communication by providing the public with factual information according to the guidelines set out in a government communication handbook.[53] Good examples are the yearbooks issued by organizations such as the Police Financial Intelligence Unit, the Cyber Security Unit of the Estonian Information Systems Authority, the Internal Security Service (the previously mentioned Kapo), and the Foreign Intelligence Service. The rationale for such publications is well explained by the former director general of the Foreign Intelligence Service in his foreword to his organization's 2016 yearbook:

> *The idea for preparing a document describing the international security environment which surrounds Estonia, and is orientated to the Estonian and foreign public, first occurred as a response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Not a day went by in the wake of annexation of Crimea and conflict escalation in eastern Ukraine without Estonian or foreign press asking: "Is Narva next?". Not to mention the numerous attempts to analyze the Kremlin's hidden agenda with regard to the Baltics. Yet public officials remained laconic or altogether silent in their statements resulting in burying the few competent messages that existed under an avalanche of inadequate information. This, in return, led to the public space being filled by doomsday scenarios, half-truths, and with a hunger for sensation. Without a doubt, such developments have a negative effect on a nation's psychological defense. At the same time, Estonia has its foreign intelligence service whose main task is to ensure that those with the "need to know" have the best possible threat assessments at their disposal. With this publication, we are sharing these assessments with the wider public.*[54]

Another means for presenting unbiased information to the Russian-speaking population is the Russian-language television channel ETV+, operated by the Estonian public broadcaster, ERR. The establishment of this channel was a somewhat controversial idea and was rejected for many years, despite the clearly polarized viewing habits of Estonia's Estonian and Russian speakers. Various arguments against national broadcasting in the Russian language were advanced, including cost, the perceived inability to compete with programming of Russian origin, and a lack of need—the expectation was that in the long run the entire population would understand Estonian and that providing Russian-language broadcasting in the meantime would reduce the motivation of the Russian-speaking population to improve their Estonian-language skills.[55] The parliament approved funding of the new channel in late 2014, following Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Rather than try to compete with Russian entertainment channels or to counter Russian propaganda, ETV+ focuses on local interest stories. The aim is to tackle the disengagement of the Russian-speaking population by persuading them to feel

more connected to the state, to Estonian speakers, and also to other Russian speakers.[56] According to polling, although ETV+ has only a 1.5 percent share of daily viewing time, 57 percent of Estonia's "other nationalities" tune in to ETV+ on a regular basis.[57]

In information domain interventions aimed at more directly countering Russia, Estonia has taken steps to deny support to organizations that are deemed non-independent or that do not follow good journalistic practice and has denied accreditation to and even issued entry bans to the employees of certain organizations. There is an obvious tension between the state's wish to block "fake news" and its democratic requirement to preserve freedom of speech, but there is also a risk that counter-disinformation actions can themselves be used in further disinformation operations that claim state censorship.[58]

Estonia has also promoted the internationalization of the disinformation problem. It was among the early supporters of the establishment, within the EU European External Action Service, of the East StratCom Task Force, which "reports on and analyses disinformation trends, explains and exposes disinformation narratives, and raises awareness of the negative impact of disinformation that originates in pro-Kremlin sources and is disseminated in the Eastern neighborhood's information space and beyond."[59] Estonians have also been prominent among those calling for the task force to be larger and better funded.[60] Further, Estonia is a sponsoring nation of the NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence in Riga, where it holds the deputy director position.

Economy and Finance

Estonia's booming economic development following the restoration of its independence is well known. The early implementation of painful "shock therapy" economic reforms, including price liberalization, privatization and restitution, flat-rate taxation, and monetary reform, led to rapid growth (with rates as high as 12 percent in the mid-2000s), high levels of economic freedom, foreign investment, the integration of Estonia's economy with the economies of the West and, ultimately, the country's joining the EU in 2004.[61] The economy proved to be a powerful tool in repositioning Estonia as a Western state and removing it from Russia's orbit and influence. Economic policies continue to have the same aims and effects today: insulation from Russian economic interference is an important contribution to Estonia's resilience in the face of potential hostile Russian actions.

One sector where this approach is very apparent is energy. Estonia is fortunate in having oil shale deposits that allow it to meet 90 percent of its electricity generation needs and thus to have the lowest energy dependency rate in the EU.[62] Oil shale is, though, something of a mixed blessing. It is a notoriously carbon-intensive fuel, and Estonia faces some pressure to lessen its environmental impact by introducing new technology to reduce emissions and increasing the share of renewables in its energy mix. For renewables, Estonia presently achieves about twice the EU average percentage of gross final energy consumption.[63]

Estonia is attempting to integrate its energy infrastructure more closely with those of other EU nations. The electricity grid is currently connected to those of Russia, Latvia, and Finland (via the undersea Estlink 1 and Estlink 2 cables), and Estonia is seeking to de-synchronize its grid from the Soviet legacy IPS/UPS wide area interconnector and synchronize instead with the European Continental synchronous area—a project with geopolitical just as much as energy significance.[64] Projects are also under way to connect the Estonian gas supply systems to the Central European gas networks and to construct an additional liquefied natural gas terminal in Estonia, again aimed at reducing dependency on supply from Russia.[65] Estonia has been a harsh critic of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines, which it

Põhja-Kiviõli oil shale mine near Kohtla-Järve, Estonia. Photo by: Mark A. Wilson (Wikimedia Commons). July 24, 2007

argues serve Russia's geopolitical interests in contravention of EU energy policy.[66]

In a more direct application of the economic instrument of power, Estonia has been very supportive of the economic and financial sanctions imposed on Russia by the EU following the annexation of Crimea and intervention in Donbas in 2014 and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The economies of the Baltic states have been damaged more than those of most other EU countries by Russia's counter-sanctions against agricultural products, notably in the dairy and canned fish sectors, and by fewer tourists because of rising oil costs. However, upholding international law far outweighs any economic loss.[67] Trade with Russia has been important for Estonia's economy, but not overly so. In 2019, Russia accounted for about 5 percent of Estonia's exports and 8 percent of its imports.[68] Tourism from Russia had begun to increase, but the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a substantial fall in numbers in 2020. In September 2022, Estonia, alongside Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, introduced a bar on entry to all Russian nationals holding a short-stay Schengen visa.[69]

On the financial (and legal) side, Estonia has also proved itself resilient against Russia's active

weaponization of corruption and organized crime. Its anti-corruption strategy aims to promote corruption awareness, to improve transparency of decisions and actions, to develop the capabilities of investigative bodies, and to prevent corruption that could jeopardize national security.[70] In 2021, the country ranked 13th in the world in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (making it the least corrupt former communist country) and in 2018 ranked 10th best in terms of the costs imposed on business by organized crime in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index.[71]

More recently, however, large financial scandals have been unearthed in the private sector. The Russian-Moldovan Laundromat, the Moldova II Laundromat, and the Azerbaijani Laundromat together laundered some $13 billion of questionable origin through the Estonian financial system, almost entirely through accounts held by nonresidents. Partly in response, the new Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prevention Act entered into force in Estonia in the same year, and Estonia led the process of amending the EU's Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive during its presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2017.[72]

But the reputation of the Estonian financial sector suffered still greater damage the following year when a whistleblower triggered an investigation into the Estonian operations of Denmark's Danske Bank. Over €200 billion of suspicious transactions were uncovered.[73] Estonia's state prosecutor also expanded the investigation to include Sweden's Swedbank, which dominates the Baltic financial sector, for failing to combat money laundering.[74]

Russia has used such schemes—the carrot of corruption—to capture regional elites, establish patron-client political relationships, and spread influence at home and in its "near abroad."[75] Clearly, efforts to prevent corruption in Estonia and Europe as a whole need to be stepped up. Unfortunately, this is a challenging endeavor, because tracking the origins of the funds is complicated and time-consuming, thus making it difficult to confirm their legality or to control or halt the flow of such funds.[76]

The Invasion of Ukraine

Unsurprisingly, Estonia reacted rapidly and strongly to Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, directing considerable additional resources to military defense. Even prior to the invasion, in January 2022, it allocated an additional €380 million over four years to the defense and interior ministries, and a budget supplement in March added a further €476 million to the defense budget and €86 million to comprehensive defense.[77] These measures will mostly be used to rapidly increase existing capabilities. The present government is also seeking to increase defense spending to 3 percent of GDP by 2024. Defense spending is not a controversial issue, and the measures adopted so far have received broad cross-party and public support; even so, it is unlikely that without the war in Ukraine defense spending could have risen so much and so rapidly. Estonia has also, with its neighbors, pressed hard for greatly increased NATO presence in the Baltic region.[78] At their summit in Madrid in June 2022, NATO's heads of state and government agreed on measures aimed at strengthening deterrence and defense, including on the Alliance's eastern flank.[79]

In the economic domain, Estonia has strongly supported the EU sanctions regime and has even, following domestic media pressure, introduced additional unilateral sanctions.[80] It has also committed to stop importing Russian gas; this commitment will require the construction of a facility to handle a floating liquefied natural gas terminal in the town of Paldiski.[81] In the information domain, it has banned some Russian and Belarusian media outlets and expelled Russian diplomats for spreading propaganda.[82]

Estonia has directly assisted Ukraine in various ways. Politically, the three Baltic states have been among the most vocal supporters of Ukraine. (The foreign ministers were in Kyiv on the day Russia's invasion began.) In material terms, the three states announced their intention to assist Ukraine militarily even before Russia's invasion, and by early April, Estonia had donated €220 million worth of weapons, ammunition, and protective equipment.[83] In approximately the same period, humanitarian assistance, largely from private donations, had reached €15 million, and almost 27,000 refugees had arrived in Estonia from Ukraine.[84]

Conclusion

Despite its small size, Estonia has had some success in the application of instruments of national power across the whole DIMEFILPSI spectrum to counter Russia. In recent years, infrastructure considerations have been included, with well-advanced plans for Rail Baltica to connect the Baltic states to the wider European and the more speculative idea of a tunnel to connect Tallinn and Helsinki.[85] Aside from the economic benefits of such projects, there are security advantages to be gained from closer integration with other European states.

Indeed, the case might be made that Estonia has had most success in countering Russia when it has directed instruments of national power toward allies, rather than directly at Russia itself. Skillful diplomacy secured Estonia's NATO and EU memberships, and the country has since demonstrated its readiness to adopt and contribute to the agendas of these organizations and those of its allies. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has underlined the threat it poses to Western states. Whatever the outcome of the war, it seems likely that an embittered Russia will continue to challenge its neighbors through political warfare. But should it challenge Estonia, it will also have to face 29 (and soon 31) NATO states and 26 EU states. The classic small-state approach has served Estonia's security well, and Estonia should continue to advocate for multinational solutions and the sharing of best practices when it comes to dealing with Russia's misconduct.

Efforts to build resilience will continue to be important, and there is a growing body of international scholarship and practice to build upon. The best countermeasures for addressing the potential challenges posed by the Russian-speaking minority continue to be good governance, socioeconomic solutions, and supporting those who are loyal and integrated citizens.[86] PRISM

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CAMP ADAZI, Latvia – Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, complete an esprit de corps run with Latvian soldiers assigned to the Latvian Land Forces Infantry Brigade, Feb. 17, 2017 at Camp Adazi, Latvia. Photo by: U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Lauren Harrah/Released. February 17, 2017

Latvia
From Total Defense to Comprehensive Defense

By Janis Bērziņš

Russia uses a variety of methods to achieve its strategic objectives, from elections meddling to cyber-attacks (as in Estonia) to violent military confrontation (as in Georgia and Ukraine). This often manifests as cognitive warfare in the form of influence operations in many countries, including Latvia where these operations aim to influence targeted social groups on certain issues. The ultimate objective is to create and strengthen discontent about Latvia's alignment with Western political, cultural, and economic models, increasing their rejection by some segments of society.[1]

Several disinformation instruments are used in both Russian- and Latvian-language traditional and social media outlets. For example, trolls are used to spread fake news and advance accounts of discrimination in Latvia. Similarly, Western society is portrayed as rotten and morally decadent. The main narratives used by Russia are:[2]

- Russian-speaking minorities are marginalized and treated unfairly by the government.
- The Baltic states are corrupt, failed states.
- European Union (EU) membership has resulted in economic and social underdevelopment. Latvia should follow its own path without foreign interference.
- EU membership is equivalent to being in the USSR.
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership decreases the overall level of security because it will draw Russian countermeasures.
- Western values have been corrupted. Tolerance towards homosexuals and other minorities constitutes

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the moral degradation of traditional family values.

- There is no real democracy in the West. Politicians are puppets controlled by the financial system and work against the real interests of the population.
- Fascism is glorified in the Baltics.

The Latvian government closely follows these influence operations and counteracts them by presenting the population with facts and critical information. The government provides concrete information about such operations, when available, clearly stating who is responsible for the operation, the objective of the operation, what narrative is being promoted, and why it is not true.[3] Before Russia escalated its war against Ukraine in February 2022, Latvia's strategy was to meet disinformation head-on rather than simply prohibiting the broadcast of Russian television and radio, unless there were hate speeches or incitement to violence. This changed in June 2022, when the National Electronic Mass Media Council blocked the transmissions of all Russian TV channels. The decision was based on a new amendment in the Electronic Mass Media Law, which forbade the transmission of content from countries threatening the territorial integrity and independence of another country.

In addition to information operations, another form of Russian action is what they call *near abroad*, which uses a variety of intimidation tactics and usually involves the military. Russia threatens military intervention to "protect" any ethnic Russian who was "left behind" after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As roughly 25 percent of the Latvian population are ethnic Russians, Latvia must take this threat into account.

Like the other Baltic states, Latvia has chosen an approach referred to as *comprehensive defense* or a whole-of-society approach to face hybrid threats.

From Total Defense to Comprehensive Defense

The National Defense Concept (NDC) is the main document that defines Latvia's defense strategy and provides guidelines to national security agencies. According to the National Security Law, the Cabinet of Ministers should propose a National Defense Concept for Latvian Parliamentary approval no later than October 1 of the second year of each parliamentary term.

Article 29 of the National Security Law requires the Ministry of Defense to prepare the National Defense Concept, a planning and policy document based on an analysis of the current military threats. It defines strategic objectives, basic principles, priorities, and measures for their three envisioned phases: peacetime, escalation, and war. The NDC is the basis for the national defense policy. It specifies the operational measures and allocates resources for the development of the National Defense Forces, as well as necessary preparedness measures for other governmental bodies, agencies, other public authorities, and private individuals during these three phases. Implementation has been largely decentralized, with the National Armed Forces executing this plan based on available resources and capabilities as defined by law while other national authorities implement in line with their competencies.

The first version of the NDC was approved in 1995, one year after Russian troops withdrew from Latvia. It was a superficial document defining Latvia's security as an integral part of the Baltic region and providing some basic guidelines for the development of the armed forces. It was much more a bureaucratic document than a security and defense assessment.

The second version was approved in 2001. It was a significant improvement from the 1995 version since it linked the country's strategic assessment with the possible threats and the development of the armed forces and other security structures, although

Caption: Soldiers from the Pennsylvania National Guard confer around a terrain map in preparation for a combined arms rehearsal prior to Saber Strike 2014. Image by: U.S. Army National Guard image by Capt. Gregory McElwain/Released. June 10, 2014

the threat assessment was limited to two paragraphs. It identified Latvia's main security concerns as geopolitical, economic development, historical foreign relations, education and culture, military and civilian defense capabilities, and the environment.

The 2001 NDC asserted that the end of the Cold War dramatically changed the global security environment. Although the threat of a global war was considerably reduced, the risk of regional and local crises had increased because of ethnic conflicts, massive migration, ecological catastrophes, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and organized crime.

Since the end of the Cold War, Latvia's security has been closely linked to the international security environment, in particular Estonia and Lithuania.

Integration into the European defense system and joining NATO are important pillars for Latvia's defense. Nevertheless, the NDC made clear that the main partner for guaranteeing Latvia's security was the United States since it was also a major actor in shaping European security and securing Latvia's independence. The document did not mention Russia as a direct security threat for Latvia or the Baltic states. The main concern was internal and foreign instability. Interestingly, the 2001 NDC mentioned Russian progress in developing a market economy and a democratic society and dramatically reducing the Russian military presence in the Baltic region.

The 2001 NDC stipulated that Latvian defense was to be based on the concept of total defense by strengthening cooperation between the military forces and the civilian population. As a result, the entire society had to be ready to defend the country with all available resources. The military forces would consist of a small professional force augmented by conscripts who would later become part

of the active reserve. The 2001 NDC did not provide any concrete guidelines, but it did make clear that the Latvian Armed Forces should conform to all NATO standards and procedures in order to facilitate membership.

The third version of the NDC was approved by the Parliament in 2003. At that time, it was already clear that the county would join NATO in 2004. The threat assessment was slightly rephrased. It included an explicit reference about NATO being Latvian security's main guarantor, while Russia was not mentioned. Since Latvia was soon to become a NATO member, the Latvian concept of total defense embraced the notion of collective defense. Guidelines for the armed forces' integration into NATO structures were stipulated. Conscription was to be abolished by 2016, and efforts were redirected to developing a professional military. The National Guard and the Youth Guard were to be auxiliary forces which would help recruit professional military personnel.

The fourth version of the document was published in 2008. It reinforced the idea that Latvian security was largely determined by its membership in NATO. In other words, the Latvian National Armed Forces were to protect Latvia's territory and be ready for integrating NATO troops upon their arrival. At the same time, the Latvian military was to take part in NATO missions as part of the principle of collective defense and transatlantic solidarity. The NDC also presented a deeper analysis of the challenges in increasing the effectiveness and capabilities of the armed forces and provided some guidance for achieving these objectives. Nevertheless, the threat analysis was quite superficial. Russia and China were not explicitly mentioned, although "specific countries with unstable internal and foreign policies" were noted as well as "probable change in the equilibrium of international politics because of some specific countries' rapid economic development, increasing military power, competition for natural resources, and influence in world politics" (a very clear reference to China).

In 2012, a new version of the NDC was approved by the Parliament. The biggest challenge was the result of the defense budget shrinking from €452 million in 2008 to €223 million in 2012 (in 2020 prices). The NDC assessment stressed Latvia's dependence on NATO and the EU, and the world's increasing inter-connectedness affecting Latvia's security. In this version, the idea of total defense and society's active participation gave room to the notion of collective defense based on NATO and the EU.

The new Parliament of 2016 approved a new version of the NDC. For the first time, Russia and what the West called hybrid warfare were clearly mentioned as the main threats to Latvia's security. This was a natural consequence of Russia's actions in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. It also mentioned terrorism and migration as significant security concerns.

Three defense principles were presented: the country's capacity and will to defend its sovereignty, a deterrence policy as an instrument to reduce external threats, and the operationalization of the national defense principles to overcome external threats within the collective defense framework based on NATO.

The role of society was considered important for mobilizing resistance, the National Guard, and the Youth Guard. Internal discussions about the necessity of developing a comprehensive defense system in Latvia as a complementary measure to the transatlantic collective defense arrangement were already under way in the Ministry of Defense and the National Armed Forces. Although the concept of comprehensive defense was not an explicit part of the 2016 NDC, it was the basis for the amendments of the National Security Law in 2018 and the 2020 NDC.

Parliament approved the current version of the NDC in 2020. It is a comprehensive document

Burachki checkpoint on Russia-Latvia border. Photo by: W0zny (Wikimedia Commons). August 16, 2013

providing solid guidance for the development of Latvia's defense system. The 2020 NDC draws attention to increased international competition, where some countries choose to openly ignore international laws and agreements as well as the sovereignty of other countries to achieve their own strategic ambitions. The fragmentation of the global system in combination with the development of new technologies, private military companies, climate change, and pandemics has increased uncertainty in international peace and security. As a result, economic and diplomatic instruments have lost their effectiveness in maintaining peace and stability, and thus there is a need to go beyond the model of collective defense based on the transatlantic alliance.

Latvian Comprehensive Security

The 2020 NDC established four pillars for Latvian defense: the National Armed Forces, a comprehensive defense system, NATO collective defense, and international cooperation.

The comprehensive defense system in Latvia has two objectives: societal resilience in peacetime and the protection of the state during a conflict. This system is based on the idea that society must support the National Armed Forces together with the national economic structure to guarantee the vital functions of the state (including material support for the armed forces). In the event of a major crisis or conflict, Latvian society is expected to:

- organize and implement passive/non-compliant civil and armed resistance against the aggressor.
- support the National Armed Forces and the allied forces with information, goods and services, and any other necessary resources.
- maintain societal services and functions in case of major disruptions or shocks (including a military conflict), by focusing on the following areas:
  - governance and state structures at all levels
  - continuity of vital societal functions (electricity, communications, financial services, food, critical infrastructure, and public health and safety) in any way and under any circumstances
  - vital resources, including raw material reserves
  - readiness to act in crisis and war situations across various societal levels, including individual civic preparedness.

According to the 2020 NDC, Latvian comprehensive defense is based on eight pillars: maintaining the vital functions of the state, society's resilience, protection of the information space, the sustainability of the national economy, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the church, civil resistance, cyber security, and youth education.

1. Maintaining the Vital Functions of the State

Latvia plans to implement pre-established mechanisms at all institutional levels to guarantee the basic functions of the state during crisis and war. Each structure must have well-defined strategies, objectives, and staff to ensure its operationality. This includes maintaining backup copies of database systems abroad to ensure that they can restore important national data in case of disruption.

2. Societal Resilience

Comprehensive defense is only possible with the involvement of the entire society. Thus, the Latvian population must take responsibility for the country's security and defense. Individuals and society must be able to survive and sustain for at least 72 hours without any state assistance as well as support the national defense with information, knowledge, skills, material means, and psychological support. This requires a culture of readiness where every private and public organization is prepared to deal with potential crises. This shall be done by providing education, training, and information for all groups in the Latvian society.

3. Protection of the Information Space

Latvia's population must be aware of influence operations and information attacks, which are constant and permanent threats. Society needs to understand media literacy, critical thinking, and psychological resilience against influence operations by including these subjects in the school curricula and by providing educational opportunities for different groups in society. The defense sector should have a clear communications strategy to enhance the state's ability to respond to information and psychological operations.

4. Sustaining the National Economy

Companies that provide basic services with more than 250 employees must ensure continuity of the operations during crisis and war. Business plans must include provisions for guaranteeing supply chain security as well as limiting economic and technological dependence on non-NATO and non-EU countries. The state also needs to establish a reserve system and prepare for export restrictions on food, medicines, and essential raw materials. It is also necessary to assign mobilization tasks to companies during peacetime, including promoting the participation of current and former employees in the

National Guard and the National Armed Forces to guarantee the physical security of strategic facilities.

5. Nongovernmental Organizations and the Church

Nongovernmental organizations are also expected to take part in defense planning, organizing exercises and training, and informing society. The church has a significant role in strengthening the psychological resilience of its members, helping them to overcome difficulties, motivating them to support civil society, and providing reliable information.

6. Civil Resistance

In the event of an armed conflict, the civilian population must evacuate as far as possible within the territory controlled by the National Armed Forces and the Allied troops. At the same time, it must passively resist by not cooperating with the adversary's established administrative institutions and armed units. This is to be done by isolating oneself from the decisions and actions of the occupiers, such as not taking part in public events organized by occupying forces and structures, not providing them information, and not participating in elections or referendums organized by the occupiers. The success of the resistance movement depends on the covert support of the population (such as security, medical care, information, finance, communications, training, recruitment, and intelligence) to members of the civil resistance, the armed resistance, the National Armed Forces, and the Allied forces.

7. Cyber Security

In efforts to reduce the vulnerabilities of state institutions, society, and companies, it is necessary to guarantee the implementation of minimal cyber security standards and the reduction of technological dependence on countries that are not members of NATO or the EU. Cyber security issues must be included in the curricula of educational institutions, and in the annual training of state and local institutions. In addition, the NDC calls for establishing subdivisions of the Cyber Youth Guard and the National Guard Cyber Defense Unit. It is essential to ensure the secure storage of important data in Latvia in efforts to guarantee the continuity of critical services.

8. Youth Education

The Youth Guard and the introduction of national defense education in schools have a key role in strengthening societal resilience in Latvia. This is to be done by educating the youth about national defense, developing their sense of patriotism, civic consciousness, social cohesion, and leadership and physical abilities. The Ministry of Defense will be establishing a vocational secondary education institution, where general education will be combined with the acquisition of skills and values to develop the students' intellectual capacity, including developing a strong sense of responsibility and improving the necessary competencies to withstand increased physical and psychological challenges. The general secondary school curriculum will focus on mathematics, physics, chemistry, and technology to develop the students' competencies to use modern combat technologies. The subject of national defense will be introduced in the national curricula of secondary schools (10th and 11th grades) by 2024. The objective is to develop competencies associated with national defense, crisis management, critical thinking, and civic patriotism. In addition, the students will have the opportunity to take part in voluntary national defense summer camps, where the knowledge acquired during the school year will be applied and practiced. It is expected that around 30,000 students aged 15–17 will participate each year. The aim is to reach a third of Latvia's population within 10 years.

Implementation of Comprehensive Defense

Developing and implementing comprehensive defense is an ongoing process with many challenges. Following the 2016 version of the NDC, the National Security Law was amended to reflect the necessities of implementing the system of comprehensive defense and civil resistance. Although both ideas had broad support by many significant stakeholders in the armed forces and the Ministry of Defense, it was politically sensitive. With a different threat assessment, it became viable to include the amendments of the National Security Law. The next step was to prepare the strategy for implanting the system of comprehensive defense. It was defined in "On the Implementation of the Comprehensive Defense System in Latvia." It defines seven key strategic objectives, the institutions responsible for implementation, and their main tasks (see table).

In 2019, Exercise Kristaps tested these functions, and the private sector had the opportunity to directly interact with the defense sector in a hypothetical crisis situation. The exercise provided many significant insights about critical services and suggestions for improvement which are being included in legislative reforms.

In 2020, the working group responsible for implementing these tasks produced a report evaluating its progress. It stressed informing society, amending legislation, strengthening the relationship between the public and the private sector, and increasing society's participation in the country's military defense system within the comprehensive defense framework.

The ministries also engaged in a tabletop exercise to help establish priorities and tasks for specific organizations, and to check the ministries' individual plans in response to the exercise scenario. The exercise conclusions showed the importance of assessing the financial systems, energy reserves, and communication capabilities during a crisis as well as the need to identify necessary resources and staff to guarantee the critical functions of the state.

Political Aspects of Comprehensive Defense

Russia's attempts to influence Latvian politics can be divided into three categories: supporting pro-Russian political parties, organizations, NGOs, and individuals; maintaining or trying to increase its political influence over the local population; and influencing politicians and civil servants, mainly at the regional level.

The main pro-Russian political force is the political alliance "Harmony," which started as the Harmony Center in 2005 as a merger of several pro-Russian parties and then consolidated in 2010 and 2011 into the Social Democratic Party Harmony. It signed cooperation agreements with Putin's party in 2009, the Chinese Communist Party in 2011, and joined the European Socialist Party in 2015. In 2017, it broke the agreement with United Russia in a move to become more palatable for Latvian mainstream politics and to be included in the government's coalition.

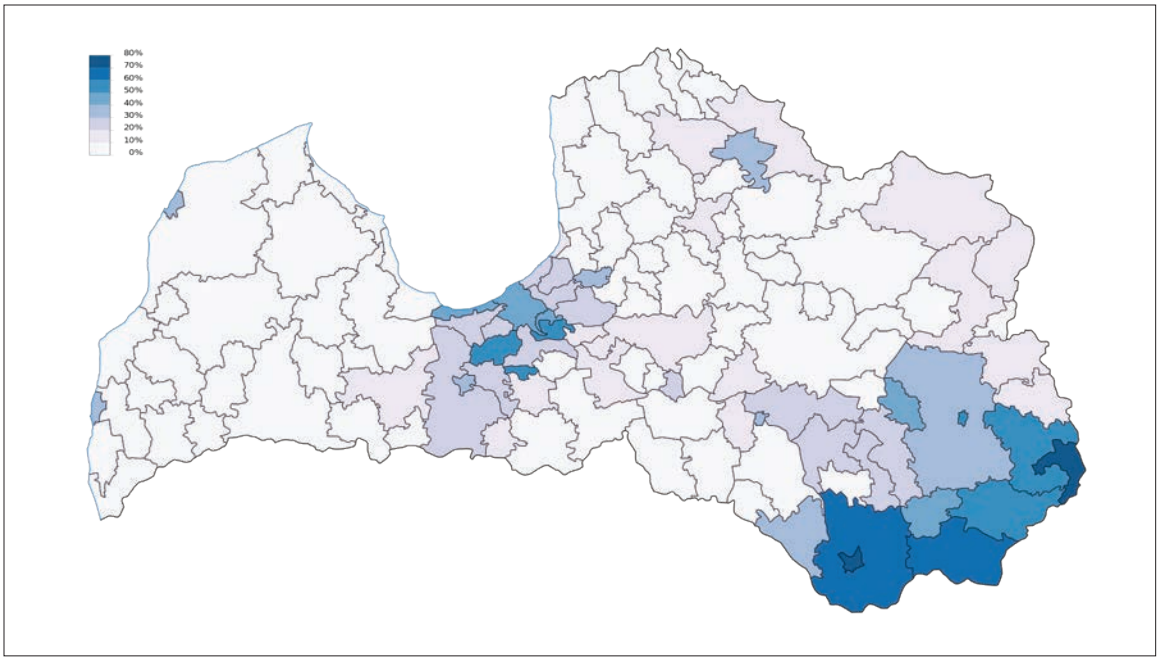
Although it is not possible to affirm that Russia controls any political party in Latvia, many politicians have maintained close contact with Russian political actors. The former Russian Ambassador to Latvia revealed in an interview with the Russian radio station Ekho Moskvi in 2015 that the Russian embassy had a plan for pro-Russian parties to win a majority of seats in the Parliament in the 2010 elections. In the same interview, he revealed that his successor had similar plans.[4] Pro-Russian politicians denied involvement in any plan from the Russian embassy.[5] Since 2017, Harmony has been publicly distancing itself from Russia and assuming a more social-democratic profile to compete with ethnic Latvian parties, which are mostly conservative. It has a stable electorate, with an average of 25 percent of the seats in the Parliament but has never been part

Table. Latvia's Comprehensive Defense Strategic Objectives, Stakeholders, and Tasks

Strategic Objective	Stakeholders	Tasks
Develop military capabilities and define defense strategies	Defense National Armed Forces	Develop military capabilities Develop defense strategy Increase individual willingness to engage in national defense and resist occupation
Establishing closer cooperation between private and public sectors	Entire government	Identify and reduce threat measures across government Cooperation with NGOs and their involvement in national defense Develop national and local volunteer networks Organize annual defense training for professionals and experts from various fields Develop the national defense industry and increase its role in national defense
National defense course in schools and increasing public awareness of defense issues	Education and Science Defense Other government bodies	Implement the national defense curriculum Introduce national defense subjects in higher education and applied sciences Strengthen relationship between state and society
Civil defense and disaster management	Internal Affairs State and local government bodies Juridical and Private Persons	Implement the seven NATO civil resilience baseline requirements Closer civil-military relations Population readiness to withstand initial stages of disaster or war
Psychological Defense	State Chancellery Defense Education and Science Culture Other government bodies	Increase societal resilience against influence, information, and psychological operations Increase social cohesion Increase social engagement in the domestic political and social processes Establish direct channels of communication with religious organizations
Strategic Communication	State Chancellery Other government bodies	Encourage the population to behave in line with the comprehensive defense model Manage the government's crisis communication Increase resilience against information operations targeting Latvia
Economic resilience	Finance Economics	Guarantee the provision of essential government services in crisis and war Establish reserves of essential commodities at the national level Sustain business continuity during crisis and war Guarantee personal economic security

of a government coalition.

Russia also finances and uses local pseudo-activists and NGOs. Over the last 10 years, Russia has instigated five campaigns with the sole objective of destabilizing Latvia: Russian-language education, Russian as the second official language in Latvia, automatic citizenship for all residents in Latvia, autonomy claims for the region of Latgale, and the family moral initiative. During Imperial Russian and Soviet times, Russians sought to "Russify" local ethnicities using education, language, and religion. Latvians (and Estonians and Lithuanians) remember this quite clearly and seek to reverse this effort through these three areas that have historically been used against them. All three of these are intertwined. Education strongly influences what language is used, while the ability to speak Latvian is a strong determinant of citizenship. Most recently, Russian



Percentage of Russian speakers in different regions of Latvia, 2011 census. Image by: Xil, based on Latvia,_administrative_divisions_-_Nmbrs_-_colored.svg by TUBS. August 17, 2013

influencers have been focusing more on the immorality and decadence of the West since the mix of citizenship and minorities has been losing its appeal.

Language and Education

The Kremlin is pushing to make Russian Latvia's second official language in order to reverse de-russification and to pursue a broader strategy aimed at establishing Russian as an official EU language.[6]

After its independence from the USSR, Latvia maintained a dual language education system with both Latvian and Russian language schools. In some cases, this resulted in a deep divergence of learning outcomes, particularly in the subject of history. In 2002, the Latvian government initiated a program to protect the cultural heritage of minorities living in Latvia by opening publicly financed schools in seven different languages.[7] This is changing, however. Before 2019, 60 percent of the studies were to be in Latvian and 40 percent in the minority language. As of 2022, all subjects except language and literature are taught in Latvian.

Another initiative to influence Latvian politics has been to include family values in the school curriculum; for example, to legally define a Latvian "family" as a heterosexual couple with children. These attempts are aimed at undermining "Western" values.

Citizenship

With Latvia's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, all those who had moved to Latvia from the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1991 (currently 25 percent of the population) had to apply for Latvian citizenship.[8] Russia's narrative aims to delegitimize Latvia's political and economic model by convincing these people that they are being discriminated against. Nevertheless, one cannot assume that the Russian-speaking population in Latvia are able and willing to support Russian destabilization operations as the Russian-speaking population is very diverse and many are not necessarily pro-Russian.

Another failed pro-Russian initiative advocated that all non-citizens should be eligible for Latvian citizenship and that the Latgale region, where a large number of ethnic Russians live, should be autonomous.[9]

Other efforts have included issuing Russian citizenship for ethnic Russians living outside of Russia, for example in the Baltic states. Since 2002, Russia has encouraged issuing Russian passports (called passportization)[10] targeting two groups: Latvian residents (particularly ethnic Russians) who are not eligible for Latvian citizenship and those who want to receive a Russian pension. This was designed to exploit their discontent and feeling of being insulted. Between 2007 and 2017 approximately 28,000 people in Latvia became Russian citizens,[11] many of whom did so for economic reasons and not for any particularly strong allegiance or loyalty to Russia. However, large numbers of Russian citizens in Latvia increase the risk that Russia will intervene on behalf of "these oppressed" Russian minorities to "defend them."

In 2019, the Parliament approved a law granting automatic citizenship to all non-citizens' children born after January 1, 2020, provided that the children's parents agreed to not seek citizenship of another country for their children and that the children did not already hold citizenship of another state.

The Economic and Social Aspects of Comprehensive Defense

According to the economic platforms of the parties represented in the Latvian Parliament, the key economic sectors are transportation, real estate, and finance.[12] All three are highly dependent on money from Russia and countries making up the Commonwealth of Independent States, and thus such business interests are a significant conduit for Russian influence. This has resulted in allegations of money laundering and corruption that create a reputation problem for Latvia.

Although Latvia's transition to a market economy might be considered a success, one of the economic policy's pillars has been low wages as a means for establishing competitiveness. This has resulted in developing a low-complexity economy with low productivity producing low added-value goods. Therefore, economic growth has not resulted in improving relative living standards. On the contrary, it has deepened economic inequality and consequently increased the sentiment of relative deprivation among the population.[13] This was aggravated by the financial crisis of 2008. Absolute living standards declined and because of government austerity policies a significant part of the population emigrated or developed resentment against the state and the political system. Thus, since Latvia's economic leverage is quite small, Russia has focused on discrediting the Western neoliberal financial and Latvia's economic models. However, Latvia has been implementing policies to resolve these issues. Wages are increasing and sectors with high complexity such as information technology are developing.

Nevertheless, Russia's opportunities for influencing Latvia by economic means is very limited. The majority of Latvia's external trade is with EU and NATO member states. In 2019, 72 percent of Latvia's exports were to EU states, and 11 percent to non-EU NATO member states. Exports to Russia accounted for only 9 percent. At the same time, Latvia's imports from EU member states accounted for 75 percent of the total, while 8 percent were from non-EU NATO member states and 7 percent from Russia. The transportation sector, which is heavily dependent upon Russia, represents just 8 percent of Latvia's gross domestic product (GDP).

For many years, Latvia has been accused of laundering money from Russia and the former Soviet Union, and since 2017 the United States has been putting pressure on Latvia to toughen its anti-laundering laws. The ABLV Bank (one of the largest private banks in the Baltic states) was

accused of "institutionalized money laundering" and the Bank of Latvia's governor was investigated for suspected bribery.[14] In mid-2019, the Latvian Parliament passed an anti-money laundering law to avoid being placed on a gray list by Moneyval, a Council of Europe monitoring body.[15]

Energy

There are important questions regarding Latvia's energy security. This is of special relevance because of historical ties with Russia which deepened during the Soviet period. The first issue is Latvia's dependence on gas from Russia. The second is the Baltic states' connection to Russia's power grid. The third is the import of electricity from Russia. These factors result in Latvia's strategic fragility since Russia could potentially turn off the electricity system in the Baltics or cut gas flows during the winter. As always, reality is more complex. Latvia has an underground gas storage facility in Inčukalns with the capacity for 4.47 billion cubic meters. From that, 2.3 billion cubic meters are of active utilization, or the equivalent to roughly 2 years of Latvia's consumption of natural gas. It is possible to increase the active reserves to 3.2 billion cubic meters.

Still, 30 years after leaving the Soviet Union, the Baltic states are synchronized to Russia's power grid to maintain stable power supplies and prevent blackouts. Some analysts believe that, in case of conflict, Russia could turn off the electricity in the Baltic states. Although technically possible, it would result in turning off the energy in Kaliningrad, in Russia's western region, including Saint Petersburg, and in a considerable part of Belarus. The Baltic states have plans to completely disconnect from the Russian power grid and connect to the European power grid by 2025. Russia answered by launching a power plant in Kaliningrad to guarantee the region's self-supply and allegedly has plans already to disconnect the Baltic states from the Russian power grid in 2024. Regarding Latvia's dependence on imports of electricity, in 2019 the country produced 6,178 million kilowatt/hours while consumption was 7,296 million kilowatt/hours. In 2018, the production of energy was 6.5 million kilowatt/hours. In other words, Latvia is nearly self-sufficient in electricity production.

Diplomacy and Comprehensive Defense

Russia's diplomatic and information actions in Latvia have the objective of debasing Latvia's credibility, especially with NATO, the EU, and the United States. Russia promotes numerous false narratives about Latvia. First, Russia maintains the narrative that the Baltics were liberated from fascism by the Red Army and voluntarily joined the USSR, instead of being forcibly occupied and annexed. The most recent example is a series of tweets from the Russian embassy in Latvia. Starting in early July 2020, it has promoted the Russian interpretation of Latvia's integration into the Soviet Union as opposed to the actual forcible occupation and annexation. This is part of the larger Russian effort to establish a narrative of the Soviet Union as the victim.

Another strategy is renovating Soviet military memorials, a task being carried out by Russian diplomats who actively establish contacts with local Latvian authorities. Similarly, the Russian embassy has been actively recruiting individuals and organizations (such as Russian historical and cultural clubs and military archeological associations) to do research and conservation work.

Since independence from the Soviet Union, the main objective of Latvia's foreign policy has been to integrate with the West, especially by joining the EU, NATO, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. This is the result of Latvia sharing with the West the same main security and strategic interests, culture, and system of values. Since these objectives have been achieved, Latvia's foreign policy priorities are:

- to strengthen Latvia's interests in the EU, at the same time supporting a united and strong Europe
- to develop Latvia's economy and the welfare of its inhabitants
- to strengthen national security in close cooperation with the other member states of the EU and NATO
- to strengthen the cooperation between the countries of the Baltic Rim to reinforce democracy and economic stability
- to promote a closer relationship between Latvia and the diaspora.

The Invasion of Ukraine

In March 2022, the Latvian government agreed to increase the defense budget to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2025. The additional resources will be used to benefit the development of defense capabilities (especially in logistics and procurement, drones, smart ammunition, air defense systems, and indirect fire support systems such as self-propelled artillery and mortar weapon systems), increasing the mechanization of the land forces, and strengthening the capabilities of cyber defense. Defense spending in Latvia has been strategically used to promote re-industrialization by stimulating the defense industrial sector. At the same time, Latvia together with its neighbors has been pushing for ampler NATO presence in the Baltic region and is analyzing the best way to reinstate conscription by the middle of 2023.

The feeling of an increasing Russian threat has galvanized public opinion to vigorously support the EU's sanctions against Russia. Survey data shows that 66 percent of Latvia's population supports the economic sanctions, with 52 percent irrespectively of the possible negative consequences for them on the personal level. There are discussions and plans to terminate all energy ties with Russia. These include constructing a terminal for importing liquified gas from other sources in Skulte and increasing gas reserves in Inčukalns. In the information domain, Latvia has forbidden all Russian TV channels, expelled 13 Russian diplomats, and closed the Russian consulates in Daugavpils and Liepāja. In addition, the city of Riga decided to demolish the Victory Monument, which has been used to promote Russia's imperialistic ideology under the mantle of commemorating the victory over fascism, whereas Latvians often refer to it as the monument of occupation.

Latvia has supported Ukraine by donating more than €200 million in military equipment, including weapons and ammunition, drones, helicopters, food, and anti-air systems (for example, Stinger missiles). The private sector and individuals have donated money, vehicles, food, clothes, and even the transportation of people from the border between Ukraine and Poland to Latvia. As of May 2022, the official number of refugees was around 30,000, but the actual number was possibly higher. Except for a minority of the Russian-speaking population, the local population has overwhelmingly supported the refugees and has provided significant donations to them.

Conclusion

Latvia sees national security through the lens of the threat from political warfare as practiced by the Russian Federation. During the post–Cold War era, Latvian views were more conventional. As Russia conducted operations against Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, Latvia developed a new perspective. Because Russia's "new generation warfare" focuses on all potentially vulnerable sectors of society, Latvia has developed a whole-of-society approach towards national security. Although cleavages still exist that revolve around ethnicity, language, education, and citizenship, Latvia actively seeks to address those issues while also pursuing economic

Latvia's Parliament has declared Russia a "state sponsor of terrorism" for attacks on civilians during the war in Ukraine. Image by: The Parliament, Saeima, of the Republic of Latvia. August 11, 2022

development. At the same time, Latvia teams with the other two Baltic states to connect with the EU, NATO, and the United States to ensure that they will receive assistance in maintaining their sovereignty and independence. PRISM

Notes

[1] See Jānis Bērziņš, "Integrating Resilience in Defense Planning Against Information Warfare in the Post-Truth World," in *Drums: Distortions, Rumors, Untruths, Misinformation, and Smears*, ed. Norman Vasu, Benjamin Ang, and Shashi Jayakumar (Singapore: World Scientific, 2018), 117–131.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] See Eks-posol Rossii v Latvii: kak my «stavili» Ushakova i stroili nashi plany (Ex-Russian Ambassador to Latvia: how we "set" Ushakov and made our plans), available at <https://rus.tvnet.lv/5249897/eks-posol-rossii-v-latvii-kak-my-stavili-ushakova-i-stroili-nashi-plany >, in Russian.

[5] See "Urbanovičs un Ušakovs noliedz Krievijas 'programmas' īstenošanu Latvijā" [Urbanovičs and Ušakovs deny the implementation of the Russian "program" in Latvia], TV3 Ziņas, March 10, 2015, available at <https://skaties.lv/zinas/latvija/politika/urbanovics-un-usakovs-noliedz-krievijas-programmas-istenosanu-latvija/, in Latvian>.

[6] A language may attain official status in the European Union if one of its member states recognizes it as one of its official languages.

[7] The languages are Russian, Polish, Hebrew, Ukraine, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Belorussian.

[8] Citizenship requires Latvian language skills and an oath of loyalty to the Latvian state. The status of "noncitizen" entitles the same rights of a citizen with the exception of voting rights and working in the public sector.

[9] See Paul Goble, "Putin and Latvia's Latgale: Ethnicity as Explanation Vs. Ethnicity as Excuse," The Eurasia Monitor, May 26, 2015, The Jamestown Foundation available at < https://jamestown.org/program/putin-and-latvias-latgale-ethnicity-as-explanation-vs-ethnicity-as-excuse/#.VWwi1s-qpBc >.

[10] In 2002, the acquisition of Russian citizenship was simplified for any former citizen of the Soviet Union, irrespective of their current country of residence.

[11] See "10 gadu laikā Krievijas pilsoņu skaits Latvijā pieaudzis par vairāk nekā 28 000" [In 10 years, the number of Russian citizens in Latvia has increased by more than 28,000], LSM.lv, July 22, 2017, available at <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/10-gadu-laika-krievijas-pilsonu-skaits-latvija-pieaudzis-par-vairak-neka-28-000.a244201>.

[12] Jānis Bērziņš, "Macroeconomic Policy, Business Cycles, and Neoliberalism in Latvia" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Latvia, 2015).

[13] The term *relative deprivation* is the subjective judgment that one is worse off or deprived of some state or thing in comparison to some standard. See Robin M. Williams, Jr., "Relative Deprivation," in *The Idea of Social Structure: Papers in Honor of Robert K. Merton*, ed. Lewis A. Coser (New York: Routledge, 2017), 355–378.

[14] See "Latvia Passes Anti-Money Laundering Reform," *Financial Times*, June 12, 2019.

[15] See "At a Glance," Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism, available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/moneyval>.

Soldiers from ten nations prepare static displays for closing ceremony of Tobruq Legacy 2020 at Siauliai Air Base, Lithuania. Image by: Capt. Rachel Skalisky. September 28, 2020

Lithuania's Total Defense Review

By Dalia Bankauskaitė and Deividas Šlekys

Russian aggression against Ukraine since 2014, and especially after February 2022, was a gamechanger that radically transformed the geopolitical and security environment in the Baltic Sea Region. Russia's aggressive and unpredictable behavior pushed Western capitals out of their comfort zone, while the Baltic states understood the new reality and reacted swiftly. Lithuania performed the most drastic overhaul of its security and defense policy since independence in 1990. Some say that the real formation and development of the modern Lithuanian Armed Forces (LAF) started then.

For several years following independence many did not focus on national defense issues. After joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2004 Lithuanians relaxed, as did the many other NATO allies. At that time the thinking was that liberal democracy would prevail in the region. Also, NATO would help in times of crisis, therefore there was no need for increased spending on defense or LAF development.[1]

This article describes the development of Lithuania's total defense policy, which focuses on a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.[2] It discusses the major changes in the Lithuanian security and defense policy during the last 8 years, concentrating on political-military and strategic issues. The article is organized in three parts. The first discusses major conceptual debates concerning the best options for the state defense. These discussions mainly circled around the ideas of hybrid warfare, total defense, and the Suwalki Corridor dilemma. The second part focuses on institutional and political changes in Lithuania's defense sector with an emphasis on such issues as Lithuania's international cooperation and conscription. The third part deals with the dilemma of society's engagement in defense issues and the challenges that presents.

Conceptual Debate on the Options of State Defense

Since 2014, Lithuania has gone through three different stages of conceptual development concerning the state of defense. From 2014 to late 2015, the dominant narrative was hybrid war. It was succeeded by discussions about the Suwalki Corridor. Since 2018, debates about total defense have gained momentum and greater importance. Events in Ukraine since February 2022 only confirmed that taking the course toward total

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Suwalki Gap Crossing. Image by: Spc. Kevin Wang/Released (U.S. Army). June 19, 2017

defense is the right one. Yet, it is also important to emphasize that these different discussions do not replace each other but coexist; each leaves its imprint on defense politics.

Buzzwords such as "hybrid war," the "Gerasimov doctrine," and "new generation warfare" were widely used to explain the Russian military approach in Ukraine. Lithuania was no exception. Political leaders, the national military command, members of the media and academia constantly talked about it.

These discussions led to institutional changes. The LAF in 2014 designated two battalions and some additional elements from other services as rapid reaction units to be ready to act in less than 24 hours. Parliament provided legal shortcuts to swiftly deal with emergencies like Crimea.[3] Lithuania also acknowledged the importance of non-kinetic elements of defense.

Therefore, when the border crisis with Belarus started in summer 2021, Lithuania institutionally and conceptually was more ready than in 2014 to tackle such a challenge.[4] Accordingly, Lithuanian politicians called this crisis a hybrid attack and gave a new lease of life to the salience of hybrid war.[5]

Suwalki Corridor Scenario

Toward the end of 2015, U.S. Army Europe commander Lieutenant General Frederick Benjamin "Ben" Hodges III recognized the vulnerability of the Suwalki Gap, which he later called a "corridor." This corridor is the only land connection between the Baltic states and the rest of Europe and is sandwiched between Russia's Kaliningrad District to the west and Belarus to the east. Keeping this corridor open became a major task for NATO.[6] The concept

was to defend the Baltic states and Poland by using Cold War military scenarios. Bearing in mind the intentional conceptual similarity between notions of the Fulda and Suwalki gaps, this approach also is more suited for a conventional army-centric vision of warfighting. The United States, by emphasizing this particular geographical area, shaped Lithuanian defense debate by nudging it into a more balanced conceptual approach, which previously had been overly fixated on the idea of hybrid war.

In Poland and Lithuania, this discussion helped to prioritize the development of host nation support (HNS) capabilities, making national politicians and the military aware that logistics were essential for any military activity in the corridor.

However, emphasizing this piece of land led to some perceptual extremes. For instance, in summer 2022, the American political news outlet Politico published an article about the Suwalki Corridor, calling it "The most dangerous place on Earth."[7] Ironically, the Suwalki Gap concept helped to avoid an over-fixation on hybrid war and yet, in time, the corridor itself became an object of over-dramatization and conceptual overstretch.

At the same time, this fixation on the Suwalki Corridor faced its own challenges in Lithuania, where the defense community sought to consider the wider involvement of society and to take the idea of total defense seriously.

Lithuania's Total Defense Posture as Focused on Deterrence and Defense

Discussions by Western and Baltic analysts on Lithuanian defense reveal a certain gap in understanding the current focus of Lithuania's total defense.[8] U.S. analysts prefer to focus on Lithuania's conventional kinetic capabilities, unconventional warfare, and violent resistance, while nonviolent civilian resistance is considered "passive resistance."[9] This approach focuses on an occupation scenario while Lithuanian experts focus on deterrence and defense. This discrepancy occurred because American studies concluded that the Baltic states might be occupied within a certain number of hours; this view was compounded by a lack of regional expertise.[10] Outsiders tend to forget that Lithuania has extensive experience and behavioral memory of societal resistance against Soviet Russia's aggression in 1944–1953 and of regaining and defending its independence in January 1991. More recently however, Americans are paying more attention to ideas and proposals coming from the Baltic region and tailoring operational concepts for this region, such as the 2019 Resistance Operating Concept.[11]

The conceptual dynamic of defense priorities shows that during the last several years, Lithuania has been engaged in a fluid, diverse, and productive intellectual reflection, and the diversity of ideas and solutions demonstrates that Lithuania is taking its defense seriously.

Institutional and Political Changes in the Defense Sector

Lithuania's experience leaves practically no grounds to trust its neighbor Russia, which has deliberately challenged Lithuania both on the domestic and international levels since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Even so, it has taken time for Lithuania to move forward on these issues. Lithuania has been challenged by Russia on energy (in 2006), information operations (in 2006–2007), and cyber threats since 2007 (and it took until 2014 to pass a law on cyber security).[12] The main qualitative breakthrough came in 2018, when a major consolidation of all cybersecurity capabilities took place, the Ministry of National Defence took the lead at the strategic-political level, the National Cyber Security Center (NCSC) was established, and the National Cyber Security Strategy[13] was adopted.

Likewise, although Lithuania is expert on Russia's military threat, for many years since 1990

Rail Baltica Linking people, nations, and places. Image by: Rail Baltica (brochure). Accessed January 5, 2023

Lithuanian politicians kept on allocating less than 1 percent for national defense, like other states seeking to enjoy a "peace dividend."

This helps to understand the magnitude of changes in Lithuania's total defense posture after 2014. These changes may be grouped according to political-legal, politico-military, international lobbying (including defense against information operations), and political-bureaucratic (including cyber and energy) aspects.

Political-Legal Aspect

The first major decision made by Lithuania was to renew its political parties' agreement concerning defense policy (the Agreement) and to increase the defense budget. Since 2014, three such agreements were signed (in 2014, 2018, and 2022). In all three documents, the political leadership reconfirmed its pledge to ensure the consistency of the commitment to strengthen national defense capabilities. One important issue covered by the Agreement was to ensure proper funding for defense by allocating at least 2.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and, depending on the state's economic health, try to reach 3 percent of GDP in the near term.[14] From a defense budget of 0.79 percent of GDP in 2014, the budget reached 2.52 percent by 2022,[15] demonstrating the maturing of national security attitudes and the determination of the Lithuanian political community and society at large to build up the country's national defense.

One new aspect covered by the Agreement is the commitment to increase public and national resistance, build resilience against hybrid threats among state institutions and the Lithuanian public at large, and further enhance the development of national cyber security capabilities.

The second important political-legal decision was to reintroduce conscription in 2015, an option discussed since conscription was abolished in 2008. The war in Ukraine forced Lithuania to reconsider this issue. The Chief of Defense publicly acknowledged that most battalions were seriously undermanned.[16] Considering Russia's habit of holding snap exercises and engaging in rapid deployment, the LAF needs enough troops on standby in the barracks ready to act when necessary. Because of this requirement, the Lithuanian Defense Council recommended a return to conscription in February 2015. Within 1 month, the Lithuanian Parliament overwhelmingly approved the recommendation,[17] with 3,500–4,500 conscripts per year serving 9 months. Citizens were encouraged to volunteer to the conscription service and missing numbers were to be covered by a lottery applied only to males aged 18 to 23, while females were encouraged to enter the service on a volunteer basis.[18]

In general, the reaction from the society was positive. In 2015 and 2016, volunteers surged to the LAF's recruitment posts. Over time, the numbers of volunteers declined, and the lottery became an important tool. Yet, public opinion approving conscription remains high and, after almost 8 years, it should be seen as a major success of the Lithuanian state and its society in terms of national security building.[19]

Alongside these two changes, several other smaller but nevertheless important legal changes were implemented, including clarifying presidential powers in the time of crisis[20] and revising wartime and mobilization laws.[21] It is clear that by making these decisions Lithuania started its serious overhaul preparation for total defense.

The Politico-Military Aspect

Despite all the talk about Russia's hybrid threats, Lithuania's first reaction to the threat was natural and classical: the Lithuanian government decided to strengthen warfighting capabilities by reforming the LAF. Conscription was only part of the approach. Lithuania decided to invest in "military hardware" and increase its warfighting capabilities. It initiated a broad range and large-scale procurement program, including mobile artillery systems (PzH 2000), armored fighting vehicles (Boxer), medium range air defense system (NASAMS), tactical combat vehicles (Oshkosh JLTV), helicopters (Blackhawk), and other tactical equipment.[22] Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2022 accelerated Lithuania's second modernization phase. Agreements were made with France to buy artillery systems, with Germany for additional infantry fighting vehicles, and with the United States for its High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), and surveillance and fighting drones.[23]

Host nation support and critical infrastructure are necessary for NATO success in Eastern Europe. At the Wales Summit NATO decided to establish NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU) in the eastern flank countries. These units serve as command-and-control elements, coordinating and enhancing interoperability between national and allied forces. The Lithuanian NFIU is a great success story.

Lithuania focuses on military critical infrastructure and has modernized its training grounds, military bases, and other infrastructure with significant help from the United States and Germany,[24] as well as building three new military bases and a new, large training ground.[25]

During the NATO Madrid summit in 2022, the Baltic states and Poland managed to convince their allies to move the Alliance into a forward defense direction, which in practical terms means more forward deployment of allied soldiers on NATO's eastern flank.[26] In Lithuania's case, an agreement was reached between Vilnius and Berlin for Germany to dedicate an entire infantry brigade to this flank. Yet in the near future, only part of its

brigade will be deployed in Lithuania due to insufficient logistical infrastructure.[27]

Finally, working together with the other two Baltic states, Lithuania scored a diplomatic victory by gaining confirmation that the EU will fund Rail Baltica, to be finished by 2026, the high-speed railway link to the rest of Europe, tremendously increasing capacity for flow of goods, people, and, if necessary, military material.[28]

The LAF also returned to conscription and to increased retention for long-serving active personnel; the number of active personnel within the military rose from 13,000 in 2013 to around 21,000 in 2022,[29] allowing the creation of four new battalions in a second infantry brigade. The LAF also developed division-level headquarters capabilities to provide higher command and control. This increase in manpower was complemented by a substantial deployment of allied troops. Some are part of bilateral agreements, such as U.S. troops on rotation or NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) units. Within the last few years, the number of rotationally deployed allied troops in Lithuania has exceeded one thousand. The presence of well-equipped allies makes a major impact on Lithuania's defense and deterrence posture. [30]

At the same time, the LAF reconfirmed Lithuania's commitment to the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union by participating in international missions abroad in Mali, Iraq, Ukraine, the Mediterranean Sea region, and the Somali waters. Overall, Lithuania remains an active participant in international missions.[31]

An overview of the last 8 years of military changes in Lithuania clearly indicates that the LAF transformation was both impressive and remarkable in all spheres. Nevertheless, such changes required almost total attention from all stakeholders and kept the mainstream thinking and public debates focused more on defense and the country's warfighting capacities, at an increased risk of neglecting the focus on its civic society, especially how to comprehensively engage it with the country's defense.

International Diplomacy and Lobbying

Another achievement is that Lithuania has never lost sight of the vital importance of diplomacy. After its initial work at home, Lithuania moved quickly, together with the remaining two Baltic states, Poland, and other countries in the region, pushing hard to change NATO and EU policies toward Russia and the defense of NATO's eastern flank. In parallel, Lithuania focused on developing bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation to complement the security umbrella provided by NATO.

NATO made a series of decisions on reinforcing northeastern Europe during summits in Wales (2014), Warsaw (2016), Brussels (2018) and Madrid (2022): Since 2014, friendly foreign forces deployed in the framework of enhanced air policing (which started in 2004, and which should be transformed into the air defense), an eFP battalion led by Germany and including many other units designated for military exercises and training.[32] However, Lithuania understands the complex nature of NATO decisionmaking and its cumbersome military structure and made a strategic decision to diversify its efforts by actively participating in NATO reforms as well as pursuing military cooperation with a number of countries. As one senior official of the Ministry of National Defense (MOD) said, Lithuania looked for partners with "teeth and claws," that is, willing, capable, and experienced in warfighting. Lithuania opted to work with countries that could be first responders.

The underlying idea is that NATO will honor Article 5 (mutual defense) of the Washington Treaty (dubbed "the musketeer clause") and will come to help in time of need, but force deployment will take time. Therefore, in a time of crises the armed forces from partner countries would provide crucial help and support while NATO forces assemble. This

idea manifested itself in closer bilateral cooperation with Poland. Cooperation includes establishing the Lithuanian-Polish Council of Defense Ministers and coordinating affiliated military units, as well as other resources. Lithuania also seeks closer cooperation with the United States, including developing Lithuania's Land Forces divisional headquarters and special operations forces (SOF) cooperation and training. The battle-tested and combat-fit Lithuanian SOF are highly valued by the allies. Lithuania also engages in multilateral cooperation in the format of the Joint Expeditionary Force (a United Kingdom–led two-star command incorporating forces from 11 circum-Baltic states),[33] which provides actual defense planning and training not only with NATO states but serves also as a "bridge" for deeper cooperation with non-NATO Sweden and Finland.

These warfighting partnerships are complemented by EU security initiatives like the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) program aimed at deepening defense cooperation among the EU member states. From the Lithuanian perspective, NATO alone cannot deliver all the necessary tools for Baltic region defense. Some issues require specific legislation, and this is an EU, not NATO, function. In 2018, Lithuania initiated and now coordinates the Cyber Rapid Response Teams (CRRT) project in the framework of EU PESCO. The CRRT project is one of the most successful PESCO projects. The Lithuania-coordinated CRRT typically consists of 8 to 12 cybersecurity experts pooled from six participating EU member states—Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania—that can provide assistance in the event of a cyber incident. CRRT has been operational since 2019 and reached full operational capability in May 2021.[34] On February 22, 2022, the Lithuanian-led EU CRRT was activated in response to Ukraine's request to help Ukrainian institutions "to cope with growing cyber threats."[35] However, Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, impeded the mission.

In response to the increasing incidents of ransomware threats around the world, Lithuania is among the leading partners (together with India)[36] in one of the five Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI) clusters.[37]

Furthermore, Lithuania was among the first to initiate and support the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, located in Finland, which focuses on the fact that the nature of contemporary conflicts is not only kinetic. This center helps to build up expertise and consensus on hybrid threats among EU and NATO member states. For Lithuania, it is a venue to present and explain its assessment of Russia's activities in a less formal environment.

In Lithuania's view, its engagement with the United States is of significant importance for the region. It should be retained and is fundamental for Baltic security and stability and deterrence of Russia. If the United States were to start considering a limited engagement in the region, Russia would regard it as a regional weakness, and this would lead to increased insecurity in the region. Eventually, it might weaken the transatlantic bond and harm the security of the entire transatlantic region.

Lithuania and other Baltic states jointly address capability gaps in maritime and air defense in the Baltic Sea region. The Baltic states have clearly expressed the requirements needed to improve political and military decision-making processes, rules of engagement in peacetime conditions, and procedures and force generation requirements regarding effective and timely transition from NATO's air policing to its air defense posture. Therefore, rapid deployment of surface-based air defense forces and fourth or fifth generation fighters are of utmost importance for deterrence and defense of the Baltics. The timely deployment and employment of air defense assets should be regularly exercised and

Image by: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. February 10, 2022

where possible should be linked to EFP training requirements, as EFP currently lacks sufficient combat enablers from the air and sea domains.

It is worth mentioning that Lithuania is leading the Military Airspace Block Concept regional initiative. This aims to develop favorable exercise conditions nationally and regionally for air and missile defense exercises and other military activities for contingencies in the Baltics. The project focuses on designing military interconnected airspaces for rapid activation and utilization, which connects all the dots of air defense.

In the current security environment and the military force imbalance in the Baltic region, Lithuania's strong transatlantic bond becomes exceptionally significant. Due to the size of its population and the economy, the country relies on cooperation with allies to ensure the security and defense of its territory and of the entire region. The presence of allied forces in Lithuania and their ability to provide timely reinforcements are seen as key factors to change the Russian calculus and prevent Russia's perceived easy wins in the region. Understanding that, Lithuania is increasing its host nation support capabilities, working to increase the military mobility to and through the region and providing excellent training opportunities to the allied forces.

As a result of these investments, Lithuania can host not only its armed forces, but also an EFP battalion, U.S. heavy battalion, and other smaller allied military units. It is notable that all the deployed forces were able to maintain their level of readiness while training in Lithuania. While NATO forces in Lithuania are there for the foreseeable future, Lithuania seeks to ensure a long-term U.S. forward presence.

The diplomatic activity discussed above and these tangible investments show that Lithuania's response to the resurgent threat from Russia is multidimensional and comprehensive.

Strategic Communications or Russian Information Confrontation

In the age of social media and fast-spreading information, society is on the front line of confrontation

and negative influences. Forming a strong, resilient, and critically thinking society that remains attentive to information and resistant to provocations is a key task in Lithuania, especially in the face of today's security issues.

Lithuania's efforts to build a defensive strategic communication capability is a regional success story. Due to Russia's history of aggressive behavior, Lithuania began building up its expertise in this field years ago. During Lithuania's preparatory steps for NATO and EU membership, these skills were extensively employed in order to gain public support and empower citizens to appreciate the opportunities of membership.

When Russia began serious information operations throughout Europe after its aggression in Ukraine in 2014, Vilnius was better prepared to withstand malign information attacks than other European countries. Lithuania's expertise and proficiency in protecting its information environment; identifying, tracking, and neutralizing malign topics and themes; and debunking fake news as well as counter-information and psychological operations grew rapidly and earned well-deserved respect among allies.[38]

Lithuania has accumulated extensive experience in monitoring and assessing the risks of hostile strategic communication, including but not limited to assessing physical and electronic environments and countering disinformation. Malignant Russian activities in the electronic environment include denial of service cyber-attacks, defacing web sites by unauthorized alteration of information, or using disinformation to trick users into opening files that allow an aggressor to penetrate the digital system; shaping opinion through articles and comments on media web sites; shaping opinion on TV and radio; and shaping opinion by using blogs, social media, and other means. Activities in the physical environment include but are not limited to creating hostile political narratives by foreign countries, shaping opinion by visual measures (for example, graffiti), using deception (for example, fake calls, alerts), propagating symbols, and holding legal and illegal protests and demonstrations.[39]

Successful defense lies in the way information operations are organized based on the decentralized and often informal cooperation among the state and civic society; the core of such cooperation is mutual trust.[40] At the state level, government institutions assess the information environment according to their areas of responsibility and competence.

The LAF were among the first to develop capabilities to monitor, assess, and analyze the information environment in real time. MOD communications promote public awareness about security and military processes in Lithuania. Other security institutions such as the State Security Department and Second Investigation Department under the MOD carry out internationally acknowledged public communication and education campaigns on potential risks to Lithuanian citizens, and their annual national threat assessment reports became branded analysis regarding geopolitical trends.[41]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken the lead in strategic communication to partner with state institutions to represent Lithuania's position abroad and to push the issue of information security up to the EU agenda.[42] Additionally, the Threat Prevention and Crisis Management Bureau (Group) in the Office of the Lithuanian Government steers and coordinates strategic communication activities between different state institutions, consolidating the comprehensive threat monitoring and crisis management mechanism. In 2020, the government approved coordination procedures for national security strategic communications.

Civic society is directly engaged in the national information environment monitoring and fact-checking, strengthening society's media and information literacy. Examples include civic activists

volunteering to work in the information technology, media, academic, education, and business sectors, such as the Lithuanian "elves;" or a mainstream media initiative; a fact-checking platform such as Debunkeu; and many others.[43] The National NGO Coalition, uniting nongovernmental organizations umbrella associations working in different areas of public policy, contributes significantly to society's resilience-building and is active in positive narrative communication. Although the state provides financial assistance to the civic society, the major financial support for the civic society comes from international donors. Cooperation between state institutions and society sets a framework for the whole-of-society approach to become tangible and long lasting.

Strategic communications are not sufficient for developing long-term social resilience. Lithuanian experts assisted by Swedish colleagues adapted the concept of psychological defense by basing their approach on the country's realities and a long-term strategy to build up resilient, well-informed decision-makers, institutions, and society, empowering them by providing practical knowledge and tools to ensure their readiness and willingness to act during a crisis.[44]

Overall, since 2014 Lithuanian institutional response to national security threats has gained momentum. Considering the nature of the threats and the speed and scope of hostile activities carried out by Russia, at the beginning a lot of response activities among state-institutions and civic society were carried out informally, based merely on coordinated efforts of interested groups and individuals. Today, the response process has become much more institutionalized.

The Political-Bureaucratic Aspect

Since regaining independence the government delegated much greater decision-making autonomy to the MOD than to other ministries. This created two problems. First, MOD officials were not inclined to share the power of a national defense monopoly. On the other hand, politicians and officials in other ministries and institutions were not very eager to claim and take over more responsibilities and tasks that would increase their workload. However, it appears that Lithuania's MOD, due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Belarusian border crisis, is on track to share custody of national security with other institutions.

Since 2014, most strategic decisions concerning the establishment and strengthening of political and military institutions have been aimed at preparing Lithuania to face hybrid threats. The first and crucial lesson learned from the experience of Russia's war against Ukraine was that national security and defense cannot be the business of the MOD and LAF alone. Diverse threats and risks require a whole-of-government approach and coordinated action among all state institutions and agencies. This can only take place if there is a functioning coordination unit in the government. Yet, theory and practice are two separate realms. It took several years for the government to finalize the National Model for Integrated Crisis Prevention and Hybrid Threats Management[45] (the Model), a legal and procedural framework for implementing Lithuania's National Security Strategy[46] that structures national efforts to monitor and assess national threats, design prevention and crisis solving plans, and conduct risk management. The new edition of the Law on Civil Protection (June 2022) and related bills defined the creation of an integrated crisis management and civil protection system for crises and emergencies, including nuclear or other potential disasters. In addition, the Threat Management and Crisis Prevention Bureau (Group) functions as a secretariat of the National Security Commission,[47] which monitors the implementation of tasks on a daily basis to secure the smooth functioning of the Model. With the start of the new year (January 2023), the Bureau/Group will be transformed into the National

Crisis Management Center.[48] The Center is tasked to continuously monitor situations, assess and forecast threats to national security, and contribute to the implementation of national security objectives set by the government. The Center is also responsible for the coordinated assessment of key state institutions' functional resilience; namely, it supervises the NATO seven baseline requirements[49] of civil preparedness. While it is too early to assess the effectiveness of this effort, Lithuania must take steps to ensure that bureaucratic inertia does not hinder necessary cooperation.[50]

The COVID-19 pandemic public health crisis was a stress test for the Lithuanian total defense system and revealed deficiencies in the crisis management system, indicating that an overhaul is in order. The outgoing political leadership passed important new versions of Mobilization and Wartime acts. A new ruling majority came to power in late 2020 and immediately went into action, initiating a revision of the National Security Strategy, while the newly appointed Minister of Defense announced a government-wide effort to create a state defense plan designed to create the first functioning total defense system.[51]

On Cyber Security

In the wake of the 2007 Russian cyber attacks on Estonia, Lithuania elevated cybersecurity high on the political agenda and decided to build advanced cyber capabilities, which are today producing results. Lithuania has applied a systematic approach to ensure the security of state information resources and its information technologies by adopting the Cyber Security Law in 2014, launching the National Cyber Security Centre (NKSC) under the MOD in 2015, adopting a Cyber Security Strategy in 2018, and establishing the position of Vice-Minister for Cyber Security.

The branches of the NKSC, equally important for national cyber security, are the National Cyber Incident Management Centre CERT-LT and sectoral Mil-CERT (launched in 2021), responsible for managing cyber incidents in the military defense system. Since the summer of 2021, the NKSC also runs the Regional Cyber Defence Center (RCDC) as the main platform for practical cooperation in the field of cyber with the United States. The RCDC members are Ukraine, Georgia, Poland, and Lithuania.[52]

The MOD is responsible for the development and implementation of national cyber security and its integration into national defense. The LAF has cyber security troops and annually runs cyber security and defense drills, such as "Amber Mist."[53] Cyber security scenarios have become an integral part of military as well as mobilization exercises.

Within a few years, Lithuania has become one of the leading states in cyber security expertise and is among the leaders in the buildup of cyber capabilities of the EU. Lithuania is ranked fourth globally and second in the EU in the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) Global Cybersecurity Index, with the highest scores in the legal, technical, organizational, and cooperation domains.[54] Following this assessment of its capacities, Lithuania simultaneously follows two parallel directions: building up national cyber security capacities and strengthening mutual interstate assistance capacities. Lithuania initiated and now leads both the PESCO CRRT and the Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security project,[55] and is also among the leaders of one of five Counter Ransomware Initiative groups. The MOD secures the core network to ensure the continued functioning of the institutions engaged in national mobilization. The current trajectory is designed to make Lithuanian capabilities in cyber security even greater and stronger.

Energy Security

In addition to cyber security, Lithuania is well known in transatlantic circles for its advocacy of energy security. The Law on the Protection

LNG carrier Energy Liberty is moored at Klaipėda LNG terminal for LNG reloading operation. Image by: Andrius Pelakauskas/ Klaipėda Nafta. March 23, 2020

of Objects of Importance to Ensuring National Security includes energy and contains criteria for assessing the compliance of investors with the interests of national security while setting a framework for economic ties with Russia and China. It has been applied numerous times and has stopped questionable investments.[56]

Lithuania has already refuted the Russian-created narrative that its energy system cannot function without Russian energy resources. Since May 2022, Lithuania has not paid a single penny to Russia for energy resources, refusing to import gas, electricity, or oil from Russia.[57] In the early 2000s, energy security was a rare topic on NATO or EU security agendas. Lithuania, facing constant pressure from Russia, complained that Moscow was setting the price of natural gas on political, not economic, criteria. Because of that, Lithuania ended up paying one of the highest per capita costs of energy in Europe. The situation became even more dire in 2010 when Vilnius closed the Ignalina nuclear plant as required by EU membership obligations; Lithuania changed overnight from being an electricity exporter to importing 65 percent of its electricity.[58] It is not surprising that Lithuania sought similarly minded states to lobby the EU and NATO to address the issue of energy as a security challenge. Eventually, these attempts proved successful. Establishing NATO's Energy Security Centre of Excellence in Vilnius serves as recognition of Lithuania's role on this

issue.[59] In 2014, Lithuania opened a floating Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Klaipėda, completed the EU's Third Energy Package, and increased the capacity of Lithuania's pipeline system. This enabled Lithuania to acquire natural gas in international markets and eliminated Russia's monopoly in the natural gas sector in Lithuania and the Baltic region. These changes have transformed Lithuania from paying one of the highest prices for natural gas to having the lowest prices for natural gas in the EU.[60] Currently, Lithuania imports no gas from Russia, and U.S. gas through the Klaipėda LNG terminal already accounts for almost 80 percent of Lithuania's gas imports. The 508-kilometer-long bi-directional Lithuanian-Polish gas pipeline GIPL (Gas Interconnection Poland-Lithuania), completed at the beginning of 2022 and open since May 1, 2022, has significantly increased the energy security of the whole region by expanding supply options. GIPL has connected the gas markets of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland to the European Union,[61] and it gives Poland access to the Klaipėda LNG terminal.[62]

Although Lithuania remains the largest electricity importer in the EU, Vilnius has multiplied its international electricity connections, which supports its energy security. Lithuania is connected to the Nordic electricity market by the NordBalt link (a Lithuanian-Swedish submarine power cable) and the EstLink 1 and 2 (an Estonia-Finland interconnection). Lithuania is also connected with the Western electricity markets by LitPol Link 1.

Although Lithuania maintains power connections with Belarus and Kaliningrad, the country has already taken control of much of its electric power system, and it has implemented key synchronization projects that ensure the security of the national electric power system. This means that Lithuania's main generating capacity is ready to operate on the continental European system, and in case of an emergency (accident, disconnection), Lithuania can ensure the uninterrupted operation of the country's electric power system with the help of Polish partners.[63] Therefore, Lithuania plans to end the synchronization with the European electric power systems in 2024 (a year earlier than planned initially). Until then, a Lithuanian isolated operation test is planned, followed by a joint isolated operation test of the Baltic power systems.[64]

The 200-megawatt battery is another project of great importance for electric power system security and stability, which will be finally commissioned in December 2022 or January 2023.[65]

To further reduce dependency on electricity imports Lithuania has set a strategic goal of generating 103 percent of its own electricity needs by 2030, 93 percent of which will be renewable, or green, power.[66] Today 37.8 percent of needed electricity is self-generated, of which 62 percent is green electricity.[67] Also, the national focus is on household energy self-sufficiency, and one in three households will generate its own energy by 2030.[68]

In the context of hybrid threats, the importance of the electric power supply has been seen as a possible area where hybrid war (or conflict) might be launched. Such a scenario has been played out by numerous tabletop exercises.

Another energy-related risk is the Ostrovets nuclear power plant, located in Belarus some 30 kilometers from the Lithuanian border. It is a Russian-Belarus project, and it poses a nuclear and environmental threat to Lithuania and Europe. The plant runs counter to both the Espoo and Aarhus Conventions, and it has not implemented EU stress test recommendations.[69] Because national law bans the purchase of electric power from unsafe sources, Lithuania has suspended power trading with Belarus, and in September 2021, Lithuania restricted the access of electricity from the Ostrovets nuclear power plant to the Baltic market.[70] Even so, the current national energy security situation and Lithuania's efforts to reach this level of security qualify as major successes.

Society Engagement in Defense Matters: Bringing Society Back In

Lithuania continues to debate and discuss society's engagement in national defense. The underlying idea is that capable armed forces and the international allies' support are necessary but not sufficient to contain and defeat the aggressor. It is therefore crucial to involve and empower everyone, making the country's defense their matter of concern as well—constituting a whole-of-society approach.

The important role of society in defense matters seemed to be obvious, bearing in mind that Lithuania restored its independence with the help of civic, nonviolent reform movements. Lithuania remembers that independence was established because of this nonviolent nature and legacy, and its lessons were used and incorporated into the national defense and security strategies and laws.[71] Yet, for many years, civic engagement was not taken into serious consideration, and it was assumed that societal resistance and the ability to mobilize were part and parcel of the Lithuanian mindset. This held especially true during the 2000s, when preparation for, and later, membership in NATO and EU narrowed Lithuania's defense and military policy to expeditionary warfighting and stability operations.[72] Russian aggression in Ukraine led to the national total defense posture and the need to define what the total defense concept meant to Lithuania and, importantly, how to implement it. The key issue is how to involve civilians in national defense. The national defense strategy of Lithuania relies on this concept of civic-based defense.[73]

The semantics of "defense" and "resistance" and how they are perceived in Lithuania are formed by the Lithuanian post–World War II Forest Brothers (a military resistance), where "resistance" is understood to mean "insurgency" and "military fight." Therefore, when people hear the word "resistance," most of them associate it with a kinetic fight, rather than its nonviolent version.

This semantic confusion is a good illustration of Lithuanian's perception of war and defense. Despite the diversity of its historical experiences, Lithuanians with some difficulty accept the idea that defense is not only a violent phenomenon, but that it has its nonviolent side as well. Nevertheless, defense is still often considered to be a mission for the armed forces.

To strengthen citizens involvement in preparations for the state's defense, Lithuanian government and parliament initiated the revision of the state-controlled paramilitary organization's (Lithuanian Riflemen's Union) strategy. In November 2022, a new law concerning this organization was passed. Starting from 2023, its main function will be civic defense. Its annual budget will increase from €2 million to €17 million in the next 2 years. The ambition is to increase its membership from 10,000 to 50,000 in the next 10 years.[74] In other words, alongside its armed forces, Lithuania is building a civilian component, which in time of crisis and war will serve as a supporting institution for the military.

When it comes to civilian-based defense of Lithuania, education plays an extremely important role. Better education is a key to a strong and resilient society. Critical and informed citizens with a strong sense of duty are groomed starting in primary school.

The Lithuanian National Education Strategy[75] clearly defines the role of education as part of national security. Education about national security is multi-dimensional and includes such topics as civic education, education on national security, and media and information literacy, and is not limited only to these topics due to the changing security environment. There is more than one state institution engaged in national security education; for example, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as the institutions and agencies

of defense have roles to play. Using education to strengthen national security is not questioned; active citizenship education has been discussed at Lithuania's political level for almost 20 years, and leaders have focused on national security and media literacy education since 2014.

Education faces several challenges. First, civic education and education on national security are not included in the compulsory school curriculum, so it depends on the willingness of teachers and their skills and attitude toward the subject. There is also a lack of coordination of teaching initiatives and programs and assessments of their effectiveness.

A major reason for such inconsistency is that after joining the EU and NATO, Lithuania did not see a reason to teach national security classes in schools. Children had compulsory civic education classes, which were mainly about democracy, civil society, and civic and political rights. Starting in 2014, the Ministries of National Defense and Education cooperated and created a national security education program, publishing textbooks and proposing optional national security and defense modules for seniors in schools.

Education on national security and information literacy is a crucial competency, but the Lithuanian government also needs to persuade the public of the need to improve their knowledge of national security, active citizenship, and media skills.

In May 2022, nearly 3 months into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Lithuania's Parliament adopted the Strategy for Preparing Citizens for Civil Resistance,[76] which focused on preparing an implementation plan for military and nonmilitary resistance that is much broader than strictly resistance against occupation. Resilience is a society's strength in peacetime that becomes resistance in wartime against an aggressor and is the key strategic focus when building up a resilient society. Preparing for resistance includes developing the will to defend the country, improving citizens' military and nonmilitary knowledge and skills, and more, as part of a national defense.[77]

A public opinion survey from 2017 shows that Lithuanian society has considerable civic potential to defend their country in the face of foreign aggression.[78] Eighty-eight percent of respondents think that defending the country is the duty of every citizen. Neither the Lithuanian elite nor the society is willing to repeat the mistake of the 1940s when the Lithuanian government surrendered to Russia's Red Army without a fight. (Male respondents and young people are more willing to participate in the defense of the country than women and senior citizens because these two groups think they cannot contribute personally to Lithuania's defense. Moreover, they do not know in what way and what form their contributions to Lithuania's defense could be relevant.)

The Invasion of Ukraine: Evolution, Not Revolution

Russia's invasion redeemed Lithuania's long-standing threat assessment of Russian expansionism while signaling that the country's security policy direction—to deploy total defense initiatives, modernize armed forces, and deepen NATO interconnectivity—was right all along. Considering this, the war only accelerated Vilnius's decisionmaking on defense and sped up the implementation of key policy priorities. One key example of this acceleration includes the March 2022 increase in defense spending to 2.52 percent of GDP (a staggering 47 percent increase year-on-year, fast-tracked ahead of the initial 2030 deadline). Another example was the decision to be the first European country to stop importing Russian gas; consequently, Russian oil is no longer supplied to Mažeikiai refinery, the only refinery in the Baltics. This in part was made possible by Lithuania's procurement of the floating LNG storage facility and a re-gasification terminal, as well as by the Poland-Lithuania GIPL.

Militarily, the country already completed its first military modernization program, scheduled

Border guard Arvydas Vilkaitis protects Lithuania's national border on the easternmost point of Lithuania in the Ignalina district. Photo by: Justinas Stacevicius, June 10, 2021

for 2022, and has expedited the start of the second phase. While data about specific acquisitions is scarce, Lithuania will procure new artillery systems, fighting drones, infantry fighting vehicles, and air defense systems, committing itself to €1 billion.

Politically, the government, in preparation for the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, is also advocating to shift NATO's strategy from deterrence to forward defense, stressing Germany's role in beefing up the region's security, and to expand the NATO presence in the region, with the permanent deployment of American troops in the country. The United States has initiated communications about the creation of permanent bases, but not yet permanent stationing. The Lithuanian government has also activated a defense-oriented venture capital fund, with further plans to join NATO's accelerator and venture capital initiatives as well.

With Lithuania being one of the first countries jumping to support Ukraine on the military, political, societal, and humanitarian levels, the importance of a whole-of-society approach was highlighted again in general and includes the training of territorial defense units.

All these initiatives are subject to a new agreement currently being discussed by the Lithuanian political parties, but in general there is strong support for these initiatives.

Conclusion

Major changes have taken place in Lithuanian security and defense policy since 2014; these changes discussed above prove that Lithuania's defense posture deserves high praise. It is natural that the country's focus first rested on, and major efforts

were allocated to, the warfighting capacity buildup of the LAF. Today, there is a clear understanding that the country's total defense posture is larger than just preparedness for conventional warfighting. The best defense is achieved when a smart balance is established between the country's military capacities, strong alliances, and the society gathered behind the military to support defense.

State inter-institutional interoperability should be sped up while Lithuania's politicians, the military community, and Lithuania's wider society must acknowledge the importance of non-kinetic elements of defense. Lithuanian society's engagement in the country's defense process has significant potential. Yet these major improvements in defense do not mean that the mission is accomplished. On the conceptual side, Lithuanians should initiate and seriously engage in debate about the importance and place of civil, nonviolent resistance in state defense. Institutionally, the government should acknowledge and prioritize the whole-of-society approach. State defense should not be perceived only as a matter of the MOD and Armed Forces. Defense should be co-owned by a variety of players. The government should facilitate this co-ownership by initiating new laws and revising old laws, procedures, and other legal documents. The government should engage and involve local authorities in all these activities. Finally, Lithuania should invest more in the general education of the population and include a wide array of themes concerning security and defense. Knowledgeable, critically aware, and creative people are the best line of defense.

Total defense is most effective when it is compatible with Lithuanian allies' defense concepts and practice: NATO allies, the EU member states, and neighbors of the Baltic Sea region. Shared total defense concepts are essential to make the collaborative response to any incursion real and effective. Moreover, it prevents misinterpretation of events and management of actions. Total defense is only as strong as its weakest element. How quickly state and regional institutions and agencies meet the requirements for total defense will depend on political consistency and leadership. Nonetheless, Lithuania is committed to total defense. PRISM

Notes

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[9] Jan Osburg, *Unconventional Options for the Defense of the Baltic States: The Swiss Approach* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2016); David A. Shlapak and Michael W. Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2016); and R.D. Hooker, Jr., *How to Defend the Baltic States* (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2019).

[10] It is also very important to emphasize the difference in the military's approach: the Western, especially American, approach is due to its military traditions and doctrines and is thoroughly offensive, while the Lithuanian approach is defensive.

[11] *Resistance Views: Essays on Unconventional Warfare and Small State Resistance*, Tartu Resistance Seminar, ed. Kevin D. Stringer and Glennis F. Napier (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2018); Otto C. Fiala, ed., *Resistance Operating Concept* (Stockholm: Swedish Defense University, 2019).

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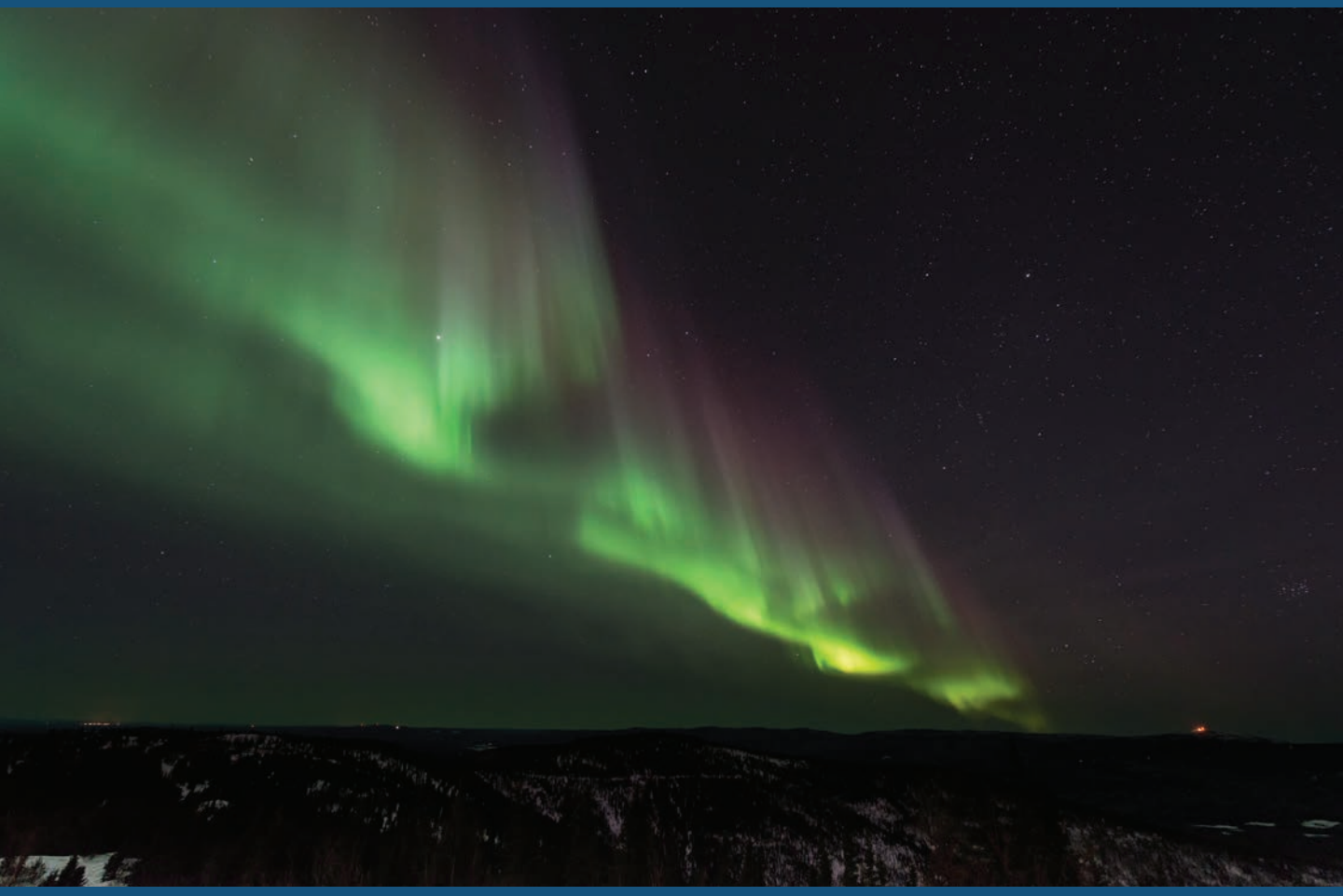

Aurora Borealis, northern Finland. Image by: The image is released free of copyrights under Creative Commons CC0. February 27, 2017

Finnish Defense "Left of Bang"

Jyri Raitasalo

Finland has a long tradition of combining military and non-military aspects of defense. During the Cold War this crystallized within the concept of "total defense," the mobilization of the entire society for the potential purpose of war. Throughout the Cold War, the all-penetrating threat from the Soviet Union was felt constantly within Finnish society. This threat was not only military in nature but also contained political, economic, energy-related, and even cultural aspects. In today's parlance, the Soviet Union prosecuted an aggressive campaign of information warfare, hybrid war, and political warfare against Finland.

With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Finland decided to move from a policy of neutrality toward closer cooperation with the Western security community. The concept of total defense with its military-centric focus began to lose significance and meaning. This did not occur overnight. Rather, it was a process of slow decay. A broader conception of security seemed warranted as the all-pervasive and all-penetrating politico-military threat from the East rapidly waned. This was not only the case in Finland but also throughout the Western world. Western states—Finland among them—have gradually stretched the contours of the concept of security during the last 30 years. Today, the Western—and Finnish—notions of international security are extremely broad—both concerning the different sectors of security (military, economic, environmental, societal, etc.) and different referent objects of security (the state, the nation, individual security, the stability of the international system).[1]

During the post–Cold War era, the Finnish system of total defense was gradually redefined into a comprehensive security model. This model was first formalized in 2003—more than a decade before the West became obsessed with Russia's Gerasimov doctrine,[2] hybrid warfare,[3] the gray zone,[4] the weaponization of information,[5] and weaponized narratives.[6] This model has been developed and practiced ever since, with the Government of Finland issuing official strategy updates in 2006, 2010, and 2017. The model has been based on the increasing cooperation among different authorities, the business community, and the third-sector actors in tackling an ever-widening spectrum of security threats. These threats include information threats, threats to data networks, the threat of large-scale immigration, terrorism, military pressure against Finland, and dozens of other threat scenarios.

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Doctrine: The Comprehensive Security Model

Based on the Cold War tradition of total defense, the comprehensive security model matured from the outset of the post–Cold War era. Already in 2001, the government declared in its security and defense policy white paper that,

> *Society takes precautionary measures for exceptional circumstances and for various disruptive situations arising under normal circumstances. The aim is to prevent the emergence of situations that could undermine the functioning of society and to create mechanisms for managing such situations and their consequences. In times of exceptional circumstances, the livelihood of the population and the national economy is safeguarded, the rule of law maintained and the territorial integrity and independence of the country ensured.*[7]

Contingency planning had already started in 1999 on a broad range of issues, including, but not restricted to, infectious diseases, information threats, threats aimed at electronic communications and information systems, international organized crime, terrorism, changes in the environment, major disasters, and sudden, large-scale population movements.[8]

Two years later, in 2003, the first government-level official policy document was published on the topic of securing the vital functions of the society against all kinds of threats—not only military threats or man-made threats but also those caused by the forces of nature (e.g. flooding). This strategy for securing the vital functions of society defined a broad range of potential future threats and assigned responsibilities to various authorities to address them.

The key to being prepared for different kinds of threats facing society is to define vital functions that need to operate 365/24/7. If Finnish society is

Figure. The Functions Vital for Society

the referent object of security—the "thing" to be secured—keeping vital functions of society running is a way to do that. According to the 2017 *Security Strategy for Society*, the vital functions of society that need to be safeguarded at all times are presented in the figure.[9]

In addition, the 2003 strategy defined the process through which any kind of response to a wide range of security threats would be handled within the existing structures of authorities—from the central government downwards to regional and local level authorities. In addition, the business community was integrated into the comprehensive security model as many of the basic day-to-day services are provided by businesses. Similarly, the third sector was integrated into the model—ranging from search and rescue services, voluntary military defense, cultural and youth activities, and so forth.

Key to an operational model is a clear division of labor—and responsibility—for authorities and other agents to deal with different kinds of threats. The bottom line of this threat management approach is based on the competent authority being the supported agent and all others the supporting agents providing all necessary assistance and support to the lead agent. This was expressed explicitly already by the government in 2001.[10]

A total of approximately 60 different threat

Russia from Finland. Image by Rajko.be. February 26, 2013

scenarios were developed in the early 2000s as a basis for crisis response planning and exercising. The goal has been to build ready-to-be-used procedures and networks to deal with different surprising crises that require a networked, multi-authority approach. Based on threat assessments, every branch of government (the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Ministry of Interior, etc.) were assigned strategic tasks that they must be able to perform in all situations. Among dozens of tasks for the MOD were included preventing military pressure applied against Finland, preventing a military attack against the state, and, if necessary, repelling a military attack against Finland.

The continuity between government resolutions in 2003, 2006, 2010, and 2017 is clearly visible. Although the system has been developed and modified, the basic structure of the 2017 resolution is surprisingly identical with that of 2003.

Diplomacy

The end of the Cold War marked a shift in Finnish security and defense policy orientation. Coming out from the cold, a key driver for Finland has been to integrate into—and within—the Western security community. This development started in the early 1990s and continues to this day. Thus, during the last 30 years, the policy of neutrality that guided Finnish notions of diplomacy, security policy, and defense during the Cold War years has transitioned into a policy of political and economic alignment and close military cooperation within the West.

An increasing level of connectivity and cooperation within the West has thus formed a key aspect of the Finnish perspective on security and defense. Another key aspect of the Finnish take on security and defense is related to Russia—a military great power with which Finland shares a land border of some 1,300 kilometers in addition to a long history

of both cooperation and conflict. As was noted by the government in 2001, "Russia maintains a significant military force and readiness in the Leningrad Military District, covering both the Kola Peninsula and the St. Petersburg area. Russia's objectives in northern Europe are related above all to opposing NATO enlargement, maintaining a strategic nuclear deterrent, and protecting the St. Petersburg area and the trade route in the Baltic Sea."[11]

The long history of cooperation and conflict with Russia—whether Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, or the Russian Federation—has left a distinctive mark on Finnish diplomacy which can be described as a pragmatic approach to relations between states in general and to Finnish-Russian relations in particular. While Russia certainly has throughout the decades opened possibilities for economic benefits for Finland, in the security realm Russia has posed the greatest challenges. The 2001 government report on security and defense policy noted,

> *Russia is striving to achieve economic reform and organized and democratic social conditions. Its internal circumstances are gradually becoming more stable but there are still many uncertainties. Russia is searching for its role as an actor on the international stage and in security issues. . . . Russia is continuing its transition toward democracy, rule of law and a functioning market economy. However, there are still uncertainties surrounding the country's future development.*[12]

Throughout the decades, the role of diplomacy in advancing Finnish security has operated as a "mediating tool" or an interface between potential gains and benefits on the one hand and potential threats to national security on the other. For most of the post-Cold War era cooperation, positive-sum outcomes, and potential benefits have been at the epicenter of Finnish diplomacy vis-à-vis Russia. The security-related challenges have been acknowledged and acted on, but for almost 25 years after the Cold War, the role of Finnish diplomacy was to engage Russia, both bilaterally and in multilateral settings.

Looking at the relations between Russia and the West in the post-Crimea period and acknowledging the deteriorating relations between Russian and the West during the last 20 years, it is easy to see that Russia and the West have not shared a paradigm or a perspective through which they can engage in a meaningful dialogue over security in Europe or elsewhere. While Western states have redefined their perspective on security—moving toward a positive-sum approach to cooperatively manage the "new" security threats of the interdependent, globalizing international system—Russia never redefined its security perspective. Russia defines its security within a framework of great power politics, spheres of influence, and zero-sum competition, and has, for at least 20 years, built its status and prestige by opposing Western engagement and actions.

The above-mentioned lack of a common security paradigm between Russia and the West is deeply troubling. It has prevented—or at least hindered—mutually beneficial security outcomes as communication between Russia and Western states has not worked. But communication—or better yet diplomacy—is the only tool that might achieve a lowering of tensions in the long run. In addition, diplomacy is practically the only tool that might facilitate the building of trust and thus the settlement of conflicts. It is during crises that diplomacy is even more valuable than during peaceful "normal times." This understanding guided the Finnish attitude toward diplomacy vis-à-vis Russia since early 2014: the need to engage, communicate, and talk to each other now that relations are at their worst in quite in a long time. The Russian war against Ukraine launched on February 24, 2022, has shattered the possibility of meaningful diplomatic outcomes

between Russia and the West. From a small-state perspective neighboring a military great power, this could have catastrophic consequences for Europe, the Baltic Sea region, and Finland. Therefore, Finland started a process to redefine its security-political outlook quickly after the onset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Applying for NATO membership is the clearest manifestation of this sea change.

Information

Information has always been a key element in relations among states and an element of national power. Thus, information has always been an important tool of statecraft. Propaganda, persuasion, lying, pressure, extortion, falsely assuring or luring opponents have been tools of international politics throughout history. This has not changed, even if modern technologies have made some new information-related methods possible—and at the same time have pushed certain older methods to the dustbin of history.

Information has become one of the focal points of Western responses to Russian hybrid warfare and gray zone tactics since the 2014 annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine. Supposedly, Russia has mastered the weaponization of information and is causing havoc throughout the Western world with its election meddling, troll armies, and false news—including social media. The use of information as a weapon was acknowledged in Finland when the comprehensive security model was being developed. In 2001, the government defined *information warfare* as the "entity of means by which information is provided or its handling is affected, and which aims at influencing the technical or mental capability of the adversary to wage war. Information warfare can be divided into information technology warfare and psychological warfare."[13]

Looked at from the Finnish perspective, Russia's use of information warfare falls into the category of "normal" confrontational international politics or traditional statecraft in a situation where a great power uses all means at its disposal to achieve its vital security goals. After all, relations between the West and Russia have been confrontational since early 2014—if not earlier. Anyhow, it is easy to see the extensive and wide-ranging use of information by Russia to try and advance its interests. It is worth remembering that Russia is playing a bad hand resorting to every opportunity—and almost any means short of war—to gain status and respect and other vital national security goals. However, the long-term trends in the Russian economy, innovations, demographics, and investments mean that Russia will need to play its bad hand for a long time. The ongoing war in Ukraine accentuates this fact and is likely to lead in the further decline of Russia's power.

Even if there was a lot of Western media frenzy about Russian information warfare and fake news for several years after Crimea, it is hard to see any real positive outcomes that Russia has achieved (from its perspective) with its information tools—at least in Finland. Russia's position has become even weaker with the onset of its aggression against Ukraine in February 2022.

Many factors provide clues to why Russia's information tools have had practically zero effect in Finland. One has to do with the high standard of education provided to all children and young adults regardless of their socioeconomic standing. The 2010 security strategy for society explains—under the strategic task of "education" for which the Ministry of Education and Culture is the lead agent—the "development of education will take into account the possibilities of conveying information on threats and preparedness by means of civic education."[14] Thus, even if social media is becoming important for younger generations, well-educated, media-literate youngsters recognize the pitfalls and dangers inherent in the social media as well as

Finnish soldiers taking the Finnish Defence Forces military oath. Image by: Karri Huhtanen (Wikimedia Commons). August 26, 2005

conventional media realms. If there is any generation that knows the pitfalls of fake news and social media trolling, it is the one that has lived much of its life with this phenomenon.

The second and related factor, which has inoculated Finnish society against information warfare, is the fact that the society is not fractured—politically, socially, or economically. The "Nordic welfare state system" takes care of those not able to get along on their own. Providing everyone a stake in society—getting everyone aboard—is a key to national unity. Unemployment services, sufficient health care for everyone, and good education are the best long-term policies for national unity and against information warfare. Running after fake news and false content in the media space and trying to correct it is a huge effort that fractures societies and fails to address the real problem. Policies that keep society unified, or at least not overtly fractured, provide resilience against information manipulation and fake news. As the 2010 *Security Strategy for Society* notes:

> [t]*he population's income security and capability to function refers to society's capability to provide comprehensive social security and social and healthcare services. These prevent social exclusion, promote harmony in society and the population's independent coping and functional capacity. This entirety includes social insurance, social benefits, social and health care services, protection of the health of the population and a healthy environment.*[15]

Information manipulation and information warfare are a scourge for already divided societies. Finland is not one of those. Reid Standish eloquently

expressed the Finnish strengths against information warfare in his 2017 article "Why Is Finland Able to Fend Off Putin's Information War?" published in *Foreign Policy*. Standish writes, "unlike its neighbors, Helsinki reckons it has the tools to effectively resist any information attack from its eastern neighbor. Finnish officials believe their country's strong public education system, long history of balancing Russia, and a comprehensive government strategy allow it to deflect coordinated propaganda and disinformation."[16]

General conscription is also a major factor reinforcing the strength of Finnish society. More than 70 percent of the male population spends between 6 months and 1 year in the military. Almost a million men, and nowadays also women, are part of the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) reserves—prepared to defend their homes and the entire country by the force of arms—at the peril of their own lives if necessary. In addition to providing a required manpower pool of resources to the wartime defense forces, general conscription strengthens the entire society and its resilience during crises. Having a purpose in the society—and being ready to sacrifice time and effort—is a key unifying element. Practically every household in Finland has one or several citizen-soldiers in their midst.

Finally, national narratives are sticky in nature. In most cases, they do not transform quickly or easily. Narratives are cultural constructs—inter-subjective facts—that cannot be manipulated instrumentally based on the demands of the day. Therefore, I argue that if there is one domain where Russia's actions have been particularly unsuccessful, it is the information domain. Despite the multitude of propositions concerning Russia's information warfare capabilities, we should ask: Which Western narrative has Russia been able to change since the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and proxy war in Eastern Ukraine? Indeed, the West has united against Russia since 2014. In fact, there has been only one strategic narrative that Russia has been able to change within the West in recent years. Before 2014, Russia was regarded as a partner to be engaged and cooperated with. The above-mentioned approach changed significantly during the first half of 2014. The Western narrative on Russia that had developed and matured over almost 25 years changed surprisingly quickly. The role of Russia, from a Western point of view, changed from a partner to an adversary—even an enemy. This trend was reinforced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The narrative power of Russia has not been able to change the strategic framework of Western states regarding Ukraine, Syria, or Libya. Rather, the multitude of Russian attempts to change Western narratives has caused a massive setback: anything and everything Putin's Russia says or does today is interpreted from a highly critical perspective. In the words of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, "We cannot trust Russia. We should never trust Russia."[17]

Military Defense

As argued above, the role (or issues) of diplomacy underwent a process of change during the decades of the post–Cold War era. As the level of direct politico-military threats against Finland subsided since the early 1990s, diplomacy became less focused on alleviating high-end threats to Finland's independence and room of maneuver in international politics. Rather, diplomatic efforts became associated more with engaging and even "changing" Russia toward a path of democracy and dealing with other lower-scale threats against Finnish society and state structures. These new threats were many—from global questions on human rights and ecological or environmental security to more concrete issues related to, for example, pollution in the Baltic Sea region.

It is noteworthy that even though Finland (and all other states) faced a rather benign world in the

1990s and after, the Finnish position on military preparedness did not change significantly. Due to the Russia's enormous military capacity—even during its most difficult years in the 1990s Russia's military capability was staggering—for Finland the long-term military situation did not change dramatically. Russia's political motivations and intentions toward Finland may have modified during the 1990s, but its existing military capability remained threatening.

Thus, after the Cold War, Finland never dropped the ball on matters related to military deterrence or defense. Even though there have been several rounds of adjusting peace time (and wartime) defense forces to the demands of the security environment and economic austerity measures, the one and only sizing construct for the Finnish Defence Forces has been the ability to defend 100 percent of Finland's territory and society against external military threats.

While most European states implemented fundamental transformations of their armed forces in the wake of the Cold War—moving from large-scale warfighting capability toward small all-volunteer forces optimized for multinational expeditionary operations in the name of stability operations, military crisis management, or counterinsurgency warfare—the Finnish approach to defense changed little. Being situated next to a military great power (Russia), the logic for military defense did not change in the early 1990s, even when the Soviet Union collapsed. Though the Western framework for international security changed remarkably in the 1990s and after, Finland continued to procure main battle tanks (by the hundreds), multiple launch rocket systems, fighter interceptors, ground-based air defense missile systems, and other military systems required by a defensive "big war approach." The guiding principle in the military defense realm has been the long-term approach needed to maintain and develop military capability: quick U-turns are not possible. Military transformation takes about 30 years. Getting rid of existing capabilities is possible in a few years—building new ones takes years and decades.[18]

The Bear and the Porcupine

Today, as during the Cold War, the Finnish defense system is based on the principle that "even the biggest bear will not eat a porcupine." It is not about matching the level of military capability around Finland's vicinity; it is about making any potential military operation against Finland so costly that even attempting it does not seem an attractive option. Increasing international cooperation in the field of defense—with Sweden, for example—supports this logic.

An essential aspect and a constitutive element of defense capability is citizens' will to defend the country. Every effort is made to ensure this will remains high. More than 70 percent of the adult population agrees that Finland should be defended militarily against an attack in all situations, even those in which success is not certain. In addition, the Advisory Board for Defence Information noted in its 2017 bulletins and reports that "[e]ight out of ten or 81 per cent support the current conscription system in Finland. Nine per cent are in favor of abolishing general conscription and instituting professional armed forces. Conscription is seen as the basis for Finland's defence system. Two out of three support the current conscription system as Finland's defence solution."[19] This level is the highest level in Europe and one of the highest levels in the world. As a 2015 Gallup International's global survey concluded, "61% of those polled across 64 countries would be willing to fight for their country, while 27% would not. However, there are significant variations by region. Willingness to is lowest in Western Europe (25%)."[20]

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has strengthened the Finnish determination to maintain and develop

credible military and other means of deterrence. The government reacted quickly to the war by augmenting defense expenditures to enhance FDF military capabilities and increase munition stockpiles. Additional resources were also allocated for other defense costs, including adding to the number of FDF personnel and increasing reservists' refresher training.

Economy, Infrastructure, and Security of Supply

Today's societies are becoming more complex and vulnerable to many kinds of disruptions. People, businesses, and authorities from local to the state levels have an interest and a stake in making sure that future disruptions will not wreak havoc on the functioning of peoples' daily lives, the prospects of maintaining economic activity, or governing society in different domains.

Securing the functioning of the economy and infrastructure as well as being prepared in terms of security of supply are all important for the normal functioning of the society and people's day-to-day lives. Therefore, the economy, infrastructure, and security of supply are defined as a vital function of society to be safeguarded.

Economic defense contains many layers, domains, and perspectives. First, on the societal level, it is of utmost importance that all citizens can make ends meet. The relevance to security of policies related to this is not self-evident in most cases. But as has already been argued above, many societal phenomena have links to national security and resilience. In the Finnish case, progressive taxation, redistribution of income, and social benefits form a totality which has important ramifications for the long-term stability of society and thus societal security. They all, *in toto*, provide possibilities to counter the centrifugal forces related to income inequality, societal alienation, and social exclusion. Educated people with jobs and possibilities for a decent life have few or no incentives for anti-societal behavior. This is particularly true when peoples' absolute welfare is related to a sense of justice and the just distribution of wealth and welfare within society.

The second layer of economic tools related to societal security is related to a balanced and resilient economy that cannot be destabilized either by purposeful attempts or so-called market forces. While governmental regulations and actions have an impact on the economic aspect of security, it is mostly up to enterprises and businesses to secure their own—and society's—long-term prospects for success. In practical terms this means having an economic base that is sufficiently diverse as not to be severely damaged by fluctuations in international trade and finances. In addition, this means business continuity management, which in today's inter-connected, globalized political and economic spaces is in the self-interest of businesses as they strive to keep afloat and to make a profit. Within the economic domain, the Finnish comprehensive security model is based on the managed linkage between societal resilience and continuity management within the business community.

A third layer of the economic defense of societal security is the security of supply. According to the National Security Supply Agency, "*security of supply* refers to society's ability to maintain the basic economic functions required for ensuring people's livelihood, the overall functioning and safety of society, and the material preconditions for military defence in the event of serious disruptions and emergencies."[21] The already noted concept of business continuity management is directly linked to security of supply but does not cover all aspects of it. In the case of Finland, the decades' long tradition of total defense has always emphasized—among other things—securing critical domains within the society and the economy through policies and actions related to security of supply. For many decades the National Emergency Supply Agency has planned, supervised, and executed policies related to this.

Finland has industrial warehouses full of supplies for emergency situations. Image by the National Emergency Supply Agency (NESA) of Finland.

Again, according to the National Security Supply Agency,

"Traditionally, security of supply has meant ensuring the supply of materials, such as grain. Goods and materials vital to the functioning of society are stockpiled to secure the well-being of the population and the functioning of the economy against major crises or serious disruptions affecting availability or supply."[22]

These old school security of supply actions are still important today considering that during crises the continuous flow of goods and services to Finland can become difficult or even impossible. About 80 percent of imports to Finland arrive as sea freight and depend on safe access to the Baltic Sea. This fact alone also highlights the need for (and execution of) international cooperation on security of supply.

Legal Issues

If there is one element of the Finnish comprehensive security model that has been invigorated since 2014, it is legislation and legal issues. Although the cooperative model of connecting authorities, business life, and the third sector into collective planning, preparations, and exercises for securing society in diverse threat scenarios has existed for decades, Russia's aggressive behavior since early 2014 has energized different actors into taking crisis preparations more seriously.

Legislation is an important resource for authorities in meeting the required state of proficiency and readiness against potential threats. Within democracies, the line between civil liberties on the one hand and emergency powers of authorities on the other is always closely followed and administered. This is also the case in Finland. But to be able to maintain the vital functions of society even during crises, it is of utmost importance that different government agencies have clear pre-determined and pre-planned mandates to operate in a wide range of circumstances. Competent authorities must be empowered with sufficient tools at their disposal. This is a central role of law within the Finnish comprehensive security model.

Much of the focus on legislation concerning times of crises is on the Emergency Powers Act (2011), which defines under what conditions emergency powers can be used by whom and how. In addition to the Emergency Powers Act, the State of Defence Act provides additional legal guidelines for situations in which the country faces a military threat. Together these two acts provide the foundation for organizing defense (widely conceptualized) "left of bang," "during bang," and "after bang." These acts stipulate a variety of tools that can be used (when deemed necessary) to manage threats.

These tools include, to name just a few, such powers that the government may:

- regulate the production and supply of goods and construction work
- supervise and regulate wages and salaries in public and private service relationships
- supervise and regulate transport and traffic, issue orders on the use of means of transport
- introduce compulsory manpower placement to procure labor
- issue orders on the extraction of minerals and peat and on the procurement of lumber by cutting
- issue decrees on the requisitioning of buildings and premises; and transport, rescue, firefighting, clearance, first aid and communications equipment, computers, and other supplies indispensable for the performance of official duties or of civil defense
- entitle the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Transport and Communications to temporarily requisition real estate, buildings, and premises necessary for the raising of defensive readiness.

Since 2014, several new aspects of society's comprehensive security have been included in the legislation process. For example, reservists (in the FDF wartime reserves, approximately 900,000 men and women) may be called upon on military readiness grounds for military refresher training without delay. In addition, giving (and receiving) international military assistance has been codified into the law on the FDF as one of the four core tasks that it must be able to perform. Also, at this time (late 2022), several pieces of legislation, which are important for the comprehensive security of society, are in Parliament for finalization: laws concerning civilian and military intelligence and a decree covering the possibilities for Finnish security agencies to access land registries and reclaim properties from suspicious buyers from countries outside the European Union and the European Economic Area. Concerning the decrees on intelligence, "The purpose would be to collect vital information to protect national security against serious international threats, military or civilian in nature. Intelligence work would ensure that the senior government leadership is able to base its decisionmaking on timely and reliable information and that the competent authorities are able to take measures to combat threats."[23] This would include collection of information from individuals and information systems.

A well-functioning legal system with appropriate legislation in place, which 1) obligates authorities to plan and prepare for different kinds of crisis situations, and 2) facilitates different operations during crises is a key element of combating threats left of bang and, in the unfortunate situation where active hostilities against Finland have commenced. Today—after almost 9 years of the Western discourses on Russian hybrid warfare and gray zone activities—Finland has a rather robust *corpus* of preparedness and readiness legislation in place. However, the evolution of the threat must be analyzed constantly. To guarantee national security over the long term, the culture of competent security authorities being facilitated (rather than constrained) by legislation is essential. Most potential future crises will begin with a degree of surprise. It is up to the authorities to prepare for surprises and develop resilience and a robust capability to reconstitute their operational capability even in situations that are characterized by surprise, degraded situational awareness, and uncertain command and control mechanisms. When well prepared, legislation can be part of the solution to these above-mentioned problems rather than a constraining factor that prevents authorities from tackling threats in a timely manner.

Final Thoughts

A key aspect of the Finnish comprehensive security model, and its application to threats left of bang, is the long tradition of interagency cooperation and trust among various security actors—be they government authorities, businesses, or third-sector actors. This long tradition has developed, matured, and settled into a network of relevant actors planning, preparing against, and exercising to tackle different threat scenarios during normal times. Although the current Finnish comprehensive security model has been in the making explicitly during the last two decades, its roots are in the threat-permeated Cold War era and the national cooperation needed to address the serious politico-economic-military-cultural threats posed by the bipolar international system and particularly by the Soviet Union. Thus, in today's world, we really need a system of total defense—or a comprehensive security model—that helps to prevent threats from emerging and responds to those threats that do emerge.

With respect to military defense, Finland did not drop the ball when the Cold War ended. This is the main reason why the FDF does not need to start a process to rebuild military capability; that capability was never lost. What the FDF must do, however, is raise the level of ambition in the long-term development of defense capability. This is even more pressing in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has changed the European security environment in a brutal way. Achieving this greater defense ambition is more a process of "fine-tuning" the defense system rather than rebuilding it.

Many of the threatening trends and actions in today's international system are not new *per se*. Rather, they are new when looked at from the Western perspective on security that developed and matured between 1989/1991–2014. From a Finnish perspective the return of geopolitics and the emergence of hybrid threats are as much the old normal as they are a new normal. Many facets of these new hybrid threats are familiar when viewed from a perspective of great power politics, conflictual international politics, or traditional statecraft. Concepts aside, what counts is the true ability to counter contemporary and emerging threats to society and state structures. After some 25 years of the benign post–Cold War era, today we face an increasingly tense international situation with the return of state-based (even existential) threats in Europe and the Baltic Sea region. Being prepared to tackle a wide variety of security threats is an essential aspect of the early 21st century security and defense policy. Being prepared requires interagency cooperation, a culture of trust between different actors, and a sufficient level or resources to all security actors. The days of more with less are over. PRISM

Notes

[1] Cf. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

[2] Mark Galeotti, "I Am Sorry for Creating 'the Gerasimov Doctrine,'" *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2018, available at <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/05/im-sorry-for-creating-the-gerasimov-doctrine>.

[3] Jyri Raitasalo, "Hybrid Warfare: Where's the Beef?" *War on the Rocks*, April 23, 2015, available at <https://warontherocks.com/2015/04/hybrid-warfare-wheres-the-beef/>.

[4] Michael J. Mazarr, "Struggle in the Gray Zone and World Order," *War on the Rocks*, December 22, 2015, available at <https://warontherocks.com/2015/12/struggle-in-the-gray-zone-and-world-order/>. Mazarr notes, among other things, "Much of what goes by the name gray zone today—economic coercion, fifth column activities, clandestine disruption and sabotage, and information operations or propaganda—merely reflects what states have been doing for centuries to advance their interests in a competitive international system."

[5] John Herrman, "If Everything Can Be 'Weaponized,' What Should We Fear?" *New York Times*, March 14, 2017, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/14/magazine/if-everything-can-be-weaponized-what-should-we-fear.html>.

[6] Joel Garreau, "Weaponized Narrative Is the New Battlespace," *Defense One*, January 3, 2017, available at <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2017/01/weaponized-narrative-new-battlespace/134284/>.

[7] Prime Minister's Office, *Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2001: Report by the Government to Parliament on 13 June 2001* (Helsinki: 2001), 73–74, available at <http://www.defmin.fi/files/1149/InEnglish.pdf>.

[8] Ibid., 74.

[9] Prime Minister's Office, *Security Strategy for Society—Government Resolution 16.12.2010* (Helsinki: Ministry of Defence, 2010), 14.

[10] Prime Minister's Office, *Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2001*, p. 74.

[11] Ibid., 28.

[12] Ibid., 12, 26.

[13] Ibid., 98.

[14] Prime Minister's Office, *Security Strategy for Society,* 52.

[15] Ibid., 46.

[16] Reid Standish, "Why Is Finland Able to Fend Off Putin's Information War?" *Foreign Policy*, March 1, 2017, available at <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/01/why-is-finland-able-to-fend-off-putins-information-war/>.

[17] Quoted in Jyri Raitasalo, "Western Societies Shouldn't Buy Into the Russia Hype," *The National Interest*, April 9, 2017, available at <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/western-societies-shouldnt-buy-the-russia-hype-20089>.

[18] Jyri Raitasalo, "Big War Is Back," *The National Interest*, September 8, 2018, available at <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/big-war-back-30802>.

[19] The Advisory Board For Defence Information, *Finns' Opinions On Foreign and Security Policy, National Defence and Security* (Helsinki: Ministry of Defence, 2017), 8, available at <https://defmin.fi/files/4062/Finns_opinions_on_Foreign_and_Security_Policy_National_defence_and_security_november_2017.pdf>.

[20] "WIN/Gallup International's Global Survey Shows Three in Five Willing to Fight for Their Country," *Gallup International*, May 7, 2015, available at <https://www.gallup-international.bg/en/33483/win-gallup-internationals-global-survey-shows-three-in-five-willing-to-fight-for-their-country/>.

[21] *The New Normal of Security Supply* (Helsinki: National Emergency Supply Agency, 2020). Emphasis added. <https://www.huoltovarmuuskeskus.fi/files/629655466c8cb8a225d054c959ddc05bf6fa40d4/the-new-normal-of-security-of-supply.pdf>

[22] *Security and Supply in Finland: Methods and Tools* (Helsinki: National Security Supply Agency, 2022). <https://www.huoltovarmuuskeskus.fi/en/security-of-supply/methods-and-tools>

[23] *Guidelines for Developing Finnish Intelligence Legislation—Working Group Report*, unofficial translation (Helsinki: Ministry of Defence, 2015), available at <https://www.defmin.fi/files/3144/GUIDELINES_FOR_DEVELOPING_FINNISH_INTELLIGENCE_LEGISLATION.pdf>.

Sweden fighting forest fires: The view of a burning forest in the area of Kårböle. European Union photo by Pavel Koubek, July 23, 2018

Societal Security and Total Defense: The Swedish Way

By Bengt Sundelius and Jan Eldeblad

Sweden has recovered from several severe security challenges over the past two decades. In 2004 more than 500 Swedish citizens died in the Boxing Day tsunami in Southeast Asia. During the suddenly escalating Lebanon conflict of 2006, more than 8,000 citizens were hastily, but successfully, evacuated out of harm's way. Days before Christmas 2010, the first suicide bomber in the Nordic region, luckily prematurely, exploded his bomb near a crowded shopping street in the city center of Stockholm. Sweden's neighbor Norway experienced a terrible mass murder in July 2011 undertaken by a solo terrorist. In April 2017, terror struck with deadly force in the shopping area of the city center of Stockholm. Dramatic forest fires rampaged in the summers of 2014 and 2018. In the fall of 2015, a massive flow of migrants poured into the country, with major immediate effects and long-term consequences for Swedish society. Most recently, the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020, became a stress test of endurance and societal resilience for the Swedish population. Compared with the other Nordic states Sweden has suffered much higher rates of infections, and it has seen more than 14,000 deaths, putting into question the Swedish strategy for managing this public health disaster.

The close neighborhood of the Baltic Sea region has experienced fundamental security changes since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and intruded into eastern Ukraine. Like those of the other nations in the region, Swedish political leaders have responded to this development by placing greater emphasis on defense and security issues, taking measures including significant additions to the defense budget. Total defense planning was reintroduced in 2015, and the conscript system, now for both men and women, was reactivated in 2017. In addition to continuing concerns about new terror attacks, political debate has focused on Russian behavior and on the potential damage of so-called hybrid attacks on Swedish society, including cyber activities and social media campaigns. Further heavy investments in national defense have been made in light of the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022. The rearmament of the total defense forces has also been accelerated, to reach higher levels more quickly than previously planned.

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The Swedish security context appears to be entering a troubling period, with the Baltic Sea region living without peace, but not in full-scale war, either, despite the close-by war in Ukraine. The gray zone between peace and war could be characterized as a state of adversarial interdependencies across the boundaries of Europe. Novel tools must be developed to safeguard the nation against acts of ill will and to promote, both at home and abroad, those values and interests that are dear to the people of Sweden. Joining the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) is one such tool. This significant step deviates from a 200-year tradition of staying outside of military alliances. A wide consensus across party lines now exists on the necessity of joining this Western defense alliance.

Considering the recent experiences of other democracies, special care was taken to safeguard the election process of September 9, 2018. Public awareness campaigns and various training programs were launched for local election officials and for party staffs. No visible manipulations of this election process were found, but the national result was ambiguous. It took four months of party negotiations before a new government was formed in January 2019. This political stalemate, which is unusual for Swedish consensus-style politics, has generated public dismay and considerable uncertainty about the future direction of Sweden's parliamentary democracy. Then, in the spring of 2020, the pandemic struck and placed the nation in a seemingly endless state of emergency alert, while partisan politics was placed on hold for a period.

Also, 2021 became a year of political turbulence, with changes of government and a new Social Democrat prime minister elected in November. After the national election in September 2022, that government resigned, and a non-socialist coalition government was elected, with the prime minister from the conservative Moderate Party. The new government pledged to continue strengthening the revived total defense system and to conclude the country's application for membership in NATO.

One fundamental element of good governance is the ability to manage everyday accidents and emergencies while building the capacity to prevent, manage, and recover from complex disasters including attacks by a foreign state or individuals. The Swedish risk and threat panorama has widened considerably over the past decade, making this leadership task even more difficult. The multipartisan Defense Commission filed its report, *Resilience*,[1] in December 2017 and presented several recommendations to strengthen the national defense and security capacities in response to the wider threat assessment and less hospitable regional setting. These recommendations informed the direction for the reform program for total defense now under way. Parliament passed a major total defense funding bill in December 2020.[2] This funding decision covers the period 2021 through 2025 and almost doubles the budget for national defense by the end of this period. The increased Swedish funding will reach the NATO goal of 2 percent of gross domestic product in 2026.

Societal Security

The concept of societal security is a pillar of the Swedish approach to the protection of the nation. This is an acknowledgement that the challenges of the 21st century are not merely about the integrity of territory but primarily about safeguarding the critical functions of society, protecting people, and upholding fundamental values in the face of many types of threats and risks. The threat from an armed attack by a state with the intent to capture and hold Swedish territory is low today, but it cannot be ruled out, given recent Russian actions toward Ukraine. Massive loss of life, damage to the socioeconomic system, and impairment of the capacity for rules-based democratic governance can be caused by failing critical societal functions as well. Antagonistic activities below the threshold of

armed attacks can very likely generate such havoc. Societal security suggests an all-hazard approach; many harmful consequences are similar regardless of whether their precipitating events are caused by ill-will, nature, or accident.

In Sweden the government and the parliament have identified three components as the baseline official objectives for societal security:[3]

- Protect the population
- Secure the functionality of society
- Maintain fundamental values, such as democracy, the rule of law, and individual rights.

If life and property cannot be safeguarded in a society, then it is not a society where people can lead productive lives. If a society's government cannot uphold key values, it is a society where no one will want to live. Similarly, if the government cannot sustain its critical functions, people will not have confidence in their leaders, and in the long run an unstable polity will emerge. It is an obligation of good governance to prepare for the unthinkable and to allocate the necessary resources to minimize the impact on people and society from catastrophic events, such as antagonistic attacks, man-made accidents, or natural disasters. Much harm can be inflicted short of armed attacks.

Sweden published its national security strategy in 2017.[4] In this government document several national interests were identified as guidelines for the continued formulation of security policy. The Swedish national security interests are given as

- to ensure the safety, security, and health of the population
- to ensure the functionality of societal critical functions
- to uphold fundamental values, such as democracy, rule of law, and individual rights
- to under all circumstances defend Swedish freedom, security, and national sovereignty
- to promote stability and security in the nearby region
- to promote cooperation, solidarity, and integration in the European Union (EU)
- to promote a rules-based multilateral world order.

In early 2018 and 2019, preliminary implementation reports were presented to indicate how well the many policy objectives of the wide-ranging strategy had been met. A revised security strategy is expected in 2023; it should reflect the recent increasingly conflictual regional context. The new government has established a national security council and appointed a national security advisor reporting directly to the prime minister.[5]

Society and all its stakeholders, including individuals, government entities, private corporations, and nongovernmental organizations, are challenged by an evolving security context. Sweden has embarked on a course to create tools that can facilitate a whole-of-society approach for societal security. This concept indicates a more inclusive approach than the more generally advocated whole-of-government approach, which is considered too narrow in scope. The effort toward enhancing societal security can be effective only to the extent that partners or stakeholders outside the sphere of national government become engaged and contribute. Most important, individuals must be mobilized in a more direct manner than is presumed in a whole-of-government approach.

Another building block that underpins the whole-of-society approach is the concept of resilience. Resilience, usually described as a capacity to "withstand," or to "bounce back" from a disturbance, can be applied to citizens, organizations, technological systems, and societies as a whole.[6] It includes proactive mitigation, as well as speedy response and recovery, and relies on the ability of a

range of interdependent stakeholders to share information and take coordinated action. An element of prevention could be considered part of resilience; for example, foreign states, terrorists, and organized crime could be influenced to choose an alternative target if a nation is perceived to have a high degree of societal resilience. This is the logic behind Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty and the current NATO work on seven baseline requirements for enhanced resilience among member and partner countries.

The concept of resilience is widely used by academics and includes several components in human, societal, organizational, political, and transnational contexts. One working definition of resilience is "the capacity of a social system (e.g., an organization, city, or society) to proactively adapt to and recover from disturbances that are perceived within the system to fall outside the range of normal and expected disturbances."[7] The rapid rise in use of the term among practitioners may be driven by several factors. One driver is a better understanding of the nature of the security landscape, where uncertainty and complexity are key features. Another is tight national budgets that make it impossible to allocate huge sums of money to prevent certain scenarios or force governments to substantially minimize risk across all possible hazards.

Resilience is about shared risks but also about shared costs. In a situation where governments must manage a growing spectrum of harmful events with shrinking budgets, the issue of "cost transfer" has become critical. Doing more with less may be less of a challenge if more stakeholders are contributing to the effort. Ultimately, shared efforts will benefit all stakeholders in society. However, there should also be an element of doing things smarter with fewer resources. It is helpful to examine and learn from the ways different nations have handled the difficulty of finding less costly but still effective measures to enhance societal security. Within NATO, there is an active debate on this complex issue.

The Engine That Drives Enhanced Societal Security

In Sweden there is broad political support for a whole-of-society approach and agreement on the virtues of resilience. This consensus around future defense and security matters was manifest in the December 2017 report of the multiparty Defense Commission. This document on total defense needs covered a wide variety of areas, such as command and coordination, psychological defense, information assurance, cyber security, personnel needs, volunteer associations, business engagements, population protection, law and order issues, supplies of essential goods and services, transportation, financial preparedness, public health issues, research and development, and international cooperation arrangements. In May 2019 another detailed report[8] was published, covering the many needs of the military defense through 2021. Appropriate parliamentary measures were passed in December 2020 to fund these costly reforms. Further investments were made in 2022 to speed up work to strengthen Swedish total defense.

Present arrangements for societal security rest on a legacy over at least the past few decades. A key reform[9] was the creation of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) in 2009, with the aim of building resilience across sectors and levels of government, at levels reaching from the individual to society as a whole. The new agency was created by replacing the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, Swedish Emergency Management Agency, and National Board of Psychological Defense. It was the result of Government Bill 2007/08:92, "Stronger emergency preparedness—for safety's sake."[10] The goal was to give coordinated support to society in the area of civil contingency management, enhancing emergency management capability at home and abroad by harnessing efficiency and effectiveness synergies.

An additional organizational innovation was a new crisis coordination secretariat, initially placed

Flower memorial for terrorist attack. Image by: Paul Arps. April 14, 2017

in the Office of the Prime Minister, to serve the needs of the Swedish central government. After the 2014 change of government, this office was moved to the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, but it was returned in late 2021 to the Office of the Prime Minister. It is responsible for developing, coordinating, and following up crisis management measures in the government offices and for any preparations needed, such as training and exercises. Its head can issue guidelines that each ministry should follow in its crisis management work. In an acute event, the secretariat has the mandate to initiate a quick response and to coordinate and support the response effort within government offices. The secretariat staffs the strategic coordination group, which consists of state secretaries (deputy ministers), who are on call to convene whenever a serious incident may require urgent top-level decisionmaking. This secretariat has over the years been engaged in many national emergencies that required the involvement of members of the cabinet and the Prime Minister. One example is the deadly April 2017 terror incident not far from its office building. Another is the deadly and extended COVID-19 pandemic.

The trigger for the earlier institutional reforms to strengthen the national emergency apparatus was the tsunami of late 2004. Although the geographical location was far from Swedish territory, the dramatic loss of more than 500 Swedish lives in a matter of hours made clear that future challenges to societal security required a more nimble system.

A government commission examined the response and recovery efforts and made recommendations for sweeping reforms. This devastating experience resembled recent experiences of the United States, where reports by the 9/11 Commission noted a failure of imagination and the reports investigating the response to Hurricane Katrina highlighted a failure of initiative.[11]

The mandate of MSB is a concrete expression of a widened policy field for crisis and civil defense management, integrating the multi-sectoral, the internal and external, and the risks and threats, as well as the different management phases: before, during, and after. It is both an engine and a champion, designed to create and facilitate a whole-of-society approach with diverse and sometimes unevenly motivated stakeholders.

The hardest obstacles to overcome for a whole-of-society approach to societal security are conceivably the deeply rooted mental gaps that tend to separate distinct professions with different training and backgrounds. Such gaps complicate close cooperation and smooth coordination, thus reducing effectiveness. This problem was clearly documented in the final report[12] of the Corona Commission of February 2022, which evaluated the difficult coordination processes across many stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mental gaps exist between most professional turfs, as exemplified by the following dyads:

- security and safety professionals
- civil and military professionals
- civilians and civil authorities
- public authorities and the private sector
- public domain and volunteer associations
- higher and lower levels of authority.

Among the key factors contributing to the gaps between these categories are that each has over time created its own terminology, ways of organizing, and procurements of sector-specific technological solutions. Perhaps most important, they have established idiosyncratic training and career systems that foster sectoral approaches. Thus far, such systems have been better at accommodating inter-blocking stovepipes than inter-locking networks. But all these actor categories have in common that it will be necessary for them to cooperate and coordinate before, during, and after an event to achieve the best results for society.

MSB was not given the authority to command other stakeholders before or during emergencies, as the supreme commander of the armed forces can do in a war situation. Given the wide scope of relevant activities and the fact that public, private, and local actors are all involved in most contemporary emergencies, a legal authority to command the rest would most likely not yield the hoped-for societal effects. Instead, MSB has been mandated to lead through proactive coordination measures, such as knowledge enhancement, support, training, exercises, regulation, supervision, information sharing, and building durable networks across sectors and levels of authority. Also, some funding is available to help create incentives for others to take this enterprise seriously in between emergency events. Having control over around 1 billion Swedish krona (€100 million) in grant awards each year gives the agency some leverage—and other agencies clear incentives to follow its lead in the emergency management field.

Much of the recent national coordination work has focused on rebuilding the previously well-developed civil-military relationship in preparation for a reactivated total defense effort. In Swedish terminology, total defense is the combined efforts of the military services, relevant civilian agencies, and various societal actors, including businesses, in the face of an armed aggression from abroad. During the Cold War era, this total defense machinery was well resourced and continuously trained and exercised and could rely on obligatory military service

for all young men. This investment in deterrence based on military might and societal resilience was dismantled around the turn of the 21st century as eternal peace seemed to have reached the Baltic Sea region. However, since 2015 total defense planning, including the necessary investments, has returned to the forefront of political concern.

In this changed security context, the question has been raised again about having a civil or societal supreme commander who could more clearly match the military counterpart. Sweden does not have a state of emergency act, short of a wartime situation, where a central authority such as MSB could take command. Currently, the two sets of interrelated national defense systems are a bit lopsided and tend to move forward at different speeds. A question might be raised about on whose terms civil-military coordination is pursued; the military machine can overwhelm the more fragmented civilian resources and their less well-disciplined personnel.

Surprisingly, civil-civil coordination may be one of the most complex working areas in this field. A main reason for this is that the roles and responsibilities in the civilian sphere are often less than clear-cut, sometimes overlapping. As threats and risks evolve, rules and routines may be missing or become outdated. Jurisdictional lines can be viewed as complementary or as competing. Some resistance to being coordinated by another can be expected; interactions for the purpose of modifying behaviors can be highly sensitive among proud professionals. A case in point: civil-civil public-sector coordination did not come easily in the face of the COVID-19 public health disaster.

There is a difference of approaches to the information needs of colleagues between safety and security professionals. Security officials are used to working with closed information systems to manage classified or sensitive materials, which they see little need to share outside a trusted few. Safety officials, on the other hand, are accustomed to using open information and tend to see a need for wide distribution of information that may affect lives or property. They sense an obligation to share rather than having a reflex to limit distribution. As the regional security environment is becoming more antagonistic, it is necessary to foster greater mutual understanding between the corps of security and safety professionals to ensure their ability to connect the dots in real time.

Recently, a greater emphasis is again being placed on the need-to-know criterion, as the antagonistic aspects of emergency management and total defense are returning to the workplace. Many professionals steeped in the logic of an obligation to share for maximum effectiveness must retool their information-handling routines. Similarly, there is some urgency about building more secure communication links, having secure meeting rooms, and enforcing the proper handling of classified documents. Increasingly, public servants at many government agencies will be assigned special tasks in war situations, as they used to have during the Cold War. Training is required for officials with backgrounds in the safety profession to be able to perform sensitive, defense-related tasks.

The Operations Department of MSB has over time built a set of action-oriented coordination venues—face-to-face, video-link, or by phone—to form a common operational awareness as a basis for agreed-upon timely deployments of resources. Meetings are held weekly by routine, more often when special operations are called for. This national system for shared sense-making of consequential events and for a concerted emergency response has been tested many times. In each case, novel elements have been added to the MSB toolbox; learning by doing has been a guiding principle in these operations. As an example: during the devastating forest fires of the summer of 2018 Sweden hosted a large EU civil protection assistance operation and improved its capacity for host nation support.

The Operations Department has been on

alert status since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. MSB is responsible for dealing with the societal effects of this crisis, not for handling the health issue itself. Societal functions, the economy, the logistics of critical supplies, coordination among many stakeholders, and coherent communications to uphold the morale of the population are all part of its brief. The COVID-19 pandemic experiences have served as a stress test for MSB leadership and for the adaptability of the operations machinery.

This national emergency response and consequence management system form the foundation of Sweden's capacity to prepare for and respond to antagonistic situations, such as terrorist actions, interferences short of armed attack by a foreign state, and the beginnings of an armed conflict with a hostile adversary.

Influence campaigns directed at Swedish democratic institutions, election systems, and political parties must be confronted. A handbook for countering influence campaigns to be used by communicators has been widely distributed and applied. Awareness-raising and training sessions were conducted for local election officials in preparation for the 2018 and 2022 parliamentary and local elections. The experiences from this Swedish investment in democratic resilience have been shared with other parties, including with relevant U.S. agencies, such as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security.

Public-Private Partnerships

Society cannot reach effective security solutions without engaging the private sector through public-private partnerships (PPP). The private sector is critical, because it operates or owns most of the critical infrastructure in many nations. There was a rich tradition of PPP in Sweden during the Cold War. At the time, cooperation and coordination were smooth; it was mutually understood that if total war led to a Soviet invasion there would be no more free enterprise. After that threat vanished in 1991, much was lost in terms of incentive for continuing this close relationship through networking and nurturing trust. In addition, business practices and corporate ownerships changed drastically over the decades. Today, privatization has progressed greatly in Sweden, as it has in other free market economies. Most companies have, or are part of, global supply chains that operate with just-in-time deliveries. These practices, however efficient, may not be the most resilient and may be vulnerable to manipulation by adversaries. Currently, the PPP tradition of the Cold War in Sweden can be labeled as "lessons lost," in sharp contrast to the situation in neighboring Finland, where many Cold War capacities and practices were retained. The focus in Sweden now is on rebuilding these relationships as vital elements of total defense planning. The total defense reforms from 2021 include the creation of additional initiatives for collaborations with and among business leaders. This work will take considerable time before any notable effects on the defense capacity will be visible.

In Sweden, advances in forging trusted relationships with key industry stakeholders have been uneven outside the defense area. In some sectors lost ground has been recaptured and progress has been made, for example, the well-functioning cooperation between the major players (public and private) in the financial sector. In the information assurance and cyber security areas, well-established working partnerships exist. There is also a forum for information exchange on the security of critical SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems, which includes key operators of critical infrastructure. Those and other examples constitute "islands of excellence" from which lessons can be drawn. MSB seeks to extend the web of resilience to other sectors, not least civil defense. It is recognized that much can be learned in this regard from current Finnish practices.

Fostering a trusted environment for information sharing in normal times creates a stronger

basis for common action when the extraordinary strikes. But in addition to trust, PPP requires practical frameworks for more concrete cooperation. Roles and responsibilities must be clarified (joint training can provide a useful tool), and issues such as financial (and other) incentives, market distortions, and liabilities must be addressed. Those are all difficult questions, and there appears to be no universal recipe for success. Sweden is far from alone in struggling with these urgent issues. A useful step would be a more systematic international exchange of information about practices that have been tested in different contexts.

The Role of the Individual

Making the individual a central component of societal security and resilience is critical. Without individual preparedness it is quite difficult to achieve a whole-of-society approach with a strong core of resilience. Ordinary people are often those affected most directly by a crisis and are often present on site before first responders or other officials; they should be viewed as assets. Furthermore, new social media technologies in the hands of citizens could be utilized by government agencies to receive and transmit information in a more timely manner. Earlier and better information is a driver of more effective operational decisionmaking.

The Swedish government has recently emphasized the responsibility of the individual to be prepared. MSB's task and challenge is to analyze what, more precisely, is included in this responsibility. Which services can individuals expect from the authorities on a local, regional, or national level to meet their needs before, during, and after a crisis or an armed conflict? How quickly can they expect them? How should cost-sharing be balanced among individuals, insurance providers, infrastructure owners and operators, and tax-funded government bodies at different levels?

The emphasis in the current Swedish approach to total defense is on societal resilience. Communicating the necessity of resilience is an implicit acknowledgement that not all threats and risks can be prevented. Establishing a risk-free society is not possible nor in fact even desirable. The foundation of a resilient society is having prepared individuals, families, and communities. Therefore, motivating citizens to make reasonable investments in self-preparedness is a major public leadership goal. Such motivation resembles the classic defense will of the population, which has been measured regularly since the early 1950s. In earlier years, that will was stimulated by the obligatory military service for all young men, by the weekend activities of the Home Guard, and through government-funded public outreach activities of the volunteer association People and Defense (*"folk och försvar"*).

MSB has developed several tools and channels to inform individuals of the benefits of being conscious of and prepared for the risks and threats to society. One such tool is an easy-to-read leaflet on how to prepare for emergencies, crises, and war situations. This publication, "If Crisis or War Comes,"[13] was sent to all Swedish households in 2018 and builds on a tradition from the Cold War era. Among its many recommendations is the suggestion that all households should keep a week's worth of water, food, and other essential supplies on hand for use in an emergency. In early 2022, there was a heavy public demand for downloading this leaflet as Swedes noted the horrible developments in Ukraine. The text is available in several languages, to reach as many households in Sweden as possible. Strategies for communication and public education should differentiate depending on the target group. Over 17 percent of the Swedish population is foreign-born, and many are young following the heavy migration influx of 2015. Reaching this population mix requires communication in many languages, as well as insights into various cultures and religions.

A new agency for psychological defense was

Home Guard exercise in southern part of Sweden, Skåne. Image by: Joel Thungren/Swedish Armed Forces.

launched in 2022. This institution traces its functions to the Cold War years when the task of building the will to defend was an important part of the total defense effort. The Swedish Psychological Defence Agency will, in addition, focus on tasks related to adversaries' social media campaigns, fund research, and help build public understanding of the need to defend democracy as well as independence.

A highly useful tool for determining the knowledge and resource needs and for practicing a whole-of-society approach is exercises. MSB leads the planning and the execution of exercises as well as vital evaluation processes. A major exercise conducted in 2011[14] involved thousands of participants in different organizations at the local, regional, and national levels. It featured a nuclear accident scenario requiring close coordination and cooperation between many societal stakeholders. The exercise took place just a month before the real nuclear accident in Fukushima, Japan, and did sensitize the participants to the inherent challenges posed by real-world disasters.

Increasingly used in such exercises are social media, which are becoming more important for rapidly collecting information for situational awareness. Social media are also tools for sense-making, for explaining the nature of a situation, and for specifying what actions the government is taking and not taking. Government agencies need to take advantage of the new generation of increasingly sophisticated information technologies. In the 2011 Swedish exercise, the primary decisionmakers at the national level were overwhelmed by the impact of the pressures from the new social media, just as happened later in the rapidly evolving Japanese disaster.

MSB holds the position of the Swedish crisis response and emergency team with responsibilities for information assurance and cyber security. This field has become even more important for societal security during recent years, and this segment of MSB is growing accordingly. Cooperation with counterparts in other governments, not least in the

Nordic and Baltic regions, is well established. Sector-focused and national exercises with cyber themes have been conducted regularly, often with the participation of the private sector.

In addition, the central government offices, the politically appointed cabinet members and their deputies, and parts of the parliament conduct exercises regularly to prepare for various risk and threat contingencies. This work is driven by the Secretariat for Crisis Coordination, often with support from experts at the Swedish Defense University.

The first national exercise with a focus on civil defense (that is, in a war-like scenario) for decades was conducted in 2018. Sweden planned to hold a major total defense exercise[15] involving numerous civilian and military stakeholders, including the armed forces, in 2020. The working processes to plan and prepare for this major national-level exercise generated numerous questions about mandates, resources, and procedures. The issues raised in these questions were documented for their potential to provide insights for improving civil-military relations and engaging relevant actors in the defense-planning effort. Host nation support issues and setting priorities with limited resources were also part of this total defense exercise. Unfortunately, the exercise had to be largely postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only a few segments of the exercise were carried out in early 2020—for example, a very timely scenario-based exercise with the members of the Swedish Parliament. A full-scale total defense exercise, Aurora, will be conducted in 2023.[16]

MSB is involved with the entire spectrum of threats and risks to society, including national defense. By law, government entities have been required since 2006 to produce and submit risk and vulnerability analyses. The 290 autonomous Swedish municipalities are also required to comply. The purpose of this bottom-up risk mapping is to guide investments and to allow MSB and other relevant departments to make informed decisions about scarce resources to build capacity and smart resilience. Over the years an increasingly sophisticated work process has developed to assess societal vulnerabilities and to point out limited capacities to meet such risks and threats. MSB provides the government and, indirectly, the EU Commission with a nationally aggregated risk and capability assessment.

The relationship between risk, threat, and basic societal values needs to be examined. Studying perceptions and social constructions of risk and threats is an important addition to traditional methods of analyzing these phenomena. Methods for constructing national or regional risk maps with clear indications of consequences, including economic and social costs, are being developed. Comparative studies of national methodologies and profiles are needed. The EU Commission has initiated a process, and many governments have put together such risk maps. These need to be problematized, compared, and more firmly grounded in research.

There is a danger of equating an all-hazards approach with saving scarce resources, because the same capabilities can be used for several types of events. It must be recognized that an all-hazards-plus approach is necessary; certain antagonistic scenarios demand unique prevention, response, and recovery capabilities. For example, an event involving weapons of mass destruction requires specialized prevention efforts and previous stockpiling of resources for response and recovery efforts. This all-hazards-plus approach is different from the counterterrorism-plus strategy used in the early years in the homeland security arena in the United States. The immense investment in counterterrorism measures secured resources that were then also used for other types of threats, where different solutions might have been more cost effective. Resources should be allocated for early-warning, response, and recovery efforts across the contingency spectrum.

The Fighting Machine That Defends the Nation

During the Cold War, Sweden had a well-developed, well-practiced total defense system. It was supported by strong pillars, two of which were the conscription of young men, who received solid military training, and the provision of wartime-designated personnel and equipment to key organizations. The system was welded together, and key actors were well acquainted with each other. The system nurtured trust and a spirit of mutual reinforcement and aid. The various organizations supported each other by building enabling conditions in peacetime for cooperation when under armed attack. Preparations were the lubricant—knowing what the others do and what I can do—so that together the-whole-of-society approach generated a higher effect. The concept was built on, among other things, the foundations:

- joint exercises
- joint plans
- systemwide cooperation
- nurturing trust.

After the collapse of Soviet Union, and thus also the incentive to maintain such a comprehensive and expensive total defense system, it was dismantled with great determination. The "eternal peace" logic now applied, and collaborations were quickly built according to the just-in-time principle, which was efficient and economical. Few believed then that one neighboring state could not be trusted: Russia. The 2008 invasion of Georgia did not wake Europe from its slumber, nor did the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. It was not really until February 2022 that Europe understood the true scope of Russia's actions and intentions. Sweden quickly realized that it needed to shake off the pandemic dust and prepare, fast.

One cornerstone of the old total defense concept was the will to defend, which included popular support for preparedness for crises and war. Along with conscription, regiments and flotillas stationed all over the country helped maintain that public support. In light of the dismantling of the Swedish defense and a change to using the armed forces as a tool in international security policy, affiliation with the armed forces declined, significantly affecting the recruitment of both officers and full-time employed soldiers. Now that Sweden has reinstated conscription, popular support is not as clear, and the educational conditions across the country are not there either. However, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has created a massive onslaught of applications to the voluntary movement, posing a challenge for the limited number of personnel currently running that program.

After a slow national awakening, the growth of the armed forces began with broad political agreement. The total defense bill for the period 2015 to 2020 set the tone for increased preparedness and adaptation. However, the result was limited. Many wise observations and analyses were made, but the system had difficulty moving forward with implementation. Problems occurred in areas such as planning, placement of people in positions, supply of necessities, and exercises, but also in deficits of basic knowledge of what applies during high readiness.

Conscript training, which had been dormant since 2010, was revived in 2017–2018; now Swedish youth are being evaluated and tested again, through the Swedish Defense Conscription and Assessment Agency. About 13,000 people, mainly those born in 1999, were tested and then required to complete military service. There were modest volumes at the beginning, roughly 3,000 in 2018; thereafter there has been an increase of 500 to 1,000 people per year. In 2021 the agency evaluated and tested 19,800 people. Of these, 38 percent were women and 62 percent were men. For basic training that began in 2021, a total of 5,800 conscripts (of whom 22 percent were women and 78 percent were men) were enrolled in

the armed forces' 5,000 slots. In 2021, the Swedish Defense Conscription and Assessment Agency sent muster documents to 104,000 conscripts born in 2003. The intention is to increase the volume of recruits going forward, up to around 16,000 by 2030, as new regiments and flotillas are established.

In addition to the extensive personnel growth, an additional focus for the coming period is materiel growth. Redundancy-increasing measures in the forms of both the acquisition of ammunition and spare parts and the purchase of new equipment and weapon systems are planned. During the 2021–2025 period, a roughly 40 percent increase in appropriations for military defense over the 2020 level must take place. The authorization framework for materiel orders is increased by 30.9 billion Swedish krona for the 2021–2025 period.

Some important areas for growth and modernization are for each branch of defense according to the following extract of acquisition and modification, respectively:

Air Force

- development and procurement of JAS 39E
- upgrade of JAS 39 C/D
- procurement of tactical transport aircraft and helicopters
- procurement of naval target robots and hunting robots.

Navy

- procurement of surface combat ships, Blekinge-class submarines, and combat boats
- modification of corvettes and battleships
- procurement of a new light torpedo system.

Army

- procurement of Archer, a vehicle-borne grenade launcher system
- procurement of medium-range anti-aircraft and airborne anti-aircraft
- procurement of armored all-terrain vehicles and track wagons
- renovation of Combat Vehicle 90 and Tank 122
- procurement of anti-tank weapons and firearms.

It is clear from Ukrainian requests for Swedish military equipment that Swedish equipment is very well suited for war against Russia. The carried anti-tank weapon has had a good effect, and the Archer system has been requested, presumably for situations in which artillery duels demand speed and precision. Swedish winter equipment, developed to be able to operate in the subarctic environment, is also now in demand in Ukraine. Composite weapon systems, easily mobile, effective, and with high effectiveness/low cost, have been the main request among Swedish equipment.

Several new regiments and flotillas have been established to enable not only increased unit production but also increased visibility and presence in certain strategically important areas. The biggest change and impact for the Swedish armed forces will, obviously, be NATO membership. Although Sweden has a long tradition of cooperation with the alliance in various operations and exercises, membership will be a game changer.

Sweden and NATO

Previous security policy solutions no longer hold; war in Sweden's immediate area cannot be ruled out. There is no time for public awareness drives or a national referendum like that undertaken when Sweden entered the EU, in 1995. Instead, it is time for Sweden's government to show political leadership

in haste. This was a challenge for the sitting Social Democratic government, which was basically opposed to NATO membership, together with its supporting parties on the left. The Swedish Social Democratic Party had to do a 180-degree turn and, with Finland, execute a much faster decision-making process. In the spring of 2022 Sweden initiated its NATO membership application in record speed. What was unacceptable on February 20 became inevitable on May 14.

NATO clearly states three core tasks in its new strategic concept:[17]

- deterrence and defense
- crisis prevention and management
- cooperative security.

The Swedish and Finnish entry into NATO will significantly expand NATO's borders and territory, including its direct border with Russia. It will stabilize the Baltic Sea region in the long run and will have a deterrent effect on potential plotters of armed attack against Sweden. Swedish territory and the Baltic Sea are important areas for NATO's defense of Finland and the Baltic states. The changing of the Baltic Sea's security policy conditions will mean that Russia will have an extremely limited ability to operate—but it will also mean changed tasks for other countries around the sea. For Sweden it may mean more support in bringing forward reinforcements to the Baltics but also other transports across the Baltic Sea.

Of course, a confined Russian fleet could mean that other systems replace an operational Russian naval and air force in the Baltic Sea; for example, ground-based systems can also fire nuclear weapons. This development and a changing Russian strategy are important to follow closely. But it is equally important to see how Western countries will act in the Baltic Sea area. For example, Germany's ongoing rearmament and involvement in the region are important, as are the activities of the Baltic States and Poland.

Operationally, support for the Baltics is difficult; the countries have quite limited military capability. Here, Swedish and Finnish membership in NATO will create strategic depth. The Nordic dimension thus becomes important, along with collaboration with the United States and the United Kingdom—for example, the Joint Expeditionary Force.

From a coordination perspective, a joint air defense and NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defense are important. Finland and Estonia are now buying land-based naval targeting robots that cover the Gulf of Finland well. Poland already has such robots, and Sweden is acquiring them. In addition, the Poles are acquiring high-mobility artillery rocket systems, which can reach important targets in this area. All of this means that the Russian navy will not be able to operate from its Kaliningrad oblast.

Sweden's strategic geographical location will be valuable for basing of NATO troops and advance storage of strategic resources, transport, and infrastructure. It also offers the possibility of grouping allied command capabilities.

Sweden's national defense planning needs to be revised and synchronized with NATO planning. This move will, in turn, affect civil defense planning in Sweden and the other Nordic countries. Coordinated exercise activities, both military and civilian, must be intensified. NATO's seven baseline requirements must be operationalized and constitute input values for exercises and evaluating activities.

Sweden should also contribute to rapid response units, such as Air Policing, the planned Allied Reaction Force, the Standing NATO Maritime Group, and the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group, as well as provide ground units for the Enhanced Forward Presence on its eastern border. Participation should be coordinated with the other Nordic countries, and management

should also be offered. When these contributions, commitments, and new conditions are in place, the Nordics will and should be seen as a common joint operation area.

The saying "Whoever controls Gotland controls the Baltic Sea" is still valid. Therefore, securing Gotland remains a key national responsibility for Sweden, whereas the Finnish demilitarized archipelago of Åland, close to Stockholm, is a dark horse.

In summary, the need for reinforcements and development in the military sphere of Swedish total defense centers on its

- capability for air defense and integrated air and robotic defense
- ability to provide host nation support
- integration of management systems
- capability for operations in a winter environment and marine operations in shallow waters.

In discussions on revising Sweden's total defense concept, proposals have been made to appoint a civilian commander in chief responsible for civil defense, an equivalent to the supreme commander for the military. At the same time the implementation of a new command and control system, mainly for the civil defense, is under way. This development should enable synergies with other constructive activities,[18] so that crisis preparedness in all sectors is used as the engine to strengthen trans-border solutions. The power of these activities can be used regionally, such as in the northern parts of the Nordic area, where the northern territories of Sweden, Finland, and Norway can find common resilience measures. Through these developments and enhanced preparatory cooperation deterrence can also be strengthened in specific geographical regions (including northern parts of the Nordic countries as well as the southern parts). Because geographical conditions vary considerably between the Nordic regions and distances are great, resilience is fundamental for regional survival.

Another key component in the Swedish total defense concept is building and maintaining trust. Here, education and training at all levels play a significant role as a trust-building engine; in particular, joint senior and capstone strategic leadership programs serve as excellent platforms.

Flow Security

A central element of the security context of the 21st century is flow security. Globalization has transformed the ways people, corporations, and societies organize and function. Technological developments have been transformational for economies and ways of doing business. Societies are tightly interconnected by flows of information, energy, computer signals, viruses, people, and goods. For society to be prosperous, it is important to enable safe, secure, and efficient critical flows. If critical functions, such as transportation, energy, health care systems, agriculture, communications, and financial systems are debilitated, it can have consequences for all in society and on several continents simultaneously. Thus, the traditional and still highly relevant goals of ensuring territorial integrity and national sovereignty must be complemented with that of securing critical functions in society. These are linked by shared transnational or even global interdependencies that must not be transformed into vulnerability traps. Examples include the deliberate denial of critical metals, components, or medicines, and interruptions in access due to various types of disasters or antagonistic interventions.

Globalized flows are not always beneficial and desirable. The flows of narcotics, weapons, trafficked persons, cyber intrusions, and computer viruses are examples of the dark side of globalization, which requires more focused attention. Those working outside the law are more apt to take advantage of these flows than government regulators or political decisionmakers. Criminal justice agencies, such as the national police and security

police, customs, the unit fighting economic crimes, and other operational units under the Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs must work even more diligently to keep up with the steady offensives of illicit trans-border activities. These negative aspects of the largely beneficial global flows can undermine societal security and erode democratic institutions and practices. Multilateral legal frameworks or regimes need to be upgraded to keep up with the rapidly evolving networks of both positive and negative flows across national borders.

Certain flow enablers are highly critical for societal survival, such as electric grids, shipping lanes, harbors, and air transport systems. A primary enabler at the center of most globalized transactions is the cyber backbone that involves continental cables and central nodes. The cyber infrastructure links nations, companies, and citizens around the world and helps channel information and goods more efficiently, but it also generates vulnerabilities. If the global or regional digital infrastructure is ruptured, it will have grave consequences for financial systems and for the command of critical infrastructure control systems in many industries.

The institutional design of government, however, is slow to adapt to this changing context for security. There is a historical legacy that separates agencies and departments operating in both the domestic and the international spheres. Failing to address jurisdictional, organizational, and mental barriers to national and international organizational cooperation will be at our peril. Organized crime and terrorists, for example, maneuver in the trans-border sphere, challenging outdated jurisdictional structures. Exploring new ways to cooperate in cyber space on planning, information exchange, training, and response is critical for the future. The flow-based security sphere can be characterized by the convergence of the domestic and international (security) arenas. Individual nations' strategies are interdependent; consequences in one country can have their origins far from its territorial borders. The merging of the international and domestic settings into an "inter-mestic" operational sphere will require individual and institutional rethinking to break mental, legal, and organizational stovepipes.

Globalization fueled by rapid technological developments has given rise to trans-boundary threats that may overwhelm national prevention, protection, response, and recovery systems. These threats cannot be dealt with in a one-by-one manner. Isolation is not a solution for Sweden; a successful response requires a networked approach. The unconventional and trans-national nature of crises demands a multilateral and coordinated approach among international partners—which entails the capacity to quickly combine and allocate resources, to share expertise and information, to manage disaster logistics, and to synchronize crisis decision-making. A critical task is being able to discover and diagnose a rapidly unfolding consequential incident quickly and accurately. The processes to achieve such shared sense-making under difficult circumstances must begin long before the need becomes imminent. It is imperative to create tools to overcome the present status of vulnerability surpluses in combination with capacity deficits in order to foresee and meet novel trans-boundary threats.

Resilience must be not only shared across boundaries but also projected forward. European concern over the West African Ebola epidemic was an early case in point. Likewise, Nordic concerns over the security resilience of its eastern neighbors are easily understood. Shared vulnerabilities and capacity limits are best met with joint and proactive measures. Such efforts can be made through, for example, exercises. Host nation support measures are also important to enable the effective use of assistance from others. Sweden has a long tradition of assisting other nations across the globe. In recent years it has also experienced the need to seek assistance from others in emergency situations.

One such example was the major EU civil protection assistance mission in response to massive forest fires in the summer of 2018. European solidarity was evident in this dramatic and highly visible field practice.

Both defense planning deliberations and concrete steps are under way to enable adequate host nation support even in more dramatic and antagonistic scenarios. Sweden and Finland have close military defense collaboration that includes working together in both ordinary times and conflict phases. In addition, a joint declaration by the two ministers of interior was signed in February 2021, pledging similar bilateral civil-sector collaboration for emergency management and crises, and mutual assistance in armed conflicts. Considerable work is conducted on issues related to Article 3 on societal resilience and on upgrading capacities for NATO's seven baseline requirements.

Euro-Atlantic Partnering Toward Alliance Membership

The Euro-Atlantic strategic setting of entangled interdependencies, where critical functions and nodes rely on the actions of others, creates the necessity for a well-functioning Nordic-Baltic partnership with North America. The groups' shared interest was recognized decades ago and has been manifested since the 1990s in the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (E-PINE), through which the political directors of the foreign ministries of the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) meet twice yearly with their counterpart in the U.S. State Department. Frequent, informal, thematic policy workshops with academics have been held in conjunction with these meetings to enable a flow of creative inputs into the more formal setting of high-level government talks.

Future trans-boundary crisis and total defense management in the E-PINE domain should not risk becoming "a failure of coordination." It is imperative for the transatlantic partnership to secure in advance an ability to act effectively and legitimately, in concert, within this domain. The Swedish government often takes notes of this vital element of national security, with the defense and security links within the NB8 and to the United States especially highlighted by officials. The Swedish embassy in Washington, D.C., includes not only several military attachés but also a defense counselor from the Ministry of Defense and a seconded official from MSB.

Several overlapping partnerships exist to mutually reinforce the security links with the United States. Sweden and Finland have bilateral arrangements with NATO, directly with the U.S. government, and with each other. In addition, a triparty defense policy letter of intent was concluded in 2018 between the United States, Finland, and Sweden.[19] Exercises are conducted together on a regular basis, and U.S. troops and equipment are often visible in these nations and their surrounding waters and skies. Applications by both nations to join NATO as soon as possible are being processed; as of this writing, those applications have been ratified by 28 national parliaments.

Once Sweden is a member of the alliance, hundreds of Swedish officials and officers will be expected to actively engage in its work, including manning headquarters and other NATO institutions and working groups. As was the case when Sweden joined the EU in 1995, considerable pressures will be placed on the government and various agencies to live up to the expectations of active membership. A learning process will be necessary before the alliance perspective settles in and becomes an integral part of the evolving Swedish total defense system. This adjustment in outlook may require a generational shift before the NATO perspective becomes the new norm.

A science and technology agreement has existed between Sweden and the United States since 2007 through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

In Sweden, this partnership is administrated by MSB on behalf of the government. Joint activities and projects on societal security, cyber security, information campaigns, and civil defense are covered under this bilateral partnership.

Although it is not necessary for the same institutional and strategic doctrine to be embraced on both sides of the Atlantic, it is important that efforts be, at a minimum, mutually reinforcing. It is also necessary to view homeland security, or societal security, as a whole-of-nation activity rather than as the policy domain of a specific department, ministry, agency, or directorate. Threats and remedies, both domestic and international, can best be seen as the responsibility of numerous stakeholders located in several distinct legal jurisdictions.

Flow security is a shared concern that cuts across many sectors and stakeholder interests. Novel tools to meet hybrid challenges must be developed together and in a holistic fashion. This is a relatively immature policy area, lacking a developed professional corps to manage its wide field of cross-sector and multilevel issues. The private sector must also be engaged in this work. How can a shared approach allow effective uses of security assets and at the same time balance such core values as privacy and civil liberties?

To further foster a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities for cooperation across the Nordic–Baltic–North American space, a common strategic executive-training curriculum for senior leaders could be developed. Transatlantic workshops in the societal security area are needed. Education and training to cope with the unexpected and consequential are obligatory for career advancements in the military sphere; why not also for leaders in public service and for relevant business executives? Various NATO training programs have accumulated considerable experience and could inspire similar investments in strategic leadership for an all-hazards-plus approach to security.

The educational task is to turn shared values and preferences regarding societal security and total defense into action-oriented plans. Concepts must be operationalized and transformed into concrete activities with deadlines and measurable effects. Academics and think tanks should be well placed to contribute ideas and expertise to such knowledge-based, capacity-enhancing work. These tasks, among others, can be supported by the Swedish Defense University and many other organizations ready to contribute, together with partners in the E-PINE space. **PRISM**

Notes

[1] *Motståndskraft: Inriktningen av totalförsvaret och utformningen av det civila försvaret, 2021–2025* [Resilience: The orientation of total defense and the design of civil defense 2021–2025], Report Ds 2017:66 (Stockholm: Swedish Government Offices, 2017)

[2] Totalförsvaret 2021–2025 [Total defense 2021–2015], TF 2021-2025, 2020/2021: FÖU4, Swedish Parliament, December 17, 2020, available at <https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankande/totalforsvaret-2021-2025_H801F%C3%B6U4 English summary, "The Swedish Defence Commission's White Book on Sweden's Security Policy and the Development of the Military Defence 2021–2025," available at <https://www.regeringen.se/4ada4a/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/forsvarsdepartementet/forsvarsberedningen/slutrapport-14-maj/defence-commissions-white-book-english-summary.pdf>.

[3] See "The Swedish Defence Commission's White Book on Sweden's Security Policy."

[4] *Nationell säkerhetsstrategi* [National security strategy] (Stockholm: Swedish Government Offices, 2017), available at <https://www.regeringen.se/48db21/globalassets/regeringen/block/aktualitetsblock/statsradsberedningen/nationell-sakerhetsstrategi.pdf 5 *Regeringsförklaring* [Government declaration] (Stockholm: Swedish Government Offices, 2022), available at <https://www.regeringen.se/4a99d4/contentassets/d6ad6308cc984aa1903d9a542ce1421c/regeringsforklaringen-2022.pdf>.

[6] For an excellent in-depth study of the concept of resilience and its applications in the security field see *Designing Resilience: Preparing for Extreme Events*, ed. Louise K. Comfort, Arjen Boin, and Chris C. Demchak (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

[7] Ibid., 9.

[8] Totalförsvaret 2021–2025.

[9] Stärkt krisberedskap—för säkerhets skull [Strengthened crisis preparedness—just in case], proposal from the Swedish Ministry of Justice, Prop. 2007/08:92, updated April 2, 2015, available at <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/10393/a/101151 10 Stärkt krisberedskap—för säkerhets skull.

[11] *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, DC: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004), available at <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>; *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2006), available at <https://biotech.law.lsu.edu/katrina/govdocs/katrina-lessons-learned.pdf>; and *A Failure of Initiative: Final Report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation and Response to Hurricane Katrina* (Washington, DC: U.S. House of Representatives, 2006)., available at .

[12] *Slutbetänkande SOU 2022:10* [Final report 2022:10] (Stockholm: Corona Commission, 2022), available at <https://coronakommissionen.com/publikationer/slutbetankande-sou-2022-10/>.

[13] "Om krisen eller kriget kommer" [If crisis or war comes], Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2018, available at <https://www.msb.se/en/rad-till-privatpersoner/the-brochure-if-crisis-or-war-comes/>.

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[15] "Totalförsvarsövning 2020" [Total defense exercise 2020], Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and Swedish Armed Forces, available at <https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/var-verksamhet/ovningar/avslutade-ovningar/totalforsvarsovning-2020/>.

[16] "Over 26,000 soldater deltar i vårens storövning Aurora 23" [Over 26,000 soldiers are participating in spring's major exercise Aurora 23], Swedish Defense Forces, available at <https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/sv/aktuellt/2022/10/over-26-000-deltar-i-varens-storovning-aurora-23/>.

[17] *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept* (Brussels: North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, 2022), available at ttps://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/>.

[18] The Hanaholmen Initiative is a cross-sector bilateral crisis preparedness program that aims to strengthen civil defense in Sweden and Finland and promotes cooperation between the countries in preparing for and the handling of civil crises. The initiative is carried out in collaboration with the Swedish Defence University and the Security Committee in Finland, with support from the Swedish-Finnish Cultural Foundation as well as the countries' governments. See <https://www.hanaholmen.fi/en/culturalcentre/the-hanaholmen-initiative/>.

[19] Försvarsgarantier mellan Sverige och USA [Defense guarantees between Sweden and the United States], Interpellation to Council of State No. 2018/19:1, Swedish Parliament, available at <https://data.riksdagen.se/fil/EB10F337-F94F-4B22-8186-321754106E4A

Norwegian forces during the military exercise Cold Response 2009. Photo by Soldatnytt (Wikimedia Commons). March 24, 2009

Norway Between the "High North" and the Baltic Sea

By Håkon Lunde Saxi

Norway has access to rich natural resources in vast ocean areas, and borders on a great power in the north. These two factors largely define [Norway's] *regional dimension.*
Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2004[1]

This article will discuss contemporary Norwegian security and defense policy within a regional and contemporary historical perspective, with particular emphasis on the relative importance assigned to the North Atlantic and Arctic "High North"[2] versus the Baltic Sea area. The main argument is that Norwegian security and defense policy is focused on deterrence and defense in the country's immediate vicinity. The Russian Federation is identified as the main source of regional insecurity. Furthermore, the Nordic-Baltic region is increasingly perceived as one interconnected strategic space, with the geopolitical fault-line between NATO and Russia running straight through the region.

While not divisible, the region arguably has two sub-theaters: the North Atlantic and Arctic "High North" and the Baltic Sea area. Norwegian decisionmakers view the Baltic States as being more at risk from Russian revisionism than Norway itself. This effort is less likely to take the form of overt conventional military aggression than of ambiguous and nebulous "political" and "hybrid" warfare. Therefore, in Norwegian security policy, the Baltic Sea area is today allotted far more attention and resources than before 2014. After years of neglect, Norway realized during the Ukrainian crisis that it had vital security interests in the Baltic Sea region. Nevertheless, the main security priority for Norway remains its maritime High North and Arctic region. The Baltic Sea area, while important, remains a secondary theatre in Norwegian strategy.

This article also discusses which allies and partners are considered vital for Norwegian security. Among its security and defense relationships, Norway has long favored building close ties with the larger "maritime powers" to the west over the "continental powers" to the south or the smaller Nordic-Baltic neighbors to the east. To its east, Norway has been linked by shared bonds of common values, histories, and identities to the other Nordic

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countries and to a lesser extent to the Baltic ones. However, hardnosed calculations of Norwegian interests have continued to favor focusing on developing good and close relations with the maritime Anglo-Saxon powers to the west. As has been the case since Norwegian independence in 1905 and since Norway joined NATO in 1949, the western powers remain the ultimate guarantors of Norwegian security.[3]

At the same time, Norway has continued to place some limitations on its "integration" into the Euro-Atlantic security structures. These included restrictions on placing nuclear weapons or permanent allied bases in Norway, as well as some limitations on allied activities and exercises in the High North. The main purpose of this "screening" has been to alleviate Russian security concerns.[4] This so-called policy of "reassurance" toward Russia aims to maintain the High North as an area of (relative) low tension.[5] As one Norwegian Minister of Defense wrote a few years before 2022, the purpose is to combine "deterrence and reassurance" vis-à-vis Russia, in order to achieve "dialogue and cooperation . . . transparency, predictability and good neighborly relations in the High North."[6] The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has reduced dialogue and cooperation with Moscow to a bare minimum, but has so far not led to the fundamental abandonment of Norway's "reassurance" policy toward Russia.

The Pre-2014 Period: The Baltic Near Abroad as a Peripheral Region

While Norway joined the Council of the Baltic Sea States in 1992, this was almost as an afterthought. Economically and in terms of security, Norway's stakes in the Baltic Sea region were far lower than for those states that shared a Baltic Sea coastline. Meanwhile, its political, economic, and security stakes in the developments in the High North region were far greater. Norwegian leaders and officials therefore devoted far more attention and energy toward developing a successful regional cooperation in the Barents region through, for example, the Barents Regional Council, established in 1993. For Norwegian foreign ministers such as Thorvald Stoltenberg (1990-1993) and Bjørn Tore Godal (1994–1997), it seemed vital to build trust, familiarity, and economic integration between Norway and the northwestern regions of Russia. Ideally, Russia would become a partner and be integrated into the Euro-Atlantic security community.[7]

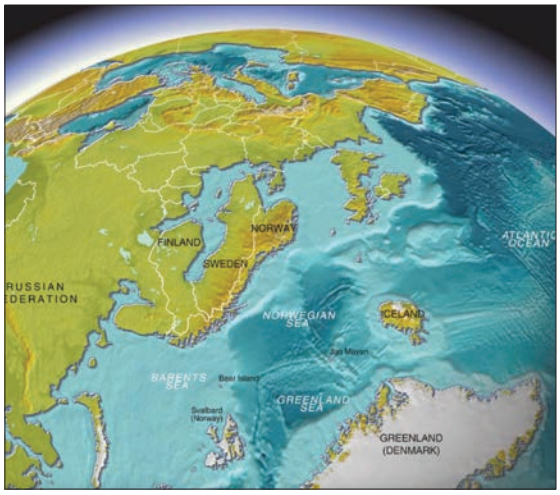
However, that Russia would develop favorably and become a stable, liberal, and democratic partner could not be taken for granted. After the end of the Cold War, Russia was perceived as an unstable and unpredictable great power, with which Norway shares a 196-kilometer border. The political, economic, and military relationship between Norway and Russia was characterized by asymmetry. Following the recommendations of the 1992 defense commission, post–Cold War Norwegian defense policy remained focused upon invasion defense in northern Norway. The main reason for this continuity was concern about the "lingering threat" emanating from Russia. From 1998 to 2002, defense policy became somewhat less focused on territorial defense and Russia.[8] Since 2002, invasion defense has given way to the dual tasks of participating in international military operations abroad and carrying out robust short-notice military crisis management at home. Nevertheless, the main scenario for which the armed forces were designed was a security policy crisis between Norway and Russia in the High North region.[9] Such a limited political-military crisis was expected to be short in duration, take place in international waters and airspace, and involve mainly air and maritime forces.[10]

All the Nordic states began to extend considerable amounts of military and security assistance to the Baltic states after 1990, especially following the withdrawal of Russian forces in 1994. Norway's engagement was, however, of a lesser order than that of Denmark, Sweden, and Finland.[11] Norway was

also at the time perceived, with some justification, as one of the countries that was more skeptical about NATO enlargement eastward. Instead, Norwegian officials tended to advocate integrating "our Baltic friends" as far as possible into the Euro-Atlantic institutions but without full membership in NATO in the near term. Norwegian officials were on the one hand concerned with not "diluting" NATO's Article 5 security guaranties, stressing that the ability to carry out collective defense of member states also had to be preserved in the "new" post–Cold War alliance. On the other hand, while carefully stressing that a Russian veto on enlargement was not acceptable, Norway was also worried about the consequences for Western/Russian relations. If enlargement caused a backlash to Russia's integration as a "normal" member of the European security community, this would not be in Norway's interests.[12] In this careful and "gradualist" policy toward enlargement, Norway differed from Denmark.[13] Sharing no border with Russia and standing to benefit more directly from enlargement, Copenhagen much more quickly came to champion full NATO membership for Poland and the Baltic states.[14]

By the time NATO enlarged to include the countries around the Baltic Sea—Poland in 1999 and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 2004—these Norwegian concerns had largely been laid to rest. Norway by that time had come to support enlargement. Both before and after enlargement, the Norwegian armed forces worked closely with their Nordic and Baltic counterparts in NATO operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. The enlargements also meant that the Baltic Sea became a virtual "NATO and European Union (EU) lake." However, this did not immediately increase Norway's attention to the Baltic Sea region.

The foreign policy priorities of long-serving Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre (2005–2012), were not directed eastward but northward, toward the High North and the Arctic, with



"The High North is the Government's number one foreign policy priority." Image by: The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. December 1, 2006

their crucial oil, gas, and fishery resources.[15] The minister repeatedly emphasized that "the High North is the Government's number one foreign policy priority." Støre was fond of quoting at length from a poem by the Norwegian poet Rolf Jacobsen that suggests its listeners "look north more often" (*se oftere mot nord*).[16] The government's policy reflected longstanding economic realities. The Norwegian economy remains heavily dependent on natural resources extracted from its huge exclusive economic zone. Since oil was discovered in 1969, the petroleum sector alone has grown to account for about 20 percent of gross domestic product and 50 percent of the country's exports.[17] The revenues generated by the oil and gas sector made Norway a wealthy country, and by investing revenues abroad the Norwegian state has built one of the largest global sovereign wealth funds, holding more than $1 trillion USD in foreign assets.[18] The revenues from this "oil fund" (*Oljefondet*) played a key part in financing the Norwegian welfare state. Fisheries and shipping were also key maritime sectors making important contributions to the Norwegian economy. Unsurprisingly, this maritime dependence heavily influenced Norwegian foreign policy.

This foreign policy preoccupation with the "High North" was given a stronger military dimension from about 2007, when Norway again became concerned about growing Russian capabilities and assertiveness in the region. In response, Norwegian defense policy experienced a "retro-tendency."[19] In 2008, Norway also introduced a Core Area Initiative within NATO, which aimed at strengthening the focus in the Alliance on more traditional "in-area" security and collective defense.[20]

To accompany his story about the importance of the north, Støre was fond of showing his audiences a map that was centered on the North Pole and showed Norway's vast northern maritime areas. On this map, the Baltic Sea appeared only as a small lake in the lower right-hand corner. Its appearance on the map reflects its position in Norwegian foreign and security and defense policy: at the periphery and off to the side; an afterthought.[21]

Nordic-Baltic Cooperation in the 2000s

In the second half of the 2000s, there was a surge toward greater Nordic and Nordic-Baltic cooperation on security and defense. In 2009, many of these defense initiatives among the Nordic countries were brought together under the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) framework. Simultaneously, the by-then elder statesman Thorvald Stoltenberg was asked to present proposals for more Nordic foreign and security policy cooperation. Presented in February 2009, these proposals became known as the Stoltenberg Report.[22]

The Norwegian military identified a strong need to cooperate internationally to meet the dual challenge of rising costs and shrinking force size and found the Nordic neighbors to be agreeable and willing partners.[23] The Baltic states were, however, seen as less interesting. They were small, had fewer relevant capabilities and less equipment commonality, were culturally more dissimilar, and were geographically not adjacent to Norway. Nonaligned Sweden and Finland, and especially NATO member Denmark, appeared as more appropriate partners to meet the Norwegian military's needs.

However, for the wider Norwegian security policy establishment, even the Nordic framework was seen as problematic. The preference was rather for building close cooperation with the Allies to the west and south who would ultimately guarantee Norway's security in a crisis. This applied particularly to the major maritime powers to Norway's west, the United States and the United Kingdom (UK), but also to the southern continental powers, Germany and France. The Nordic and Baltic states were too small to offer much in the way of support in a crisis, even if Sweden and Finland were to abandon nonalignment and become members of NATO. For this reason, the Norwegian security policy community warmly welcomed the British initiative to establish the so-called Northern Group in 2010. The Northern Group was more of a security policy talking shop than NORDEFCO, which aimed toward more concrete military cooperation on training, education, acquisition, and maintenance. However, it had a strong security-policy appeal in its inclusion of several key NATO countries; It consisted not only of the Nordic-Baltic states but, more important, also the UK, Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands.[24]

The 2009 Stoltenberg Report contained a number of suggestions for joint action favored by Norway, since they focused on northern maritime issues. These included surveillance of Icelandic airspace, satellite-based maritime monitoring in the Baltic Sea, joint sea patrols, and more political cooperation on Arctic issues.[25] In Sweden and Finland, officials stressed that this emphasis on the High North and the Arctic needed to be balanced by a greater focus on the Baltic Sea area.[26] Norway, however, demonstrated a limited willingness to invest political and economic capital in Baltic Sea security. Not surprisngly, when a "wise-men" group convened in 2010 to identify how to advance the cooperation between the Nordic and

Baltic countries (NB8), the joint initiative was comprised of Denmark and Latvia.[27]

The Sea Surveillance Cooperation in the Baltic Sea (SUCBAS) provides an interesting case of Norwegian non-involvement in Baltic Sea security. Originally launched in 2006 as a Swedish-Finnish undertaking, SUCBAS has since enlarged to also include all the NATO member states around the Baltic Sea (Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany). In 2015, the UK also joined. Norway remained skeptical about its usefulness, though, and did not wish to pay the entry costs. Oslo was, however, eager to encourage the other Nordic states to join a very similar Norwegian project, Barents Watch, which focused on maritime situational awareness in the High North, the Barents Sea, and the Arctic.[28]

NATO air-policing in the Baltic states and Iceland also provides tangible clues to national priorities. Norway, with its long Atlantic coastline, contributed to both missions but concentrated more on patrolling Icelandic airspace. Denmark, with both an Atlantic and a Baltic Sea coastline, split its efforts more equally between the two.[29]

The 2014 Ukraine Crisis: Norway Discovers the Baltic Sea

With the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, Norway now viewed the security situation as significantly changed. In an interview conducted a year after the start of the crisis, Norwegian Minister of Defense, Ine Eriksen Søreide, told CNN in an unusually clear, but not alarmist way, that "I want to warn against the fact that some people see this as something that is going to pass. The situation has changed. And it has changed profoundly." She argued that there was now "no going back to some sort of normality."[30]

Considering its relatively small size, Norway now took an unusually prominent and active role in NATO's Immediate Assurance Measures toward the Baltic states in the wake of the crisis. In April 2014, following an Alliance request, Norway assumed out-of-rotation command of NATO Mine Countermeasure Group 1, contributing the flagship KNM *Valkyrien* and the minesweeper KNM *Otra*. The naval force was active in the Baltic Sea as part of NATO's reassurance measures. In June and October, Norwegian infantry companies also trained in Latvia for several months in exercises with a similar purpose.[31] Following the September Wales Summit, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway also agreed to contribute to NATO's interim Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) in 2015. This brigade-sized force (approximately five thousand troops) should be able to rapidly reinforce frontline Allies, thereby acting as a deterrent to potential aggressors. The VJTF was to form a more responsive core of the existing NATO Response Force (NRF), which the three countries had already been slated to provide. The Norwegian army committed its high-readiness force, the Telemark Battalion battle group, to the interim VJTF.

Some of these land exercises, as well as the Norwegian commitment to the NRF, had been planned already before the Russian annexation of Crimea but were now framed in the completely new context of deterrence and reassurance. To explain the increased Norwegian military presence in the Baltic states, the Norwegian Chief of Defense stressed that Norway's actions were intended to communicate "clearly" to Russia that the Baltic states were behind "NATO's red line."[32] Søreide told reporters, "When one is a member of NATO, one has to respond when Allies request support, just as we would expect support if we needed it."[33]

Norway had come to discover two vital interests in Baltic Sea security: preserving the inviolability of international law in general and upholding NATO's Article 5 security guaranties. These were longstanding priorities in Norwegian security policy, sometimes described as the United Nations track and the NATO track.[34] As a small state with limited military resources but with huge maritime

Central administrative and residential complex of the "Arkticheskiy Trilistnik" or Arctic Trefoil base. Image by: Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation.

areas rich in resources, Norway considered the upholding of international law to be its "first line of defense."[35] Furthermore, within NATO, Norway was often grouped together with the "new" Central and Eastern European member states as "Article 5ers:" countries that first and foremost see the Alliance as a provider of (primarily American) security guaranties. These countries all bordered or were located close to Russia.[36] For the Article 5ers, the credibility of Alliance collective defense was the bedrock upon which their security rested. The seeming vulnerability of the Baltic states now threatened to undermine this vital foundation. Additionally, with key Norwegian allies such as the United States, the UK, and Germany leading the efforts to reassure the Baltic states and Poland, Norway viewed it as important to work closely with these major powers.[37]

All Quiet on the Northern Flank

One reason why Norway could commit itself to such an extent to the reassurance of its Allies on the eastern flank was that things were initially comparatively quiet on the northern flank.[38] The situation in the High North and the Arctic regions was not considered to have changed in the same alarming way after February and March 2014. As Søreide told the press in February 2015, the Russians "have not breached our territory and that is different from what is happening in the Baltic Sea area. They are breaching territory there all the time."[39] By October 2014, the number of intercepts of Russian aircraft by NATO in the Baltic area had tripled compared to 2013. In what was described as "dangerous brinkmanship," Russian pilots were also reported to be acting aggressively and unpredictably. This new pattern of activity was initially very different from in the Norwegian High North, although this later changed around 2017, when, for example, Russian aircraft began simulating attacks against Norwegian military installations in the High North.[40]

The Norwegian Intelligence Service has for years closely watched the increase in Russia's air

and naval activity in the Arctic. Since 2007, this has included the resumption of strategic bomber patrols over the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea. Russia's Northern Fleet has also increased its activities in the Arctic. This Russian resurgence included a revitalized "bastion defense concept" intended to protect its strategic submarines in the European Arctic Ocean, with ambitions of sea-denial extending west and south to the Greenland-Iceland-UK gap. However, the increases in Russian capability in the High North and Arctic regions were seen as a "normal" part of Russia's long-term military modernization as developments had taken place gradually over many years.[41]

In the Norwegian High North, unlike in the Baltic Sea area, there was no sudden change in the patterns of Russian military behavior following the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis. The two Norwegian F-16 fighter aircraft assigned to act as NATO's Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) in Norway had intercepted and identified more or less the same number of Russian aircraft in 2014 as in 2013.[42] The relative continuity in Russian behavior in the High North gave Norway the necessary freedom of action to increase its efforts to strengthen Baltic Sea security in 2014 and 2015.

In light of the tense situation in Norway's near abroad, the country nevertheless did increase its national military preparedness and situational awareness efforts at home. This, together with the already mentioned in-NATO-area efforts on the eastern flank, was given priority over out-of-NATO-area missions on the Mediterranean, North African, and Middle Eastern "southern flank." In 2011, during NATO's UN-sanctioned air war over Libya, Norway and Denmark provided almost identical contributions to the Alliance effort: six F-16 combat aircraft.[43] In October 2014, Norway differed markedly from Denmark. Unlike Copenhagen, Oslo now declined a request to provide combat aircraft to support the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq fighting against the Islamic State group.

At the time, Norway's F-16AM/BM aircraft were showing signs of aging. Cracks had been discovered in their 1980s-era fuselage, which meant that many aircraft were at least temporarily unavailable. This forced the government to prioritize. Prime Minister Erna Solberg (Conservative Party) argued that, "due to our border with Russia, Norway is in a different situation than countries such as Denmark, Holland and Belgium." The government's decision and reasoning enjoyed bipartisan support. Jonas Gahr Støre (Labor Party), now the leader of the largest opposition party, stated that "we not only have a long coast to patrol, but we also have assumed responsibility for large sea areas, which has strategic importance for NATO."[44] The Minister of Defense echoed this sentiment: "Right now and today, we have to make sure we can keep our situational awareness and . . . keep up our presence in the High North, both with frigates and planes."[45] Norwegian leaders effectively argued that the Alliance expected Norway to keep its house in order at home, maintaining good situational awareness, presence, and readiness on NATO's northern flank.

The 2016 Warsaw Summit: Making NATO "Look North More Often"

Moving into 2015 and 2016, Norway continued to maintain its strong support for NATO's reassurance and deterrence measures on the eastern flank of the Alliance. From May until September 2015, Norway assumed lead-nation responsibility for NATO's air-policing mission in the Baltic states, providing four F-16s and seventy personnel.[46] At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, Norway pledged to provide a company-sized unit as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic states.[47] The security of the Baltic states also enjoyed a newfound prominence in Norwegian security thinking. In October 2015, a government-appointed expert commission on defense delivered its advice for the next long-term plan for the armed forces. The commission allotted high priority to the defense of the Baltic states.

The expert commission outlined three scenarios to illustrate some of the situations the armed forces now had to prepare for. Scenario one was an (initially) bilateral crisis involving Norway and Russia in the High North. Scenario two was a NATO collective defense operation in the Baltic Sea area in defense of the Baltic states. The third was a nonstate terrorist attack on Norway. Considering that Norway is itself a "frontline" state bordering Russia and vulnerable to Russian "horizontal escalation" in case of a NATO-Russian conflict, the commission recommended a high level of ambition for Norway's participation in the collective defense of the Baltic states: "The Norwegian Armed Forces must be able to rapidly provide and transfer units to the Baltic area, to demonstrate political will and an actual ability to exercise collective defense. . . . The Norwegian forces must be prepared for both military combat and to remain in the area for a protracted period of time."[48]

However, Norwegian politicians and government officials soon came to champion an increased NATO focus on the maritime High North. One reason for this was that the initial calm in the High North gradually gave way to more bellicose Russian behavior. The Norwegian Intelligence Service reported larger and more frequent Russian exercises near Norwegian borders, including unannounced "snap readiness exercises."[49] The number of "scrambles" and identifications of Russian aircraft in the High North by the Norwegian QRA aircraft stationed in Bodø also increased after 2016 to a level not seen since the end of the Cold War.[50] In 2017, Russian aircraft simulated attacks against radar installations in Norway.[51] In 2018, GPS signals in northern Norway were periodically jammed by Russia. This affected Norwegian and Allied air traffic and represented a threat to civilian air traffic safety in Norway. Surface vessels from the Northern Fleet also held live fire exercises off the Norwegian coast.[52] These developments led Norway to bolster its own defenses in the High North and to increase its efforts to strengthen Allied awareness and engagement in the region.[53]

In the run-up to the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw, Søreide stressed that the "new security environment" required "maritime power and presence" and the need to "raise NATO's profile in the maritime domain." Russia's new high-end military capabilities and infrastructure in the Arctic, such as its submarines, aircraft, and long-range missiles, were identified as the challenge.[54] Norwegian decisionmakers believed that a major NATO-Russian conflict was unlikely to start in the High North, but that a crisis could quickly spread to the region.[55]

A key Norwegian concern was that in the event of a NATO-Russian conflict in the Baltic Sea area, Russia could seek to put into effect the previously mentioned "Bastion defense concept" designed to protect the Barents Sea patrol areas of its ballistic missile-carrying submarines and their bases in the Kola peninsula. This would involve securing Russian control over the Barents and Norwegian Sea and parts of northern Norway, as well as seeking to establish sea denial in the North Atlantic Ocean down to the Greenland, Iceland, and UK (GIUK) gap. Norway's main military response was to encourage greater military engagement in the region from the United States, UK, and the Netherlands, who were judged to possess both the political willingness and relevant naval, air, and amphibious forces capable of supporting Norway in case of a High North contingency.[56]

At the Warsaw summit in 2016, Norway joined forces with the UK, France, and Iceland to successfully champion new proposals to strengthen NATO's activities and force posture in the North Atlantic.[57] The summit communiqué reflected this effort. It added the North Atlantic to the list of strategically important areas where the Alliance faced "evolving challenges" and committed NATO to strengthen its maritime posture and situational awareness. The Alliance would deter and defend

against threats to "sea lines of communication and maritime approaches of NATO territory."[58]

Following the inauguration in January 2017 of President Donald J. Trump, who cast doubt on U.S. commitment to NATO in general and Article 5 collective defense in particular, a muted debate gradually emerged regarding the reliability of the United States as a security provider. However, no credible alternative existed that could replace Norway's security reliance on the United States in the short or medium term. After four turbulent years, the election and subsequent inauguration of President Joe Biden in January 2021 was therefore greeted with a collective sigh of relief in Norway. It seemed to signal a return to greater normalcy. Nevertheless, Norway continued its existing efforts to strengthen security and defense ties with its key Northern European allies and partners, including the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and its Nordic and (to a lesser extent) Baltic neighbors. While more credible deterrence and better "burden sharing" in the Alliance were formal objectives, reducing dependence on the United States was one unstated objective of Sweden and Finland's decision to apply for NATO membership in May 2022. This was warmly welcomed in Norway, as it would, one, make it easier to prepare and organize the collective defense of the region within the framework of NATO, and two, simultaneously make the region more capable of ensuring it's own security. It would significantly improve the prospects for successfully defending the Baltic states against Russian aggression.[59]

The high priority given to the defense of the Baltic states and the wider eastern flank in Norwegian defense policy has to be understood as part of Norway's priorities as an Article 5er. If NATO's security guaranties were tested and proved ineffective, it would have devastating repercussions for Norwegian security. For this reason, making NATO's deterrence efforts credible and effective was of key importance for Norway. On the one hand, from this point of view, strengthening Norwegian security and strengthening the security of Norway's Baltic Sea Allies and partners were two sides of the same coin. There were mutual interests both in Norway and among the Baltic Sea states in strengthening the security of the latter.

On the other hand, Norwegian leaders simultaneously worried that the deterrence, defense, and reassurance measures so far enacted after 2014 were too reactive and one-sidedly focused toward the eastern flank. NATO's military efforts—such as the VJTF—were also perceived as too land-centric. Norway's desire to see NATO revitalize collective defense in the Northern Atlantic maritime area, while strengthening its maritime capabilities, should be read as a reaction to this perceived one-sidedness.[60] *If* one regards the attention, focus, and military capabilities of the Alliance as zero-sum—which is debatable—then such a shift toward an increased northern maritime presence would necessarily have to come at the expense of the eastern or southern flanks. From this point of view, there were also some competing interests at work.

Facing Up to New Security Challenges: "Hybrid" Warfare and the "Gray Zone"

In 2015, during the European refugee crisis, more than 5,500 migrants were unexpectedly permitted to cross the heavily guarded and closely monitored (on the Russian side) Russian-Norwegian border on bicycles, cars, and mini-buses in the course of a few weeks. This caused a tug-of-war between Moscow and Oslo, as Norwegian authorities scrambled to reign in this uncontrolled flow of migrants.[61] It was not seen as credible that this could have occurred without the active endorsement and support of Russian authorities.[62] As such, the incident can be regarded as a Russian attempt to "weaponize" the flow of asylum-seekers to Europe in order to destabilize, punish, and influence its western neighbors.

In October 2020, the Norwegian Government took the unprecedented step of carrying out the

Bikes of the Syrian refugees that made it to the Norwegian border (this is in front of passport control). Image by: Rosa Menkman (Wikimedia Commons). October 11, 2015

public attribution of a cyber intrusion against the Storting (Norwegian parliament). "Based on the information the Government has, it is our view that Russia is responsible for these activties," stated the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs.[63] The attribution was based on information provided by the Norwegian security and intelligence services. Its primary purpose seems to have been to punish Russia and thereby potentially exert a deterrent effect against future cyber intrusions, attacks, or influence operations. The Norwegian Intelligence Service, in its annual assessment of current security challenges, also took the unusual step of stressing the heightened risk of foreign interference in the 2021 parliamentary election in Norway.[64]

The cyber intrusion in the Storting was the most recent, but by no means the only, "gray zone activity" undertaken by Russia against Norway since 2014. These activities were all below the threshold of armed conflict, but they represented unfriendly acts against Norway designed to destabilize, unbalance, or influence the Norwegian state, society, and key decisionmakers.

The 2015 refugee crisis and 2020 cyber intrusion are but two examples of how the Russian Federation has employed ambiguous and nontraditional tools to influence, destabilize, or even coerce Norwegian authorities and society. To address these new "gray zone" challenges, Norway has sought to strengthen civil-military cooperation by revitalizing and modernizing its total defense concept. It is important to note that this "modernized" total defense concept differs significantly from its Cold War–era counterpart in several ways.

The Cold War–era total defense concept was geared toward mobilizing civilian resources for

military and civil defense in case of a massive "total" war of national survival against the Soviet Union. At its peak in the 1980s, about one million citizens were assigned a function in the total defense system, divided equally between military and civilian functions—about a quarter of the population of Norway! Prepared plans existed for the massive requisitioning of private vehicles, buildings, ships, helicopters, and other aircraft by the military.[65] The "modernized" concept is far less "total" in scope, encompassing fewer people and resources. It is designed less as an instrument of last resort and more as a tool to be utilized regularly if and when needed, in order to face up to a more fluid security environment where the distinction between peacetime, crisis, and war has become unclear and fuzzy. Rather than requisitioning, it depends much more upon partnerships and commercial agreements with businesses and industry—particularly in logistics.[66] The old concept was one-sidedly focused on mobilizing civilian resources for military and civilian defense in wartime. The new concept envisages and encourages greater civil-military cooperation and more mutual support between the armed forces and the different civilian-government agencies. This cooperation extends in principle to all types of crisis situations, from peacetime events, such as natural disasters and pandemics, to security policy crises and war.[67]

The modernized total defense concept aims to address new and more diverse threats and challenges, including "the increased flow of migrants," "serious terrorist attacks," "frequent extreme weather events," and "cyber-attacks."[68] Enhancing emergency preparedness and building increased societal resilience, especially within "critical societal functions," are important objectives within the modernized concept.[69] One concrete measure undertaken was the establishment in 2019 of a Norwegian National Cyber Security Center within the National Security Authority, built on public-private cooperation. The Center was tasked with enhancing Norway's resilience in the digital domain and handling severe computer attacks against critical digital infrastructure.[70]

Building on this theme, in October 2020, the government submitted a report to the Storting entitled "Societal Security in an Insecure World."[71] The report underscored how the security and defense of Norway is no longer solely focused on military issues, but on creating a whole-of-society approach to maintaining societal security and building resilience.[72] Nevertheless, it should be stressed that at its core, the total defense concept still also seeks to retain and modernize the traditional principle of extensive civilian support to the armed forces in crisis and in war. If necessary, the state will still attempt to mobilize "society's total resources . . . in the defense of the nation."[73]

Svalbard: Norway's Soft underbelly?

The most serious potential challenge posed by Russia to Norway—below the threshold of war—is arguably the Svalbard archipelago in the Arctic. To understand why, some background is required. Svalbard became a part of Norway in 1925 when the Svalbard Treaty came into force. The treaty recognized Norwegian sovereignty over the archipelago, but gave all citizens and companies from signatory states equal rights to engage in commercial activities on the islands. The treaty also limited taxation and placed some limits on establishing permanent military installations on the islands. Mainly Norwegian and Russian companies are engaged on the islands. A Russian mining company runs the "company town" Barentsburg on the Spitsbergen Island, with about 450 inhabitants—mostly Russian and Ukrainian citizens.[74]

As a sovereign part of Norway, there is no question that the Svalbard archipelago is covered by NATO Article 5 security guaranties. Nevertheless, the islands are virtually defenseless. The Svalbard

Aerial view of Svalbard Satellite Station in 2011. Image by: Erlend Bjørtvedt (Wikimedia Commons). September 13, 2011

Treaty prohibits Norway from establishing "naval bases" and "fortifications" or from using Svalbard for "warlike purposes."[75] Norwegian authorities interpret these stipulations strictly, so the islands are de facto demilitarized most of the time. Norwegian military forces do, however, visit the islands regularly and are permitted to use them for transit purposes. Russian military forces have similarly used the island for transit purposes. In 2016, there was considerable attention and some controversy when units of Russian Federation special forces and airborne troops used the islands to move equipment and personnel participating in exercises close to the North Pole.[76]

A Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs once remarked that when the phone rang late at night in his home, his first thought was, "it's about Svalbard."[77] The interpretation of the Svalbard Treaty has long been a source of contention in relations with Moscow. Russian authorities have, for example, protested against Svalbard environmental protection rules as "discriminatory" against Russia. The Kremlin has also since 1970 opposed Norway's claim to exclusive rights in the maritime areas around Svalbard. At times, Moscow has deployed warships into the zone to signal displeasure with how the Norwegian Coast Guard has enforced Norwegian sovereign rights in the zone. The matter is exacerbated by the fact that few NATO allies support Norway's claim to exclusive rights in the maritime areas outside Svalbard's territorial waters.[78]

The Svalbard archipelago is a part of Norway that is also strategically important to Russia in the Arctic, is demilitarized most of the time, and has some unresolved legal issues concerning the interpretation of the Svalbard Treaty. These three factors make it a potential flashpoint in relations with Russia and therefore a continuing source of concern for any Norwegian government.

Norwegian Defense Policy Since February 24, 2022

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has caused some dramatic changes in Norway's security environment and in Norwegian defense policy. Most significantly, Sweden and Finland's decisions to abandon military nonalignment and seek full

membership in NATO has been a boon to Norwegian and regional security. To name but one benefit, it will mean that Norway's challenging defense of its exposed northern flank will become far more manageable.[79] Reports that Russian units garrisoned on the Kola Peninsula have suffered heavy casualties in Ukraine have added to this improved security environment.[80] The war also led to rapid changes in Norway's arms export policy—within days of the invasion, Norway abandoned its historical restriction on delivering arms to warzones and has since become a significant supplier of arms to Ukraine.[81]

At the same time, there has been no radical reconceptualization of Norway's defense priorities, which continue to be focused on deterring Russia in the High North. Norwegian policy is therefore marked more by *continuity* rather than *change* since February 2022. Norway has remained a steadfast ally in NATO and a reliable partner to the EU, following NATO allies and EU partners closely. For example, it has signed on to virtually all EU sanctions and has followed its allies in condemning Russian actions and expelling Russian diplomats. At the same time, Norway has not abandoned its efforts to strike a balance between deterrence and "reassurance" vis-à-vis- Russia, and it continues to seek cooperation in some fields, such as fishery management. In short, developments since February 2022 have so far *reinforced* rather than *changed* existing priorities in Norwegian security and defense policy.

Conclusions

In 1939, the Swedish Embassy in Oslo wrote home to Stockholm complaining about the "complete lack of interest from the Norwegian side for all Baltic Sea problems."[82] If we had had access to the same kind of correspondence written sixty or seventy years later, it would portably have revealed a similar disinterest in Oslo for Baltic Sea security issues. As Thorvald Stoltenberg once lamented, "it was not always easy to get the Icelanders and Norwegians to realize that what was happening in the Baltic also affected their safety."[83] Until the 2014 Ukrainian crisis, the Baltic Sea area in general and the security of the Baltic states in particular were issues of relatively minor importance in Norwegian security and defense policy.

From a Norwegian point of view, the Baltic states were allies, friends, and partners, but their importance was limited. In contrast, Sweden and Finland share a 2,366-kilometer border with Norway (92 percent of its total land border), are far more populous and economically significant, and are, arguably, more similar to Norway culturally—for these reasons, they have figured much more prominently in Norwegian thinking. However, this interest did not carry as far as the Baltic Sea or to the Baltic states. Among the Nordic capitals, with the possible exception of Reykjavík, Oslo paid the least attention to the Baltic Sea region. Instead, Norwegian attention was directed northward and westward. In the High North and the Arctic, Norway sought to develop and protect its huge exclusive economic zones, with their rich natural resources. In the west, Norway sought to maintain and strengthen its ties with those Western powers that ultimately guaranteed its security.

The 2014 Ukrainian crisis generated an upsurge in Norwegian interest in the Baltic Sea and, in particular, in the security of the Baltic states. Russian revisionism now appears to threaten the law-based international order and Western security guarantees upon which Norwegian prosperity and security rely. Furthermore, in military-strategic terms, the Nordic-Baltic area appears increasingly to be one strategic space.[84] In response, Oslo has committed political and military resources to ensure a more credible deterrence posture for the Baltic states. Simultaneously, Norway has also sought to modernize its total defense concept in the face of Russian "hybrid" or "gray zone" activities, including cyber intrusions and the "weaponization" of migrants.

However, Norwegian attention soon turned toward strengthening its national defenses at home and bringing NATO to engage more assertively in the High North and the North Atlantic. While Norway has not abandoned its newfound awareness of the Baltic Sea area, Norwegian security policy returned in a sense to its classical pursuit: to tie the Western (maritime) powers more closely to the defense and security of Norway and the wider northern flank of the Alliance. PRISM

Notes

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[1] Strength and Relevance: Strategic Concept for the Norwegian Armed Forces (Oslo: Ministry of Defence, 2004), 42.

[2] This is an imperfect translation of the Norwegian term "*nordområdene*," which entered Norwegian political and academic discourse in the 1970s. It overlaps to some extent with the geographical Arctic, but is more diffuse geographically and more political. It usually includes the Arctic parts of Norway, and of Norway's neighbors, as well as the counties of northern Norway. It also includes the maritime areas in the Arctic, including islands and archipelagos eastwards, from the Greenland Sea to the Barents Sea and the Pechora Sea. See Odd Gunnar Skagestad, *The "High North" An Elastic Concept in Norwegian Arctic Policy*. Report 10/2010 (Oslo: Frid TJDF Institute [FNI], 2010).

[3] Olav Riste, "Was 1949 a Turning Point? Norway and the Western Powers 1947–1950," in *Western Security: The Formative Years: European and Atlantic Defence 1947–1953*, ed. Olav Riste (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1985).

[4] The historian Rolf Tamnes developed the terms "integration" and "screening." See Rolf Tamnes, "Integration and Screening: The Two Faces of Norwegian Alliance Policy, 1945–1986," in *Forsvarsstudier VI: Årbok for Forsvarshistorisk forskningssenter, Forsvarets høgskole*, ed. Rolf Tamnes (Oslo: TANO, 1987).

[5] The term comes from the Norwegian statesman Johan Jørgen Holst. See Johan Jørgen Holst, "Norsk sikkerhetspolitikk i strategisk perspektiv [Norwegian security policy in a strategic perspective]," *Internasjonal Politikk* 24, no. 5 (1966).

[6] Frank Bakke-Jensen, "Change and Stability in the High North," *Defence News*, December 2, 2019.

[7] Thorvald Stoltenberg, *Det handler om mennesker* [It's about people] (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2001), 249–258; and Bjorn Tore Godal, *Utsikter* [Views] (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2003), 104–119.

[8] Norwegian Defence Commission of 1990, *NOU 1992: 12*; *Forsvarskommisjonen av 1990* [Norwegian Defence Commission of 1990] (Oslo: Statens forvaltningstjeneste, 1992); Norwegian Ministry of Defence, *Hovedretningslinjer for Forsvarets virksomhet og utvikling i tiden 1994–1998* [Main guidelines for the armed forces' activity for the years 1994–1998], Report to the Storting, no. 16 (1992–1993); and *Hovedretningslinjer for Forsvarets virksomhet og utvikling i tiden 1999–2002* [Main guidelines for the armed forces' activity for the years 1999–2002], Report to the Storting, no. 22 (1997–1998).

[9] *Omleggingen av Forsvaret i perioden 2002–2005* [The restructuring of the armed forces in the period 2002–2005], Proposition to the Storting, no. 45 (2000–2001), chap. 4 and chap. 5; and *Den videre moderniseringen av Forsvaret i perioden 2005–2008* [The further modernization of the Norwegian armed forces 2005–2008], Proposition to the Storting, no. 42 (2003–2004), chap. 1.

[10] Norwegian Chief of Defence, *Forsvarssjefens Forsvarsstudie 2000: Sluttrapport* [The chief of defense's defense review 2000] (Oslo: Forsvarets overkommando, 2000), 7–9; *Forsvarssjefens militærfaglige utredning 2003* [The chief of defense's defense review 2003] (Oslo: Forsvarets overkommando, 2003), 3–4; *Forsvarssjefens Forsvarsstudie 2007: Sluttrapport* [The chief of defense's defense review 2007] (Oslo: Ministry of Defence, 2007), 5–6; and Gen. Sverre Diesen, "Security and the Northern Region," in *High North: High Stakes: Security, Energy, Transportation, Environment*, ed. Rose Gottemoeller and Rolf Tamnes (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2008).

[11] Clive Archer, "Nordic Involvement in the Baltic States Security: Needs, Response and Success," *European Security* 7, no. 3 (1998); "Nordic Swans and Baltic Cygnets," *Cooperation and Conflict* 34, no. 1 (1999); and Rolf Tamnes, *Oljealder, 1965–1995* [Entering the oil age, 1965–1995], vol. 6, *Norsk utenrikspolitikks historie* [The history of Norwegian foreign policy] (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), 145.

[12] See, for example, a book by permanent representative to NATO Leif Mevik (1992–1998), *Det nye NATO: en personlig beretning* [The new NATO: a personal account] (Bergen: Eide forlag, 1999), 51–56, 61–62.

[13] For a historical comparison of Norwegian and Danish defense policy, see Håkon Lunde Saxi, *Norwegian and Danish Defence Policy: A Comparative Study of the Post–Cold War Era*, Defence and Security Studies no. 1 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2010).

[14] See interview with Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen (1982–1993), in Jakob Kvist and Jon Bloch Skipper, *Udenrigsminister: Seks politiske portrætter* [Foreign Minister: Six political portraits] (Copenhagen: People's Press, 2007), 227–228. See also the biography by the Danish Minister of Defense (1993–2000), Hans Hækkerup, *På skansen: Dansk forsvarspolitik fra Murens fald til Kosovo* [On the redoubt: Danish defense policy from the fall of the wall to Kosovo] (Copenhagen: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2002), 15, 66; and Archer, "Nordic Swans and Baltic Cygnets," 59.

[15] These themes, which formed the leitmotif of Jonas Gahr Støre's tenure as minister, are well reflected in his book *Å gjøre en forskjell: Refleksjoner fra en norsk utenriksminister* [Making a difference: Reflections from a Norwegian Foreign Minister] (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2008).

[16] Jonas Gahr Store, "Most Is North: The High North and the Way Ahead—an International Perspective," lecture at the University of Tromso, April 29, 2010 (Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010), available at <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/Most- is- north/id602113/>.

[17] *Norway: Selected Issues*, IMF Country Report no. 13/273 (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, September 2013), 21.

[18] *Government Pension Found Global: Annual Report 2020 (* Oslo: Norges Bank Investment Management, 2021).

[19] Rolf Tamnes, "Et lite land i stormaktspolitikken," [A small country in great power politics] *Internasjonal Politikk* 73, no. 3 (2015), 389; Svein Efjestad, "Norway and the North Atlantic: Defence of the Northern Flank," in *NATO and the North Atlantic: Revitalising Collective Defence*, ed. by John Andreas Olsen (London: RUSI, 2017), 62–66. See also Olav Bogen and Magnus Håkenstad, *Balansegang: Forsvarets omstilling etter den kalde krigen* [Balancing act: the reforms of the Norwegian Armed Forces after the Cold War] (Oslo: Dreyers forlag, 2015), chap. 6.

[20] Paal Sigurd Hilde and Helene F. Widerberg, "NATOs nye strategiske konsept og Norge," [NATO's new strategic concept and Norway] *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, no. 4 (2010), 13–19.

[21] See maps at the very beginning and end of Støre, *Å gjøre en forskjell*.

[22] On the "surge" and the founding of NORDEFCO, see Håkon Lunde Saxi, *Nordic Defence Cooperation after the Cold War*, Oslo Files on Defence and Security no. 1 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, March 2011), and Thorvald Stoltenberg, *Nordic Cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy* (Oslo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 9, 2009).

[23] Ultimately, this military-driven integrationist experiment proved unsuccessful. Håkon Lunde Saxi, "The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of Nordic Defence Cooperation," *International Affairs* 95, no. 3 (2019).

[24] Paal Sigurd Hilde, "Nordic-Baltic Security and Defence Cooperation: The Norwegian Perspective," in *Northern Security and Global Politics: Nordic-Baltic Strategic Influence in a Post-Unipolar World*, eds. Ann-Sofie Dahl and Pauli Järvenpää (London: Routledge, 2014), 93–94, 103.

[25] See proposals 2–6 in Stoltenberg, *Nordic Cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy*.

[26] Saxi, *Nordic Defence Cooperation*, 37–39, 43–44.

[27] *NB8 Wise Men Report* (Copenhagen and Riga: Danish and Latvian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, 2010).

[28] Saxi, *Nordic Defence Cooperation*, 43–44. See also the SUCBAS and BarentsWatch webpages, available at <http://sucbas.org/> and <https://www.barentswatch.no/en/about/>.

[29] *The Secretary General's Annual Report 2013* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2014), 21. Note that Baltic air-policing began in 2004. The NATO air-surveillance mission over Iceland began in 2008.

[30] Mick Krever, "Norway: 'We Are Faced with a Different Russia,'" CNN, February 26, 2015.

[31] *Forsvarets årsrapport 2014* [Annual report 2014] (Oslo: Norwegian Armed Forces, 2015), 62, 94.

[32] Quoted in Rune Thomas Ege, "Tydelig beskjed til Russland," [Clear message to Russia] *Verdens Gang*, November 19, 2014.

[33] Quoted in Håkon Eikesdal, "Her øver norske soldater i Putins nabolag," [Norwegian soldiers on exercises in Putin's neighborhood] *Dagbladet*, October 1, 2014.

[34] Tamnes, "Et lite land i stormaktspolitikken," 392.

[35] Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Interesser, ansvar og muligheter: Hovedlinjer i norsk utenrikspolitikk* [Interests, responsibilities and opportunities: the main features of Norwegian foreign policy], Report to the Storting, no. 15 (2008–2009), 37, 43.

[36] See, for example, Jens Ringsmose, "NATO: A Provider of Public Goods," in *Theorizing NATO*, eds. Mark Webber and Adrian Hyde-Price (London: Routledge, 2016), 214–215. See also Hilde, *Nordic-Baltic Security and Defence Cooperation*.

[37] The United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and the Netherlands were subsequently identified by Norway as key Allies with whom it hoped to build especially close military relationships. *Veivalg i norsk utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk [Setting the course for Norwegian foreign and security policy]*, Report to the Storting, no. 36 (2016–2017) (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017), 33. On Norwegian military cooperation with the UK and Germany, see Håkon Lunde Saxi, "British and German Initiatives for Defence Cooperation: The Joint Expeditionary Force and the Framework Nations Concept," *Defence Studies* 17, no. 2 (2017), 171–197.

[38] Paal Sigurd Hilde, "Norway, the Ukraine Crisis and Baltic Sea Security," in *Baltic Sea Security: How Can Allies and Partners Meet the New Challenges in the Region?* ed. Ann-Sofie Dahl (Copenhagen: Centre for Military Studies, 2014).

[39] Quoted in Julian Borger, "Norway to Restructure Military in Response to Russian 'Aggression,'" *The Guardian*, February 25, 2015.

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[50] Thomas Nilsen, "Increases in NATO Scrambled Jets from Norway," *The Barents Observer*, September 14, 2020.

[51] Hallvard Norum, "Russland simulerte angrep på Vardø-radar" [Russian simulated attack against radar in Vardø], *NRK*, March 5, 2018.

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[59] On these efforts, see Håkon Lunde Saxi, "British and German Initiatives for Defence Cooperation: The Joint Expeditionary Force and the Framework Nations Concept," *Defence Studies* 17, no. 2 (2017), 171–197; Håkon Lunde Saxi, "The UK Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)," *IFS Insights* no. 5 (2018) 1–6; Saxi, "The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of Nordic Defence Cooperation," 677–679; Håkon Lunde Saxi, "Alignment But Not Alliance: Nordic Operational Military Cooperation," *Artic Review* 13, 53–71.

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Russian paratroopers before boarding transport aircraft. Military exercises West-2021. Image by: Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (Wikimedia Commons). September 14, 2021

Poland's Threat Assessment
Deepened, Not Changed

By Mariusz Antoni Kamiński and Zdzisław Śliwa

Polish-Russian relations are traditionally difficult, shaped by geostrategic locations in Europe and shared history. Russians have stereotypes about Poland that color their perception of Polish issues. This, combined with ongoing political and economic disputes, creates a situation where hopes for improvement are slim.

Poland and Russia's common history includes a number of painful historical memories that make it challenging to build mutual trust and reconciliation, which outside observers must understand. Although the two nations have been neighbors for more than a thousand years, the critical historical events came between the 16th and 17th centuries, when both countries competed for primacy in Eastern Europe. Poland lost this rivalry, resulting in Austria, Prussia, and Russia partitioning Poland three times between 1772 and 1795, when Russia made Poland a principality within the Russian empire until Poland's independence in 1918. The result was the compulsory Russification of Polish lands, widespread attempts to convert Catholic Poles to Orthodox Christianity, and the brutal suppression of national uprisings. Together, these meet the modern criteria for ethnic cleansing and form the basis of Poles' historical consciousness.

When Soviet forces sought to invade Europe in the name of communism at the end of the Russian Civil War, they were decisively defeated at the Battle of Warsaw in 1920, which stopped the Soviet advance and frustrated their desire to ignite a global revolution. Stalin, then an officer in the Red Army, was one of the contributors to this disaster and took his revenge in 1940, ordering the execution of some 22,000 Polish officers and intelligentsia at Katyń, after partitioning Poland again with Germany. The Soviets occupied Poland at the end of World War II and imposed a communist regime until 1989, depriving Poland of full political and economic sovereignty, creating elite dependence on the Soviet Union, and enabling Soviet interference in Poland's internal affairs.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ascent of the Law and Justice Party in Poland in 2015 led to a more decisive and negative policy toward Russia. According to Witold Waszczykowski, a former member of Poland's Parliament and a current member of the European Parliament, NATO's Founding Act

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on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, enacted at a time when "Yeltsin's Russia was relatively weak and cooperative with the West," was repudiated in acknowledgment that "Today's Russia is aggressive and imperialistic, [and so] there's no reason we should respect that agreement."[1]

Perception of Russia as the Main Threat in the Baltic Sea Region

The current "Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland," published in May 2017,[2] provides an example of Polish leaders' perception of Russia as the main source of instability on NATO's eastern flank as well as playing a destabilizing role in the Middle East and North Africa. It states that the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation poses a direct threat to the security of Poland and other countries of NATO's eastern flank.[3] It anticipates Russia maintaining an aggressive stance in foreign and security policy and considers the Russian use of armed forces to pursue political goals, destabilizing neighboring countries, and undermining their territorial integrity to be particularly dangerous. The Defence Concept also recognizes hybrid activities and proxy conflicts as threats.[4] It acknowledges that Russia might cause a regional conflict involving one or more NATO allies and that the buildup of Russian armed forces in the Western Military District and aggressive scenarios of the Russian military exercises such as *Zapad* 2009—which ended with a simulated nuclear attack on Warsaw—validate their assessment of threats from the Russian Federation.[5]

Poland's May 2020 National Security Strategy (NSS)[6] confirmed the assessment that Russian neo-imperialist policies are the most severe threat to Poland's security, citing Russia's 2008 aggression against Georgia, the 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea, and ongoing actions in eastern Ukraine as violating international law and undermining the European security system. The NSS views Russia through the prism of its offensive military potential, hybrid operations, and activities in the "gray zone" below the threshold of conventional war. Poland is also concerned by Russian anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) systems in the Baltic Sea Region and Crimea, as Russia proved in Syria that it could attack targets up to 2,000 kilometers away using *Kalibr* cruise missiles.

The February 2022 unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has consolidated Polish feelings and vindicated Poland's approach to Russia. Poland is now in the forefront of states providing support to Ukraine.

Strengthening Military Potential and Cooperation within NATO

Fear of Russia contributed to a consensus on strengthening Poland's defense potential within NATO and in bilateral cooperation with the United States. This consensus facilitated the development of both territorial defense forces and A2AD capabilities. Poland is shaping NATO adaptation and activities to strengthen the eastern flank. Poland also seeks to increase the U.S. military presence in the area to safeguard against Russian aggression. Poland has already used the NATO consultation framework and "in concert with Lithuania, called a meeting of NATO ambassadors, citing Article 4 of the NATO treaty on emergency 'consultations' if a NATO member feels threatened."[7]

The critical element of Baltic Sea Region security is solidarity and a coherent regional policy including NATO members as well as Sweden and Finland. Part of this effort is to continuously develop the NATO Contingency Plans for Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland (which was launched during the 2010 Lisbon NATO Summit) as well as improve the Readiness Action Plan (initiated during the 2014 Wales NATO Summit).[8] Poland and the Baltic States strongly favor more NATO forces in their territories. They also seek to make the NATO presence in northeastern Europe permanent instead

Patriot Missile training in Poland. Image by: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. January 16, 2016

of rotational, seeing this as a clear signal of NATO's determination to defend the Baltic Sea Region.

Bilateral cooperation with the United States is also crucial. Poland hosts a U.S. anti-missile defense base in Redzikowo, rotational U.S. Armored Brigade Combat Teams in Żagań, a Combat Aviation Brigade at Powidz Airbase, an MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial system detachment at Miroslawiec Airbase, and a division-level Mission Command Element in Poznan.[9] Poland hopes to host a U.S. Corps-level HQ in the future. Additionally, the United States is the framework (lead) nation for the Poland-based NATO battlegroup.

The Defense Budget

It is impossible to maintain security at an appropriate level without a stable defense budget. For Poland, appropriate statutory solutions are one of the keys to success in the process of modernization of the armed forces. Following Poland's 1999 accession to NATO, the Polish Parliament passed a law on the reconstruction and technical modernization and financing of the armed forces as part of the political consensus in 2001, stipulating that defense expenditure would be no less than 1.95 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).[10] Not only has this principle proven durable, but Poland strengthened it in 2017 when a provision that defense expenditure will gradually increase to 2.5 percent in 2030 was passed.[11] This law provides stability and has tripled the defense budget over the years from $3.1 billion in 2000 to $10.8 billion in 2018, making Poland a European leader in defense spending.[12] In February 2019, the Ministry of National Defense accepted the 2026 Technical Modernization Plan (TMP), with proposed funding of approximately $48.9 billion. The TMP includes plans to prioritize and procure combat aircraft, attack helicopters, short-range air-defense systems, submarines, and cybersecurity. The *Harpia* fifth-generation aircraft program is the most important part, and in 2020 Poland signed a contract to purchase 32 F-35A Lightning II fighters. Modernization priorities include the *Narew* program (acquisition of anti-aircraft short-range rocket sets for combating unmanned aerial vehicles), *Kruk* (assault helicopters), and *Orka* (submarines). The TMP also includes $791 million towards the purchase of modern cryptographic and information technology (IT) equipment for cyberspace defense forces.[13]

The allocation of military spending has significantly changed since February 2022. Already in 2023, the defense budget will reach 97.4 billion Polish

Zloty (PLN) or 3.0 percent of GDP, with the apportionment of 27.3 billion PLN, or 28 percent for the TMP . Underscoring the importance of procuring modern weapon systems, additional modernization expenditures will be supported by nearly 46 billion PLN from the Armed Forces Support Fund (in Polish, Fundusz Wsparcia Sił Zbrojnych, or FWSZ) and an additional 39.5 billion PLN will be obtained from the issue of bonds by Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego.[14] The newest modernization projects include the acquisition of as many as 250 M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks (MBTs) from the United States and some 200 pieces of M142 HIMARS [High Mobility Artillery Rocket System]. Another source of weapons is South Korea, with planned acquisitions of 288 K239 Chunmoo MLRS [multiple launch rocket system], 180 K2 MBTs, 212 K9A1 155-mm, self-propelled howitzers, plus 48 FA-50 supersonic advanced jet trainers.[15] Such procurements are based on the recent threat assessment and support Poland's growing role as a regional power. Power is what Russia understands, so military capabilities will serve as a deterrence factor supplemented by enhanced resilience, especially when merged with NATO allied forces in the case of any conflict.

While Poland has made substantial investments in its conventional military, it has also sought to boost its societal resilience, crisis management, and unconventional warfare capabilities by investing in a new branch of its military, the Territorial Defense Force (in Polish, Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej—WOT), officially launched in 2017.[16] The WOT is modeled in part on the National Guard of the United States and is primarily a volunteer light infantry force constituted at the regional level and intended to supplement the professional armed forces.[17] The WOT is technically the fifth branch of the Polish armed forces and is subordinate to the Minister of Defense, but falls outside the regular command hierarchy.[18] WOT units are designed to bolster resistance against hostile measures and are trained in providing a response during the early stages of a hybrid conflict, protecting infrastructure or supplementing security for military facilities and critical infrastructure, assisting in countering disinformation campaigns and cyber operations, and providing stability in a crisis.[19] The WOT is currently planned to consist of 30,000 members, and the number will grow until it reaches the desired 50,000 troops.[20] In this context, it is valid to highlight the current discussion around increasing the number of active-duty soldiers to 250,000, and of a return to the national draft. The latter, according to the Center for Public Opinion Research's survey in May 2022, is supported by some 45 percent of the population.[21]

Poland's traditional strategic focus has been on securing the northern border with the Kaliningrad Oblast and the eastern border with Belarus in anticipation of rapid support from allied forces. Another crucial strategic focus is securing the Suwalki Gap, a 100-kilometer corridor of land connecting Poland to Lithuania between Kaliningrad and Belarus. The geostrategic location of the Suwalki Gap is important in the regional security context, particularly vis-a-vis the complexity of the terrain for conducting military operations. Russia's geographical location threatens the Baltic States, while the invasion and destabilization of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea are causing Suwalki to be a topic of discussion by civilian and military authorities.[22] Russian control of the Suwalki Gap would cut off the Baltic states from NATO reinforcements. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia see this as an existential threat. Conflict there would likely expand throughout Eastern Europe from Kaliningrad to Belarus and even occupied territory of Ukraine.

Time to Change the Legal Framework

A state defense system needs a solid legal basis to function smoothly. Without defense laws, it is impossible to create a robust organization and achieve effective cooperation between various

military and non-military elements. Unfortunately, in Poland the current legal provisions are often archaic and completely inappropriate for the current situation. The defense law, passed by the Parliament of the Communist People's Republic of Poland on November 21, 1967, needs a decisive reform, especially the "Act on the universal duty to defend the Republic of Poland."[23] Since then, Poland transitioned from a totalitarian state to a democratic state under the rule of law and the function and character of the armed forces have changed significantly. The very perception of national defense now places great emphasis on the functioning of the non-military aspects of national defense.

Over the last five decades, the Act on universal defense has been amended 113 times and repeatedly supplemented with successive tasks and powers redefining the defense roles of various state bodies, the competencies of the commanders of the armed forces, and individual military formations. Some provisions were transferred to other new laws. As a result, the Act is an extensive and complex legal cluster that contains provisions such as regulations concerning civil defense that have been practically unchanged since 1979. Consequently, the Act is archaic and unsuitable for the current situation; it is currently a chaotic combination of various aspects of defense and military law that has resisted calls to draft a completely new national defense law.[24]

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Polish Parliament passed a new law on the defense of the homeland, which unified a large part of military law. The law allows for the establishment of the Armed Forces Support Fund—a new financial mechanism to accelerate the modernization process of the Polish armed forces. Defense Minister Mariusz Błaszczak confirmed that starting in 2023 at least 3 percent of GDP will be allocated to defense.[25]

Cybersecurity, Information Warfare, and Intelligence

Today, the link between external and internal security is increasingly apparent, requiring the extension of strategy from a narrow military defense framework to include other relevant areas. Rapid changes and dynamic processes in the security environment at local, regional, and global levels require national security systems to continually evolve. New technologies, the incredible growth of cyberspace, the intensification of the information struggle, and the increasing dependence on information infrastructure make a non-military defense as important as military defense. The massive Russian cyberattack on Estonia in 2007 shows that the cyberspace domain is now increasingly a political and military battlefield and should be defended on a par with the defense of the country's territory, airspace, and territorial waters.[26]

Poland has become more dependent on digital services; social and economic development increasingly depends on quick and unhindered access to information. The efficiency and stability of information and communications technology (ICT) systems are crucial not only for the state's internal security, but are also practical for every area of state and civil activity. Cyber threats that directly impact Poland's internal security evolved between 2015 and 2020. The Internal Security Agency's (ISA) governmental Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT GOV) reacted to more than one hundred thousand computer incidents between 2015 and 2019; one-third of these were cyber threats. Advanced persistent threat groups constitute a growing portion of the threats to Poland's cyberspace. Most malicious traffic against governmental administration networks in 2019 originated from Russian cyberspace (28 percent); the organizations most affected were government institutions and critical infrastructure. As many as 226,914 notifications of potential ICT incidents (12,405 acknowledged as incidents) were recorded in 2019, compared to some 31,865 notifications in 2018

(6,236 acknowledged as incidents).[27] The number of cyber threats is growing every year; for example, in 2020, of the 246,107 notifications of potential ICT incidents, 23,306 proved to be real incidents against Polish institutions. They were reported by improved early warning systems.[28] The numbers from 2021 are even more alarming, consisting of 762,175 notifications and 26,899 incidents, including 115 warnings about specific and coordinated cyber campaigns.[29] This was in the year immediately preceding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Poland recognized the need to secure cyberspace early when in 2015 the Supreme Audit Office identified critical deficiencies in defining the legal and conceptual framework for actions as well as insufficient coordination and financing of tele-information security by the Ministry of Administration and Digitization (from 2016 on, referred to as the Ministry of Digital Affairs).[30] The situation called for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the security of Poland's cyberspace. The Act on the National Cybersecurity System was passed in 2018 and the Strategy for the Protection of the Cyberspace of the Republic of Poland for 2019–2024 was passed in 2019.[31] Although it took a decade to codify governmental efforts related to cyberspace security and not all issues have been resolved, a solid basis for further work was established.[32]

In order to ensure a more efficient response to threats to Poland's cybersecurity, the CSIRT GOV has expanded its early warning systems and participation in international cybersecurity networks. It instituted the ARAKIS 3.0 GOV early warning system, which provides data on external threats and vulnerabilities of the state's administration information and computer networks. Important political events considered high-risk events in terms of cybersecurity receive heightened attention for monitoring and mitigation of cyber threats. Polish CSIRT teams also participate in multinational exercises such as NATO's Crisis Management Exercise, Cyber Coalition, and Locked Shields to prepare better for the protection of the state's cyberspace.

Understanding that securing Poland's cyberspace will remain crucial for the state's internal security, Poland is increasing efforts to improve the protection of critical infrastructure as well as pursuing private-public partnership solutions and developing indigenous cryptographic tools and national expert cyber centers.

Foreign Intelligence Operations in Poland

Poland's geostrategic location and its membership in NATO and the European Union (EU) attract foreign intelligence services (particularly from the Russian Federation), including espionage related to security and other state functions. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is responsible for counterintelligence activities. MIA published an overview of foreign services activities between 2015 and 2019, recognizing the disappearing boundary between foreign intelligence information-gathering activities and other activities inside Poland, including extensive use of cyberspace and social media, as evidenced by developments in the Baltic States and Ukraine.[33] The energy sector, investments, information sphere, and social networks are the main targets of foreign espionage, which range from the security and military industry to the civilian economy. China and Russia are particularly recognized for conducting propaganda, disinformation, and intelligence operations in Poland since 2015. New technologies and operating procedures necessitate a more focused and deliberate response.

Poland faces growing threats from foreign influence operations. Because these "hybrid" activities are difficult to identify and classify in legal terms, they usually do not end up in court. Most frequently, foreign citizens suspected of threatening hybrid activities in Poland face administrative actions while illegal activities of foreign diplomats are addressed

through diplomatic procedures. Poland expelled four Russian diplomats in 2018 as a part of the international reaction to the Skripal poisoning, and then in 2019 expelled the Vice-Consul of the Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Poznań based on information collected by the ISA showing that the diplomat had engaged in activities inconsistent with their diplomatic status and which could harm Polish-Russian relations.[34] The diplomat was declared *persona non grata* and was banned from entering Poland and the rest of the Schengen area.

Over the last five years, Poland has ramped up its efforts to address hybrid threats. The ISA counteracts hostile hybrid activity through administrative procedures such as entry bans, expulsions, denial of permission to stay, negative opinions on applications for citizenship, or withdrawal of permission to stay. The ISA has released information related to some of the cases. In October 2017, the Russian scholar Dimitrij Karnuakhov, tied to the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies, a Foreign Intelligence Service-affiliated think-tank, was suspected of conducting hostile information activities and expelled. In late 2017, the ISA assisted in banning three Russian agents posing as researchers from entering the Schengen area who turned out to be the masterminds behind pro-Russian projects orchestrated in Poland.[35]

An example of a hybrid threat to Poland's security was an attempt to set fire to the office of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association in the small town of Uzhhorod in south-western Ukraine. The perpetrators were Polish citizens who were used to spoil Hungarian–Ukrainian relations. The ISA investigated the Uzhhorod arson attempt and tied it to the pro-Kremlin Polish party, "Change," whose then-leader was charged with espionage and cooperation with Russian intelligence services. The case serves as evidence of the complex relationships between the influence of hybrid threats on internal, national, and international security in the region. The extent of administrative procedures used to counter hybrid threats is perhaps better illustrated by statistics: between 2015 and 2019, Poland expelled a total of 28 foreigners for activities against the security and interests of the Republic of Poland.

Protecting classified information plays an essential role in preventing foreign espionage. The ISA grants Polish citizens NATO and EU security clearances, issuing approximately 43,000 individual and 1,000 industrial clearances between 2015 and 2019. Simultaneously, 123 persons were denied access to classified information, and the security clearances of almost one hundred persons were revoked.

To support counterintelligence efforts, the ISA has increased prevention and educational efforts. Between 2015 and 2019 as many as 58,000 participants took 2,600 counterintelligence courses. These efforts are reinforced by other governmental agencies, especially the security services, including the armed forces. This complex approach supports counterespionage efforts and contributes to the society's resilience against and awareness of the wide range of threats resulting from the activities of foreign intelligence services within Poland and beyond.

Because Poland is a frontline state, countries will continue carrying out intelligence operations there. Russian intelligence services will remain active in both espionage and influence operations. They may also initiate and support malicious hybrid activities against Poland's security interests at home and abroad. Experts also highlight the increasing scope and intensity of Chinese intelligence operations in Poland. This evolving threat will require a deliberate approach integrating legal, conceptual, and organizational efforts. The Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for Secret Services has observed that the Polish legal definition of espionage is outdated and not entirely relevant to current security threats. The definition needs to be updated to address issues such as the role of agents of influence and to clarify the relevant parts of the criminal code.

Strategic communication is also viewed as crucial to Poland's counterintelligence efforts. Several specialists have called for more robust public communication to increase social awareness of foreign espionage threats and influence operations.[36] This is especially true in in Poland where "the concept of strategic communication does not have a general strategy of action at the political level, nor a commonly accepted definition that could be adapted to either the national context or the current situation in the information space."[37] The development of a clear strategy and priorities followed by internal and external coordination will help to enhance trust in Polish counterintelligence services and demystify some aspects of their operations.

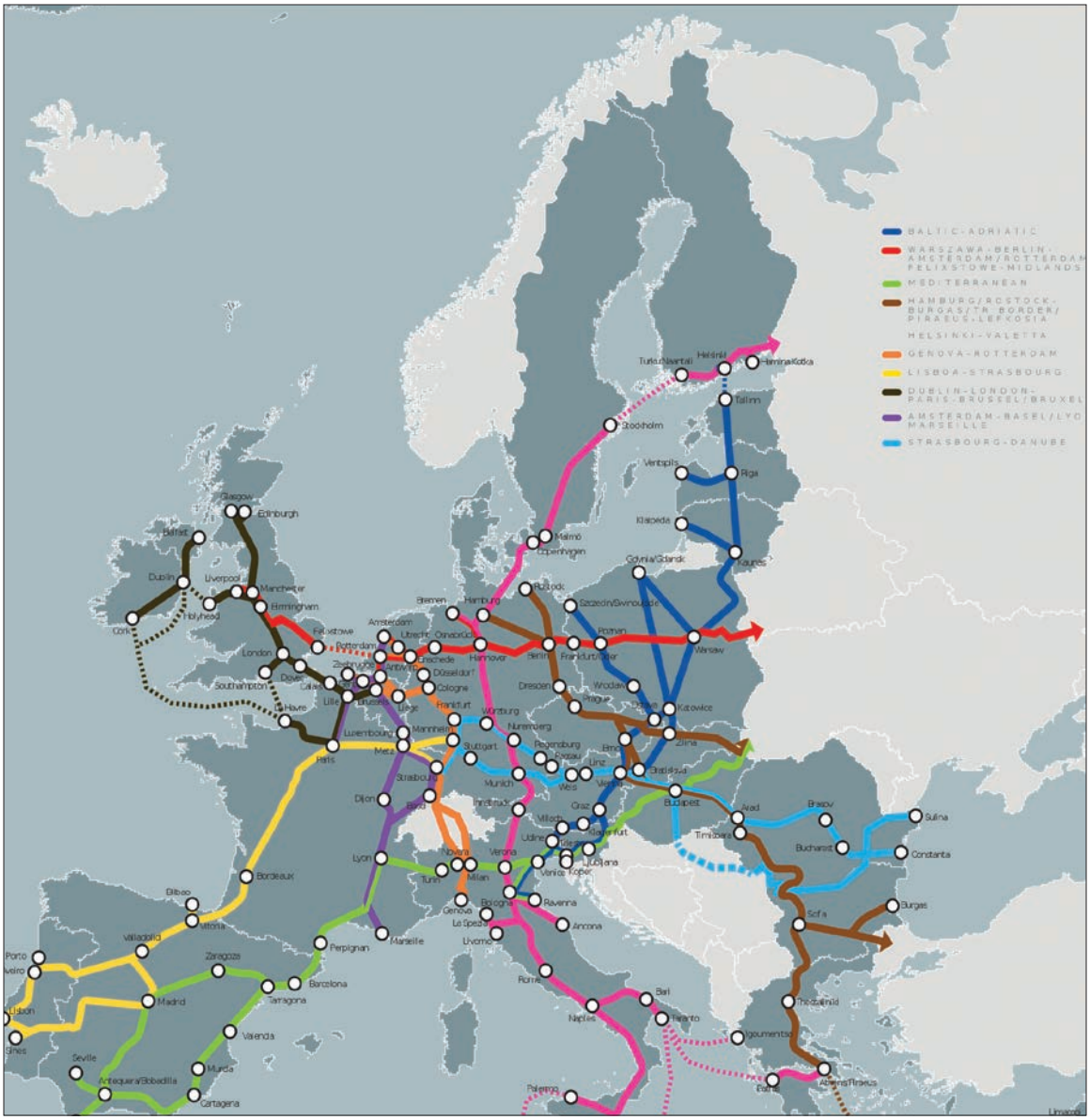
An issue currently receiving increased attention is the flow of refugees into Poland fleeing from the war in Ukraine. This refugee flow has created a window of opportunity for Russian intelligence services to send operators and deploy agents of influence to destabilize Poland and create an anti-Ukrainian attitude. This could conceivably be part of a long-term plan to activate those agents at some future point, determined by Russian intentions and Russia's desire to destabilize or weaken the cohesion of Poland's society or degrade the Polish position within international bodies.

The Key Role of Infrastructure in Defense

Poland's military infrastructure was developed to facilitate advancing to the west and preventing an advance to the east. Major military units were located in the western part of Poland and infrastructure was prepared to support the rapid movement of Russian second-echelon units from the East to the West. Next, Poland was protected from the West by Russian military units located in the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany). After 1991, Poland had to adjust its military infrastructure to face a threat from the East, a strategy that gained credibility after 2014 following Russian aggression in Ukraine. In this new scenario, Poland was transformed from its previous position as a Soviet rear area to a potential NATO frontline state, facing a threat on its direct border with Russia (the Kaliningrad Oblast) and Belarus (a member of the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization, or CSTO). The CSTO Article 7 is similar to NATO Article 5; therefore, the border with Belarus matters.[38]

Poland is the natural land link between West and East, so it is critical to ensure that lines of communication support the rapid flow of forces and sustainment from Western European bases and ports of debarkation to forward staging areas. Military mobility requires investing in military and civilian infrastructure to meet requirements that usually exceed the normal civilian routes and capacities. Building and maintaining infrastructure is a costly task. Since much of Polish infrastructure had to be rebuilt after Soviet occupation, Poland chose early to adopt military specifications for all future commercial infrastructure projects in order to facilitate the Allies' deployment during a crisis. This is an element of deterrence for Warsaw and has become more urgent since February 2022 when the Russian invasion of Ukraine brought attention to Polish infrastructure heading south and east, not just north and east.

Rail movement remains a challenge. The Polish rail system uses the European rail gauge while the Baltics still use the Russian gauge, which requires a cargo transfer in Sestokai or Mockava, Lithuania (the Russian gauge is different due to a Russian decision in 1842 to prevent potential invaders from using Russian railroads).[39] The current EU/Baltic States projects, Rail Baltica and Via Baltica, will eventually change all Baltic state rail gauges to European standards, however, the railroads and highways are currently insufficient for transporting heavy equipment such as tanks, infantry fighting vehicles,



Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) map. Image by: European Commission, European Union. December 20, 2013

or self-propelled howitzers. The good news is that military experts are involved in ensuring both Rail Baltica and Via Baltica meet military specifications.

Cooperation between NATO ("Military Schengen Zone") and European Union (PESCO "Military Mobility") underpins both funding and accelerated execution. Additionally, Poland and other states will continue infrastructure improvements, for instance connecting those two projects with the Via Carpathia (a north-south road system physically linking Lithuania and Greece) and further integration into the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T, a network of 10 transportation projects linking Europe north/south and east/west).[40]

Unfortunately, some of these latter railway and road projects are delayed and do not meet specific military specifications, in contrast to air and seaports of debarkation, which are meeting expectations. A primary concern is the availability of adequate onward routes from the ports and seaports, which are critical to ensure a smooth and constant flow of troops and supplies. The situation should improve with the agreement between Poland and the United States on the location and development of military facilities to accommodate some 20,000 troops. It will include a military complex in Poznan comprising a command-and-control center, a tele-information hub, and a combat training area to support the division-level headquarters and the newly identified U.S. Army V Corps Headquarters (Forward). Poland is also developing facilities for an armored brigade combat team's facility in Świętoszów, Trzebień, and Pstrąże.

Poland is also enhancing the Powidz airbase to support some 50 aircraft and two attack helicopter battalions as well as facilities for a special operations battalion HQ and air defense assets. The airfields in Krakow-Balice and Katowice-Pyrzowice will accept C-5 Galaxy transport aircraft, an important requirement to speed up deployment of units from the United States. Finally, Poland is upgrading air bases in Mirosławiec, Łask, and Dęblin to accept unmanned aerial systems.

Warsaw must be an active partner and advocate for EU PESCO projects on "Military Mobility" and "Network of Logistics Hubs" as well as TEN-T "dual use" infrastructure improvements, with the allocation of funds to upgrade relevant, civilian projects to military requirements. The NATO Schengen Zone concept requires clarifying the legal aspects of entering a country and cross-boundary movement. This will require Warsaw to make legal arrangements with neighboring NATO nations.

While Poland has significantly streamlined documentation requirements for deploying forces since the Anakonda 16 exercise, infrastructure improvements are still needed. Defender Europe 2020 was designed to test the deployment of a division-size force from Allied facilities in Europe and air and seaports of debarkation in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Poland. Onward movement required extensive use of the road, rail, and inland waterway networks while also testing the capacity at commercially operated airports, seaports, and transportation companies. NATO and the United States worked closely with the National Movement Coordination Centre of the Polish Movement and Transportation Division, which yielded lessons learned regarding rail and road infrastructure as well as procedures and terminology. It highlighted some shortfalls, such as the vulnerability of a limited number of bridges across major rivers, lack of engineering equipment for river crossing operations, and the need to control the flow of civilians. Poland learned that it must assure funding for military mobility and infrastructure, invest in cyber resilience, acquire strategic lift, contribute to prepositioning of U.S. and NATO equipment, enhance Host Nation Support capabilities, and improve procedures and terminology among military staff to enhance communication with allies.

The main challenge is infrastructure. First is the limited capacity of many minor roads and small bridges to withstand the weight of heavy armor. Next, there is a limited number of bridges across major rivers, which mainly run from south to north. Poland is building up engineering unit capacity to ensure required river crossings. There is also a need to provide specific infrastructure for logistics purposes, for example, fuel storage and ammunition depots to cover both Poland's requirements and specific classes of supplies for incoming units. Another aspect is the possession of proper capabilities to protect critical infrastructure against enemy attacks. Artillery and long-range missile launchers in Kaliningrad and Belarus create a significant

A2AD concern for Poland and NATO in general. The limited number of modern air defense assets and procurement of just two Patriot batteries does not solve this problem and results in dependence on other NATO nations.

Poland's geostrategic location pressures Warsaw to develop the required infrastructure in peacetime. The task is time-consuming and costly, and therefore, proper utilization of national funds and capabilities and financial guidance and expertise from NATO is required together with the proper development of dual-use civilian facilities, which requires close cooperation with and within the EU.

The Economy as a National Security Domain

Poland's 2020 NSS recognized the urgency of strengthening economic security in the face of globalization and growing competition in foreign markets. This is directly linked to internal security, national defense potential, and state and societal resilience in the face of modern threats. Poland has paid special attention to the financial sector, which is vulnerable to speculative attacks on the Polish currency as well as capital flight. As this sector is significantly affected by external trends, Poland must coordinate policies with international supervisory institutions and international law enforcement agencies.

Energy security is an important element in how Polish elites view Russia. They perceive Russia's historical position as a monopoly supplier of natural gas and crude oil as strategically unfavorable. As dependence on Russia for the supply of most energy resources exposes Poland and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to political blackmail and threatens energy security, Poland has diversified crude oil and natural gas supplies since 2015. Poland opposed the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, with a former Polish minister of foreign affairs comparing Nord Stream to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact (in which Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia carved up Poland), causing angry reactions in Germany and Russia.

Russia exploits its oil and natural gas dominance to pressure targeted nations by categorizing them as hostile or friendly and charging them different prices. Gazprom's termination of gas supplies to Ukraine in the recent past demonstrates this effect. Poland is clearly aware of such threats; the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection's decision in October 2020 to impose penalties on Gazprom and the five companies participating in the project was a clear message.[41] After decades of Russia monopolizing the supply of oil and natural gas and Poland actively trying to stop the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project, Poland has invested in a strategically important liquid natural gas terminal in Świnoujście to ensure the stability of supplies.

The recent sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines showed another Russian tool of hybrid war using other-than-military means against the West. The war and energy crisis have caused Poland to rely once again on coal as a source of energy and has resulted in price increases and market shortages compounded by the ban on Russian coal. Poland ended a ban on the use of lignite despite its being a more polluting fuel type. And though renewable energy sources are being energetically discussed, the planned transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy projects like wind farms, solar energy, and bioenergy has been postponed.

Currently, there is a nuclear power plant in the pipeline to enhance future energy security. It will be built by the Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse Company using AP1000 technology. With a capacity of 1 GW to 1.6 GW it is to be completed in 2033.[42] A total of three nuclear power plants are projected and linked with the construction of new power grids. The effects of coal-use, however, will last for years and will inevitably have a negative impact on the environment, necessitating the process of decarbonization, requiring substantial funds.

Poland Since the Ukraine Invasion

For many years Polish authorities warned partners within the EU and NATO that Russia poses a real threat and could cause a full military conflict in pursuit of its national interests. In 2008, President Lech Kaczyński, during a visit to Tbilisi, said: "We know very well that today it is Georgia, tomorrow it will be Ukraine, the day after tomorrow the Baltic States, and perhaps the next one in line will be my country, Poland."[43] At the same time, Poland criticized the governments of some European countries for too reckless a policy towards the Russian Federation and for their dependence on Russian resources (including Nord Stream 2). Russia's attack on Ukraine did not come as a surprise in Poland but rather vindicated the Polish perspective.

From the beginning of the Russian invasion, the Polish government called for hard sanctions against the Russian Federation, including a ban on oil imports. Twenty days after the outbreak of the war, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, together with the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic and Slovenia, were the first European leaders to visit Kyiv to express their support and solidarity with Ukraine.[44] Politically, Poland has been very direct in condemning the Russian aggression and explicitly urged decisive action in international forums such as NATO, the EU, the UN, and other entities based on the existential threat Russia poses to Poland and to Europe. To encourage that support, Polish President Andrzej Duda, along with presidents of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, visited Kyiv in April to meet President Volodymyr Zelensky. During a follow-up visit in May 2022, President Duda addressed Ukraine's parliament (Verkhovna Rada), stating, "the free world today has the face of Ukraine!"[45]

These efforts resonated with Polish society and its perception of Russia. According to the Public Opinion Research Center survey in April 2022, 79 percent of Poles believe that "the war in Ukraine threatens the security of our country," along with 80 percent supporting the ban on Russian gas and oil imports.[46] Polish society's perception of Russia has significantly changed, as the negative perception of the nation in 2020 was only 42 percent.[47] The common threat assessment by political elites and the broader population has galvanized a stronger cohesion in Polish society, which has undertones related to Russian historical aggression and expansionism.

Polish support for Ukraine was immediate, offering solidarity with the invaded nation and recognizing the threat to Poland and the whole of Europe. Poland has been one of the main weapons suppliers to Ukraine, including an estimated 230 T-72M/M1 tanks,[48] as well as BWP-1 infantry fighting vehicles, BM-21 Grad 122-mm multiple rocket launchers, 2S1 Goździk self-propelled howitzers, and short-range portable "Piorun" air defense systems.[49] Polish authorities wanted to deliver MIG-29 aircraft, but this project did not materialize due to disputes within NATO. Poland donated 18 pieces of the NATO-compatible AHS 155-mm self-propelled tracked howitzer, "Krab," which proved its value in Ukrainian soldiers' hands. In June 2022, Ukraine decided to procure another 54 AHS Krab howitzers.[50] Similarly, the newest versions of the Grot rifle and Piorun man-portable air defense systems were praised as valuable and effective donations. Poland has also become a major hub for the transport of weapons to Ukraine, due to the long border with Ukraine and solid lines of communication through Poland from other EU and NATO countries.

Poland was among the first nations to deliver military support to Ukraine from the beginning of the war and is among the top three nations in terms of proportional contribution. According to the World Economy Institute in Kiel, Poland's contribution amounts to 0.49 percent of its GDP.[51] For comparison, that proportion for the United States is 0.25 percent. Poland's contribution was recognized when the Commander of Poland's 11th Armored Cavalry

Division, Major General Piotr Trytek, was appointed to lead the EU Military Assistance Mission Ukraine.[52]

Of critical importance, Poland welcomed the largest number of refugees from Ukraine; from February to May 10, 2022, 3,296,000 people—mainly women and children—came to Poland through the border crossings with Ukraine.[53] It is noteworthy that in Poland there was no need to establish refugee camps as most refugees found shelter in Polish families' homes, a sign of the generosity of Polish society. The commitment of local governments, volunteers, and the Polish government was also visible. In April 2022, the Polish Parliament passed regulations accelerating the registration of Ukrainian citizens in the PESEL system (Poland's personal identification code) and medical supplies were delivered by the Governmental Strategic Reserves Agency along with a help line to speed up the process of donations from citizens and organizations, including currency.[54] The Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego was allowed to grant guarantees for the repayment of loans or other liabilities incurred by businesspersons. The number of war refugees is increasing; as of November 2022, as many as 7,370,000 refugees have crossed the Poland-Ukraine border, according to The Polish Border Guard.[55]

Conclusion

Poland's security has been subject to increasing threats in recent years. Russia's aggressive actions have destabilized the Euro-Atlantic security situation and increased the scope and magnitude of threats to both Poland's external and internal security. Poland has faced growing threats of foreign espionage, intelligence, and influence operations. While most of these are attributed to the Russian Federation, the intensity of Chinese secret services actions in Poland also raises growing concern.

Hybrid threats—those below the threshold of armed combat—are among the major challenges, including to Poland's internal security, and are considered to be tied closely to adversary governments' actions using non-military tools. Recent years have blurred the boundaries between intelligence threats and hostile cyber, terrorist, and economic activities within and beyond Poland's borders. Propaganda and disinformation inspired by Russia have become the primary instruments of hybrid activity in cyberspace. They attempt to weaken Poland's security and its position in international relations. Simultaneously, hybrid activities exploit political divisions and extremism among Polish citizens, undermining the internal security of the state and its resilience to external threats.

Recent trends suggest that the scope and magnitude of cyber threats to Poland's security will grow significantly in the coming years. Actions of foreign states, along with criminals, will pose a threat to Poland's public administration, industry, and banking, as well as individual citizens. Furthermore, cyberspace may be used for hybrid activities and hostile information operations. Poland's cyberspace protection will remain crucial for the state's internal security in the coming years. A comprehensive approach combining public and private efforts will focus on the improvement of the protection of critical infrastructure assets. The common civic defense idea (or total defense) has already been conceptually announced within the *National Security Strategy of The Republic of Poland* in 2020.[56] It is to be based on "the efforts of the entire nation, and building an understanding for the development of the Republic of Poland's resilience and defence capabilities."[57] The concept is currently within the implementation phase, calling not only for building military capabilities, but also parallel preparatory laws, procedures, and capacities related to all aspects of governance across the whole Polish nation and to mobilize the full potential of the state to face any threats. It will extend to the educational system, the management of military and non-military entities, and the utilization of military and civilian industry and infrastructure.

Polish riot police in front of a giant football in Warsaw before a Poland vs Russia match during UEFA Euro 2012. Photo by Wistula, June 12, 2012

Poland's independence in the digital domain will be given priority. That, in turn, will translate into more robust efforts related to the development of cryptographic tools and building national cyber expertise. Protection of Polish economic interests against external hostile activities will remain one of the primary tasks for the ISA in the future. The economy has a direct impact on internal security both at the national level and for any individual citizen's security. With the globalization of the economy, the frequency of potential external state and commercial actors' interference with the Polish economy may increase, and their intentions may not always be clear. The protection of vital national investments against hostile takeovers, corruption, and hybrid activities will be given priority, as such investments affect Poland's security. The actions of the ISA will be coordinated with other state security agencies, as well as the Central Bureau for Anticorruption and the Police.

The Polish perspective on the Russian invasion of Ukraine supports the assessment that Russia is and will be an existential threat if it is not stopped by a decisive and united effort, especially by NATO and the EU. Therefore, Poland is ready to pay the price of such commitments. Despite Russian retaliation, such as cutting gas supplies, Poland has been one of the main supporters of Ukraine and will continue to be so as long as the illegal aggressive Russian occupation of Ukrainian territory continues. PRISM

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The Brandenburg Gate divided East from West Germany during the Cold War. The 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall inaugurated a quarter century period of accommodation with Russia, which ended with Russia's 2014 intervention in Ukraine. Image by: Gordon Dylan Johnson. June 7, 2015

Germany and the Baltic Sea Region

By Marcel Hadeed and Monika Sus

The security of the Baltic Sea region (BSR) has gained importance for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Germany in the past decade, even prior to the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since 2014, the Russian Federation has waged continuous political warfare against its neighbors. Actions include the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbass region, as well as ongoing disinformation campaigns, cyber attacks, and violations of air and maritime spaces. The BSR is a preferred target of these attacks and provocations, and as attacks on the cyber infrastructure of the German Bundestag in 2015[1] and the infamous "Lisa" disinformation campaign in 2016[2] have shown, neither Germany's size nor its comparatively good relations with Russia guarantees Berlin's security from Russian political warfare.

In fact, the database *euvsdisinformation.eu*—a flagship project of the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force—has counted more than 700 cases of Russian disinformation against Germany since 2015—by far the most of any European Union (EU) member state.[3] The campaigns attempt to portray an image of "Russophobia" in Germany and Germany's avoidance of dialogue.[4]

Two prominent examples of Russian disinformation activity against Germany stand out. When the German battalion deployed as part of the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission in Lithuania in February 2017, Russian outlets targeted them in an information campaign, likening their presence to the Nazi occupation,[5] alleging the presence of a Russian agent among German troops, and the raping of a teenage girl by a German commander. In 2019, the battalion was targeted again with allegations of the desecration of a Jewish cemetery by a German tank.

The Russians used a different approach during the German federal elections of 2017, when German-speaking Russian outlets attempted to galvanize support for the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland by discrediting Germany's immigration policy and thereby exacerbating political polarization.[6] The Russian troll factory Internet Research Agency was also active on social media and infiltrated partisan networks.[7]

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Neither campaign was particularly effective, and Germany remains a difficult target. Germany has a lower social media penetration rate than the United States, while the public media landscape is trusted and centrist.[8] As a result, political fallout from both attacks remained limited and did not fundamentally alter Germany's policies toward Russia.

Neither is the German public particularly worried about Russian aggression. In a 2019 survey by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, only 15 percent of respondents viewed Russia as a threat. A more open question to rank potential "enemies" paradoxically sees the United States (39 percent) far ahead of Russia (15 percent) while 60 percent of respondents desired more cooperation with Russia.[9] According to a survey by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in August 2022, only 22 percent of respondents viewed Russia as a major threat to Germany, whereas 50 percent perceived it as a minor threat. Twenty-five percent of respondents saw no threat from Russia at all.[10]

Germany's role in BSR security is significant: it is the largest and most powerful country of the region, both economically and politically. However, the BSR has "never been a priority in Berlin" since World War II.[11] Germany's Baltic coastline is merely 964 km long (out of 6,103 km of total borders) and has only two (out of nine total) neighbors in the region: Poland and Denmark. Germany conceives of itself as a Central European country. Accordingly, Germany pays less attention to the BSR than the other Baltic Sea states.

This article analyzes German policy toward the BSR after 1990 by reflecting on both political doctrine and Berlin's involvement in providing security in this region. Although Germany does not have an explicit strategy toward the BSR, it is possible to gauge a comprehensive picture of German strategy and efforts in the region using strategic documents from the Federal Ministry of Defense (MoD) to trace the German approach toward Russia and the BSR mainly through the lens of Germany's Russia policy. The German political elite believe that Germany has a "special role"[12] to play in maintaining dialogue and building trust with Russia and this shapes key security policy decisions regarding the BSR. The ministry periodically publishes white papers and defense guidelines, which outline priorities in defense policy based on an elaboration of its threat perception. White papers were published in 1994, 2003, 2006, 2011, and 2016.

German Political Doctrine and the Eastern Partners

Working Toward a Eurasian Vision: 1990 to 2014

Reunited Germany sought good relations with Russia, which it viewed as an "important element for the future European security and stability system."[13] As Russia made tentative steps toward integrating into the liberal international system, Germany saw internal strife and conflict in former satellite states as the main threat to regional stability, while the relationship was one of optimistic engagement. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the 1997 Permanent Joint Council (later the NATO-Russia Council) were vehicles to integrate Russia into the international and European communities.

Although Germany lacked a distinct BSR strategy, its overall strategy was defined by the broader guidelines of foreign and security policy with two poles: an unwavering commitment to NATO and the vision of security through integration and cooperation.[14] The United States remained its most important security partner. Under the U.S. security umbrella, Germany significantly reduced the size of the Bundeswehr from 476,288 troops in 1991 to 177,800 troops in 2017.[15] Germany saw integration into European and transatlantic cooperation as vital for the nascent democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, including in the BSR, and focused on extensive civilian cooperation to support the Baltic States and Poland in that transition.[16]

Germany cultivated extensive bilateral cooperation with Poland. Within the framework of the Weimar Triangle and beyond, German-Polish cooperation has resulted in tangible results like the 1997 launch of Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC-N) in Szczecin, Poland.

Relations with the Baltics were more ambiguous. On one hand, German officials expressed feelings of responsibility toward them;[17] like Poland, the Baltics were victims of the Ribbentrop-Molotov-Pact. Because of this history, Germany advocated for the Baltics, including support for their integration into the EU. Berlin was less enthusiastic about NATO accession. As experts noted, "German-Baltic relations were . . . overshadowed by Russo-German relations."[18] Chancellors Helmut Kohl and later Gerhard Schröder carefully weighed Moscow's reaction to the expansion of the Western security structure into the Baltics, leading to ambiguous policies toward security in the BSR. Part of securing Russian support for German reunification was assurances by American and German diplomats that NATO would not expand eastward.[19] Accordingly, Germany remained on the fence regarding Baltic state NATO membership. If it were up to Germany then, intensive civil and economic cooperation, including with Russia, would have provided for the security needs of the Baltics while not alienating Russia. In the end, Germany endorsed NATO membership for the Baltics in 2002.[20]

At the same time, and up to 2014, Germany expended a great deal of energy in establishing cooperation with Moscow, such as the 2010 Partnership for Modernization initiative. As the respective foreign ministers stated at the time:

> *"Today our relations rest on a solid and broad foundation: our economic ties have acquired an intensity unknown in earlier times. The cultural exchanges, the intensive political dialogue and, not least, the numerous contact points in civil society bear witness to close relations based on a spirit of trust. . . . Germany and Russia work closely together on global security issues. Comprehensive, indivisible and cooperative security, stability and prosperity are amongst our common aims."*[21]

Neither the crisis in Chechnya in 2004 nor the Russian cyber operation against Estonia in 2007 or Russian operations against Georgia in 2008 profoundly changed this ambition. In 2012, the German foreign minister postulated that "we cannot solve the challenges of our time without, much less against, but only together with a great nation like Russia."[22] In 2013, in response to Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych's refusal to sign the EU association agreement, Chancellor Angela Merkel called for more dialogue with Russia to escape the either/or trap for Eastern countries to choose between the EU or Russia.[23] Germany saw this as continuing the tradition of cooperation established by the Helsinki Accords, Russia's signing of the European Convention on Human Rights, and the NATO-Russia Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security.

In the absence of a dedicated strategy toward the BSR, a cooperative Euro-Russian security structure provided the framework for German policy toward the region. A strategic partnership between NATO and Russia remained Germany's long-term objective.[24] Although the concept is compelling, it depends on Russia accepting and adhering to the territorial inviolability and sovereignty of its neighbors.

Strategic Turning Point

Germany fundamentally altered its security policy at the turn of 2013 and 2014. In the face of a crisis in Ukraine, a triad of top German officials pledged at the 2014 Munich Security Conference that Germany would take on more responsibility in the

international arena.[25] When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, it profoundly transformed threat perceptions across Europe, and particularly in the BSR, incentivizing increased German engagement.

The current German strategy is most clearly defined in the MoD's 2016 White Book on Security Policy and the Future of the German Armed Forces[26] and the outgoing government's 2018 coalition agreement. The strategy reflects the view that Russia's present "policy of aggression"[27] threatens the current international and European security order and the BSR constitutes a particularly exposed region. Germany ceased advocating for outright partnership with Russia: future cooperation remains a long-term objective, but first the conditions for such cooperation need to be re-established. This means an end to Russian violations of international law. Chancellor Merkel stated that international relations must be built not on the law of the strong but on the strength of law.[28] The question is how Russia could be compelled to respect the fundamental principles of international law in Europe.

First, it must be noted that Germany emphasizes a comprehensive policy mix, of which defense policy is only one part. Sustainable solutions to international conflicts can only ever be political. Accordingly, Germany follows a multi-pronged approach to achieve security in the BSR by combining increased collective security and resilience *against* and cooperative security and sectoral cooperation *with* Russia.[29] The Foreign and Defense Ministries emphasized the former and the Chancellery the latter.[30]

Increasing collective security and resilience depends on increased international cooperation. It is no coincidence that, in a speech in 2019, outgoing German Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer recalled the German Basic Law, which bestows on Germans the "determination to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe."[31] Her tenure would continue the emphasis on multilateralism that has become a hallmark of German security and defense policy initiatives over the years.

More specifically, under the slogan "remaining transatlantic and becoming more European,"[32] the outgoing German government agreed to strengthen both its own defensive capabilities and budget while simultaneously enhancing European cooperation and capabilities. Indeed, Germany has not only signaled its willingness to approximate NATO's 2 percent commitment but also increased its defense spending by 10 percent between 2018 and 2019, the largest increase among the top 15 military spenders.[33] At 1.3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), defense spending remains far from the 2 percent that was promised at the NATO Wales Summit in 2014. While it dipped slightly in 2020, Germany planned an expansion in 2021, boosted also by the government's COVID-19 stimulus package.[34] Unfortunately, this level of spending is insufficient to remedy low readiness rates regarding German equipment, such as submarines, military aircraft, and tanks.

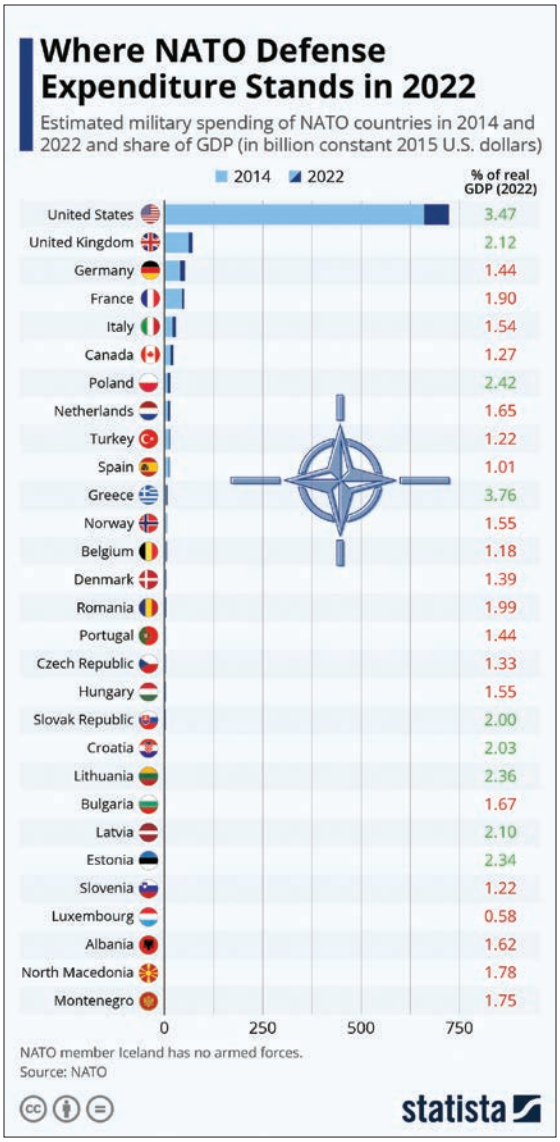
It is nonetheless noteworthy that the question of military spending, and in particular the 2 percent commitment, remains hotly contested even among the governing coalition of the center-right Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) and center-left Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). In particular, the government questions the utility of a GDP-anchored indicator to resist more forceful attempts to reach the agreed on goalpost.[35] Although the SPD/Green/Free Democrat coalition agreement does not address the 2 percent goal, it does state that that it will "subject personnel, material and finances to a critical inventory," will improve the equipment of the soldiers and the Bundeswehr, will "procure a successor system for the Tornado fighter aircraft, . . . and will enable the arming of Bundeswehr drones."[36] Because the new Chancellor Olaf Scholtz was both Merkel's Vice Chancellor and the former

coalition government finance minister, we may expect no major change in policy or resourcing for the military.

Even with the burden of high overall but low percentage of GDP spending, Germany reiterates its willingness to provide leadership within the Alliance.[37] This willingness is reflected in its leadership of the eFP battalion in Lithuania and the extensive supporting role it overtook in the initial phase of the DEFENDER-EUROPE 20 exercise.

At the same time, Germany prioritizes enhancing European capabilities, both within NATO (the "European Pillar") and without. Germany actively promotes the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework for defensive integration and underlines its complementarity to NATO. Yet a closer look at the projects suggests a lack of vision for the security of the BSR. Only the military mobility project features all European members in the BSR (except for Denmark). Of eight projects that Germany coordinated in November 2021, only two involve Poland and one Lithuania. PESCO initiatives led by Germany confirm Berlin's prioritization of the improvement of European synergies—and thus interoperability, research and development, procurement, standardization, and certification.[38] They reflect Germany's doctrine of "military reluctance." Accordingly, any European response also encapsulates non-military measures as demonstrated by Germany's hardened stance on sanctions against Russia in 2014[39] and its active coordination.[40]

Germany also pursues increasing resilience against hybrid warfare beyond the framework of the EU. It participates in the Northern Group, which brings together the Nordic and Baltic countries with the United Kingdom, Poland, the Netherlands, and Germany to informally consult on security and defense matters. It has also changed its stance on the "Three Seas" (Adriatic, Baltic, and Black) Initiative. Additionally, Germany is actively engaged in bilateral defense cooperation with partners in the BSR.



Thus, the first prong of German policy toward the BSR—increasing security against Russian activity—is conducted with a focus on concerted international action in NATO, the EU, and through bilateral cooperation, all supported by a general increase in defense spending. These efforts are moderated by the second prong of a cooperative stance toward Russia.

Russia Seen as an Indispensable Partner

Despite condemning Russian aggression, prior to February 2022 Germany still viewed Russia as an indispensable partner in global security questions. Germany saw the potential of long-term strategic partnerships among itself, NATO, and Russia, if it is based on the current European security structure. This was German foreign policy during the entire Schroder and Merkel chancellorships and at the beginning of the current Olaf Scholtz chancellorship that started on December 8, 2021. Within 2½ months, Scholtz had to deal with an unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine. He was clear that Germany thought this was a violation of international law and initiated a wide variety of actions to support Ukraine and prepare Germany, including a €100 billion special fund for the Bundeswehr to make up for deferred maintenance and an additional deployment to Lithuania as part of the eFP.[41]

In accordance with its overarching insistence on the inviolability of international agreements and principles, Germany has long remained unwaveringly committed to the NATO-Russia Founding Act. As such it has upheld the commitment not to carry out collective defense missions that would exceed the threshold of "substantial combat forces" based in former Warsaw Pact countries.[42] Some interpret this as the permanent stationing of a maximum of three brigades, while others believe that Russian actions have abrogated the agreement.[43] As Judy Dempsey claimed in 2017, "Germany in particular remains unwilling to review the act, and there is silence in the alliance about other options."[44]

An example of Germany's unwavering attempts at forging a durable relationship with Russia is the controversy surrounding the Nord Stream II pipeline, which Germany finished, despite risking U.S. sanctions[45] and the harsh criticism of European neighbors.[46] Germany remained committed to the pipeline even after the Russian Federal Security Service attempted to assassinate and subsequently imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, despite the fact that Navalny's poisoning generated significant publicity, not least because he was treated and recovered in Berlin. As argued in one of Germany's most popular daily newspapers (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), "Nord Stream 2 was the symbol of German-Russian special relations, an intricate mixture of economics, politics, and sentiment."[47] The project was abandoned only after Russia attacked Ukraine in February 2022.[48]

Until February 2022, there were two competing narratives in Germany regarding Russia. The first narrative treated Moscow as an indispensable economic and security partner, while the second recognized Russia's aggressive policies as a challenge to European security. The latter argument has gained ground since the events of 2014 and has been reinforced since February 2022. However, the debate about the threat from Russia remains abstract for most Germans, and only a minority fear Russian aggression.[49] This is clear from survey results in August 2022, in which 75 percent of respondents in Germany viewed Russia as "no" or only a "minor threat." This will probably remain so if Germany has a Polish buffer zone between itself and Russia.

These competing narratives are mirrored in the approach to the question of how to end the war in Ukraine and the consequences it will have for Russia. Whereas most Central and East European countries and most of the U.S. political elite claim that there is no conceivable common ground on which Western values and interests could meet the Russian leader's goals, Germany is more reluctant on this front. Some among Germany's political elite argue that the West (and Ukraine) should end the war through diplomatic means and agree to territorial concessions to Russia in order not to humiliate Vladimir Putin. Also, once the war is over, they believe Germany should return to buying Russian gas.[50] Despite the war many Germans believe Putin's propaganda: in October 2022, one-fifth of survey

Angela Merkel criticized the United States's sanctions against Russia that target EU–Russia energy projects. Image by: The Russian Presidential Press and Information Office (Wikimedia Commons). May 2, 2017

respondents agreed with conspiratorial ideological statements about the war. While 72.8 percent of those surveyed stated that Russia was fully responsible for the war, there is also a group that saw NATO and the United States as clearly to blame, with 14.6 percent holding the Alliance responsible and 15.8 percent blaming the United States. Moreover, a total of 11.4 percent believe that responsibility for the war lies with Ukraine while only 35.1 percent of Germans surveyed hold Ukraine blameless.[51]

Germany's Security Engagement in the BSR

Before 2014: Period of Reluctance

German political doctrine emphasizing partnership with Russia casts a shadow over collaboration with the BSR countries. The German approach to NATO enlargement was emblematic. On the one hand, Berlin supported the attempts of Poland and the three Baltic states (the so-called Vilnius Group) to join the Alliance. On the other hand, German policymakers were extremely careful to secure Russia's acceptance of the enlargement. The NATO-Russia Founding Act was essential in this respect, as Allies agreed not to station additional permanent combat forces on the territories of the former Warsaw Pact states.

Polish accession to NATO provided the first indication of German growing involvement in the multilateral approach in the BSR. In 1997, Germany, Denmark, and Poland established an MNC-N headquartered in Szczecin, Poland. The MNC was the only NATO headquarters on the territory of the former Soviet bloc and played a key role in providing a command-and-control framework for the new members of the Alliance. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined the MNC-N in 2004 and achieved full operational capability in 2005.

Despite this move, NATO only slowly started to take steps to enhance the credibility of the collective defense guarantees for this region in the face of Russian (and Belarusian) exercises specifically simulating attacks on the Baltic states and Poland, including Ladoga 2009, *Zapad* (West) 2009, *Zapad* 2013, and *Zapad* 2017.[52] Indeed, activities of the MNC initially focused on conflicts in other parts of the world such as the International Security Assistance Force, a NATO-led military mission in Afghanistan.

One of the reasons for NATO's reluctance was the lack of consensus among its members about the level of threat at the eastern border. Despite Russia's clearly offensive military exercises, NATO needed 4 years to organize an exercise in the region. STEADFAST JAZZ 2013 was the first exercise in the region since the end of the Cold War, therefore of great importance for the BSR. By deploying about 6,000 troops from 17 countries, it tested the readiness and interoperability of the NATO Response Force. Germany was only minimally involved in the exercise, contributing 55 soldiers—compared to 1,200 troops sent by France and 1,040 by Poland.[53] As Judy Dempsey observed, Berlin's insignificant involvement revealed "a growing German indifference toward defense and security issues, whether they are related to NATO or the EU." As previously discussed, Germany's stance on Russia provided another key factor for the decision not to be involved more substantially at the time. This also explained Germany's limited engagement in SABER STRIKE, a U.S. Army Europe–led annual international exercise focused on the Baltic states since 2010, which is designed to enhance interoperability between U.S. forces and regional partners and to demonstrate U.S. commitment to securing the BSR. Berlin did not join the exercise until 2013 and only then through the MNC. Overall, Germany's military involvement in the BSR prior to 2014 could thus be described as hesitant and measured.

After 2014: Toward a Strategy, Incrementally

A new German approach to the BSR started to develop in the wake of Russia's invasion of the Donbas region and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. German policymakers began to recognize Russia as a threat, which the frontline countries on NATO's Eastern Flank had always felt. Even so, German attitudes have not changed much. A recent opinion poll, carried out by the Pew Research Center, showed only 30 percent of German citizens think that Russia constitutes a major threat to German security, compared to 65 percent of Poles.[54] Nonetheless, we can observe a growing engagement of Germany in the BSR since 2014.

Territorial Defense Initiatives

The 2014 Wales Summit was the venue for major NATO decisions aimed at providing greater security for the BSR. Germany, Denmark, and Poland agreed to raise the level of readiness of the MNC headquarters to a High Readiness Force and gave the MNC command and control over the full range of Alliance missions in its northeastern region (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland) with the emphasis on Article 5 mutual defense operations. NATO also created the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The VJTF is composed of up to 5,000 troops (land, maritime, air, and special forces) ready for deployment within 48 to 72 hours. In 2019, Germany took the lead for the VJTF. NATO also increased the size of its Response Force from 25,000 to 40,000 personnel while maintaining the time for deployment at 30 days. Also, Berlin agreed to complement the European Deterrence Initiative launched by the United States in 2014 by providing a combat aviation brigade.

At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO decided to strengthen its defense capabilities on the eastern flank. Germany strongly supported this, mainly by leading the Lithuania-based multinational eFP battlegroup of 1,200 troops from 10 countries, a compromise between the expectations

of Alliance members from the region for a permanent NATO presence and those, like Germany, that argue against it based on the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Nevertheless, the four multinational battalions placed within the framework of the eFP mark NATO's first deployment of combat forces east of the former inner-German border and thus changing the nature of NATO's presence on its eastern flank.

Germans perceive Berlin's declaration to serve as a framework nation in the eFP as a way to reassure its Allies rather than as a German conviction to deter Russia.[55] Yet the German approach toward the eFP has evolved since 2016 and its military presence in the region has gradually expanded. In 2019, then–German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen announced the investment of a total of €110 million to improve military bases in Lithuania.[56] Vilnius is becoming Germany's major partner on the eastern flank as military-technical cooperation intensifies.

Military Exercises

Another important element of the German approach to the BSR is the participation in NATO exercises. TRIDENT JUNCTURE 18 in Norway and on the Baltic Sea was NATO's biggest exercise in recent years, with 50,000 troops participating. Germany sent about 8,500 Bundeswehr soldiers and several vehicles to the exercise, including about 100 battle tanks and armored personnel carriers. Two years later, NATO put together the DEFENDER EUROPE 2020 exercise, which was the biggest military exercise in Europe since the end of the Cold War, focusing on Germany, Poland, and the Baltic States. As the host nation, Germany's role in the exercise focused mainly on serving as a logistics hub for military units and on testing the German infrastructure needed to move NATO troops from the west to the BSR. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the size, scope, and date of DEFENDER EUROPE 2020 was modified, and the exercise moved to 2021.[57]

Military Mobility

One of the areas in which German engagement is most visible is the enhancement of military mobility across and beyond Europe. The EU and NATO recognize that the ability to move troops and equipment in a timely manner constitutes one of the major challenges to European security and is a necessary condition for the effective collective defense of the European continent, in particular NATO's eastern flank.[58] Germany is the major transit nation for large numbers of troops and military equipment from Western Europe to the BSR. The major challenges are infrastructure, including limitations of road surface, weight capacity, bridges capacity, and railway traffic limits, and procedural and legal barriers.[59] Germany's central location and dense transportation infrastructure place it in the key role of enhancing east/west mobility.

Current German projects are aimed at closing existing shortcomings in infrastructure (rails, roads, bridges) and speeding up the administrative and regulatory procedures necessary to move military assets. One of the key initiatives in this area is the "Military Mobility" project coordinated by the Netherlands and supported by Germany. The other is the "Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations" led by Germany. The former serves as the political-strategic platform to simplify and standardize cross-border military transport procedures while the latter aims for a multinational network based on existing logistic capabilities and infrastructure to decrease reaction time and increase capacities and sustainability for military operations across Europe.

In a major step to address the need for multinational collaboration, Germany in 2018 formed the Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC), located in Ulm. It facilitates the rapid movement

of forces across intra-European borders and works under the NATO Military Command Structure. JSEC played an active and well-recognized role in STEADFAST DEFENSE 21.

German involvement in enhancing military mobility corresponds well with its focus on prioritizing the civilian components of security.

Countering Cyber Threats and Disinformation

Germany and the BSR are targets of frequent Russian disinformation campaigns and cyberattacks.[60] The German government has reacted to the hostile cyber activities of Moscow and other actors by strengthening its foreign secret service's ability to collect data abroad (a legislative change curtailed by the Constitutional Court in May 2020).[61] It also established a separate Cyber and Information Domain Service within the Bundeswehr in June 2017. The goal is to use its 14,500 soldiers and civilian employees to integrate all Bundeswehr structures dealing with new technologies, cyber security, information technology, and psychological warfare. It is designed to be both offensive and defensive, although Germany's reluctance toward offensive action will probably constrain offensive operations. It should, however, enable the German military to react to the impact of digitalization on military forces by developing skill sets needed to plan and execute operations in the cyber domain to prevent (or at least mitigate) cyber threats and disinformation campaigns. Its commander, Vice Admiral Dr. Thomas Daum, sums it up well, "Our aim is to take a cohesive and comprehensive approach toward understanding a continuously advancing cyber and information domain so that we can meet the challenges of the digital age." Considering that the Bundeswehr was the target of more than 280,000 cyberattacks in January and February 2017 alone,[62] the launch of a separate service seems appropriate.

Maritime Security

Another change since 2014 is that NATO has paid greater attention to the maritime aspects of collective defense. Germany is active on this front and participates in the Framework Nations Concept to establish the multinational Baltic Maritime Component Command (BMCC) in Rostock, Germany. The new facility should generate expertise on the BSR, currently still missing within the Allied Maritime Command structure and will provide command and control for NATO maritime operations in the Baltic Sea in case of a crisis. The BMCC will provide common maritime and air pictures, naval exercises, and anti-submarine warfare capabilities in the Baltic region.

Out of the eight European Baltic Sea states (nine if Norway is included), Germany has by far the strongest navy.[63] Despite the limited readiness capacity of the German navy, the existing difference in power potential makes German active participation in effective regional coordination indispensable. According to one German naval officer, the "north Atlantic and the wider northern flank have returned to our attention as potential areas of operations. . . . The Baltic Sea has grown to a never-seen strategic significance in the past years."[64] The BMCC is planned to achieve initial operating capability in 2023 and full operating capability in 2025. Furthermore, in the mid-term perspective, the German navy plans to buy new equipment (such as multipurpose combat ships) as well as to modernize the German mine-warfare fleet.

Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG-1) is an element of NATO's standing naval maritime immediate reaction forces and operates primarily in the North Atlantic, North Sea, and Baltic Sea. In 2021, it consisted of one Canadian and one German tanker. SNMG-1 took part in the BALTOPS 2020 exercise alongside 19 NATO Allies and partners in the Baltic Sea[65] and visits the Baltic Sea at least once a year.

Despite growing German involvement in BSR security, ambiguity toward Russia continued until

2022. In fact, some within the political mainstream opposed the enhancement of the German involvement on the eastern flank, including in the BSR. Also, the above-mentioned SABER STRIKE 2016, which was carried out by the U.S. European Command, headquartered in Stuttgart, was bluntly criticized by then–German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. He stated that "anyone thinking a symbolic Panzer parade on the eastern border of the Alliance would enhance security, is wrong. . . . We are well advised not to provide cheap pretexts for a renewed old confrontation policy."[66] Evidence of this policy is visible in German reluctance to supply Ukraine with heavy military equipment, such as battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles. A not insignificant part of the German establishment, including many SPD politicians, fears that delivery of tanks to Ukraine could trigger an "irrational" escalation by Putin.[67]

"Zeitenwende"? German Policy Shifts After Russia Invades Ukraine

On February 27, 2022, 3 days after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Chancellor Scholz addressed the Bundestag, declaring February 24 the turn of the times (*Zeitenwende*) and announcing a departure from three longstanding German foreign policy pillars.

First, from military reluctance: Scholz announced that Germany would spend more than 2 percent of GDP on defense and, to that end, create a special budget (*Sondervermögen*) for the Bundeswehr, worth a staggering €100 billion.[68] This would catapult Germany to the top tier of global defense spenders.[69]

Second, the chancellor committed to increasing German troop numbers on NATO's eastern flank, and the first reinforcements have already arrived in Slovakia and Romania.[70] German troop numbers in the eastern flank remain low for now, but this can be expected to change.

Third, Scholz has agreed to send weapons to Ukraine, declaring a break with a long-established tradition of not supplying arms to warring parties.[71] However, translating the Zeitenwende into action is proving difficult. The government's declared intention to deliver weapons to Ukraine kicked off a debate about the types of military equipment to be exported. German indecisiveness has already drawn the ire of its European partners. The lack of speed is indicative of not only the magnitude of the policy shift but also the struggle that some among the German political elite (especially within the SPD) have in abandoning the failed policy of appeasement toward Russia.[72]

Another example of Germany's difficulty in pivoting its Russia policy more forcefully is its long insistence on maintaining Russian oil—and especially gas—imports. Although Russian oil—which plays a far less significant role for German industry than gas—was added to the EU sanction list, and the Nord Stream 2 project was finally declared dead, Germany never actually decided to stop importing Russian gas.[73] It was in fact the Russian government's decision to stop gas exports to Germany—a decision made more permanent by explosions of the Nord Stream I and II pipelines in a suspected sabotage in September 2022. The German economy relies heavily on gas imports, prompting the coalition government to tour the world—from Canada to Saudi Arabia—in search of replacements. At the same time, it announced a policy package worth €200 billion in October 2022 to protect companies and consumers from soaring energy costs. Some among the German political elite, such as Prime Minister of Saxony Michael Kretschmer, still openly advocate for a resumption of Russian gas imports after the end of the war.[74]

The German public seems more willing to move away from cheap Russian gas. As recent polls indicate, there is unequivocal and widespread support for all sanctions across the board and the increase in defense spending. Moreover, respondents showed overwhelming willingness to incur economic

Germany delivers IRIS-T SLM air defence system to Kiev. Image by: Matti Blume (Wikimedia Commons). April 27, 2018

hardship in the context of increased sanctions.[75]

Berlin claims to be Ukraine's biggest financial benefactor, supporting the country with around €2 billion in recent years via a myriad of different support schemes and funds.[76] Between January and October 2022, Germany has committed another €3.3 billion in bilateral financial, humanitarian, and military support—in addition to routing €3.38 billion via the EU. Germany is also hosting more than 1 million Ukrainian war refugees.[77] Nevertheless, its reluctance to provide Ukraine with substantial military support[78] and to support a gas embargo undermines Berlin's credibility as an ally not only in the eyes of Ukraine but also of many NATO countries.[79]

Conclusion

German BSR security policy reflects two overarching goals that are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, Germany aims to strengthen multilateral cooperation and to show more leadership in common defense structures within NATO and the EU. On the other hand, Germany's perception of Russia, and particularly its vision of a long-term strategic partnership, clearly diverges from that of its partners in the BSR. This has a tempering effect on German engagement in the region, to the displeasure of its regional allies.

The main challenge for German security policy with respect to the BSR (and beyond) seems to be the lack of a coherent strategy. German verbal assurances of its readiness to defend its eastern European allies are contradicted by the memory of the Cold War *Ostpolitik* that attached special importance to close cooperation and dialogue with Russia. Indeed, the "new Ostpolitik," called for by then-Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in 2018, reflects this ambiguity by calling for a European approach toward cooperation with Russia in the face of "dangerous silence" between Washington and Moscow, while taking into account the concerns of all member states—the

Baltics, Poland, and those in Western Europe.[80] German participation in the eFP and other activities aimed to enhance the security of the BSR and the concurrent energy dependence on Russia—and previous support for the Nord Stream II project—illustrate this dichotomy in practical terms.

This undermines German credibility as an ally. Yet German involvement on the eastern flank along with the increase in defense spending, continues to be not only a salient but also highly divisive issue among German political parties.[81] We should not expect a coherent BSR security strategy any time soon, particularly as these fissures extend to the prospective government coalition parties.

Germany's ambiguity and limited engagement in the BSR has several sources. Internally, a key hindering factor seems to be the lack of a cross-party consensus over major foreign and security related questions, such as the magnitude of defense spending (including maintenance issues), the commitment to the transatlantic alliance, support for the French-led idea of European strategic autonomy, and relations with Russia. Despite the reassuring declarations from then–Foreign Affairs Minister Maas that "Our neighbors in Poland and the Baltic can trust us to take their security needs as seriously as we take our own,"[82] the political reality in Germany is more complicated.

As this analysis shows, reassuring rhetoric from German policymakers and German engagement on the eastern flank are only beginning to develop and could be more substantial. At the same time, German policies regarding Nord Stream II and the Navalny case point out the existing ambiguity in relations with Moscow. At its heart is the remarkable consistency in Germany's medium-term and long-term strategic objective of achieving security with—not against—Russia.[83] The Russian invasion of Ukraine has turned this upside down and is a significant challenge to German foreign policy, which Germany is struggling to grapple with.

Moreover, the recently revived debate about nuclear deterrence illustrates the divide among (outgoing *and* expectedly incoming) governing coalition parties and German political elites on major security questions such as cooperation with the United States.[84] In June 2022, only 12 percent of Germans were still in favor of modernizing U.S. nuclear weapons in Germany. Almost as many were in favor of their withdrawal as in favor of maintaining the status quo. Seventy-one percent were against their country having access to its own nuclear weapons.[85] This stalemate restrains Germany's role in NATO and, in particular, on the eastern flank.

Another major challenge is disagreements between the United States and Germany.[86] Continued disagreements over key security issues have presented an increasing challenge to the BSR. Germany's historically rooted commitment to multilateralism contrasted quite significantly with the Trump and Biden paradigms of inter-state strategic competition with China and Russia. Such difficulties reflect a long-felt and often-lamented sentiment that Germany is not shouldering its fair share, particularly regarding its unmet promise to increase its defense spending to 2 percent of its GDP. Though recently Germany has pledged to meet this goal the implementation of Zeitenwende has proved to be a difficult process. Despite recent improvements in transatlantic relations, deeper divergence in strategic medium- and long-term objectives will continue to undermine the credibility of NATO, which remains the key security provider in Europe, including the BSR. Even with a new German government and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, one cannot expect the differences between Washington and Berlin to disappear. They have been papered over by Russian aggression but the fundamental differences in *Weltanschaaung* of the two states remain.

All the efforts described herein are necessary but not sufficient to deter further Russian aggression in Ukraine. As Russian President Putin becomes

more aggressive overseas and unpopular at home, he is stepping up international destabilization efforts to reinforce his situation at home. Because we will certainly see more Russian political warfare for the foreseeable future, the states in the greater BSR must not only increase their efforts but also increase regional cooperation to maintain peace and stability in the area. PRISM

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The Öresund or Øresund Bridge is a combined railway and motorway bridge across the Øresund strait between Denmark and Sweden. Image by: Nick-D (Wikimedia Commons). September 28, 2015

Denmark's Security Starts in the Baltic States

By Amelie Theussen

Danish security and defense policy strongly builds on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as its cornerstone. Since the 1990s, Denmark has pursued an active military role in international missions. In line with its military activism and Atlanticist orientation, the United States, United Kingdom, and France are Denmark's closest strategic partners. Yet several developments in recent years have forced the country to question its partnerships and re-evaluate its military priorities: the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the election of Donald Trump as U.S. President in 2016, Brexit, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. These stand out as major external influences on Danish policies. Additionally, a changing threat environment with an aggressive posturing by Russia (and non-military threats in the cyber realm and of hybrid nature) means that Denmark has made moves to strengthen its military capacities, contributing to NATO's overall deterrence posture as well as its total defense capacities to deter and defend against unconventional threats. While Denmark does not consider Russia a direct military threat against its own territory, it does regard Russia as directly threatening its neighbors and European security, and the rules-based international order through actions which analysts refer to as "political warfare."[1] Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Denmark has joined with the vast majority of European Union (EU) and NATO members in supporting Ukraine and condemning Russia for raging violations of international law.

Current Security and Defense Policy

Alliances

NATO is seen as the guarantor of Danish security—it is without a doubt the country's most important alliance. NATO's essential role for Danish security and the Danish commitment to maintaining and contributing to the Alliance both shape and inform Danish security policy in all aspects.[2] As the most recent government strategy for foreign and security policy points out, "NATO and a strong transatlantic bond [to the United States]

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are the guarantors for Denmark's and Europe's security" and the United States as "unrivalled and crucial partner" for Denmark.[3] The Danish focus on NATO as the primary alliance and cornerstone for Denmark's security is strengthened by the fact that Denmark, despite being a longstanding member of the European communities since 1973, has opt-outs from the EU that limit the country's ability to cooperate with the EU and its other member states in a few crucial areas. Most notably, for the purpose of this article, are the opt-outs regarding cooperation on justice and home affairs and defense (abolished in June 2022; more on this below). Additional opt-outs exist for the areas of EU citizenship and the euro.

In June 1992, the Danish population rejected the Maastricht Treaty in a referendum. The treaty aimed to deepen and expand European cooperation and included (among others) provisions for a common foreign and security policy, cooperation on matters of justice and home affairs and a common monetary union. This meant that European cooperation was no longer limited to the economic realm but instead turned into a broader political cooperation. Denmark was only able to ratify the Maastricht Treaty in spring 1993, after the government and the EU had negotiated and agreed on the four opt-outs in the Edinburgh Agreement during fall and winter 1992, and the population accepted the agreement in another referendum in the following year.[4]

The opt-outs mean that Denmark remains outside of most EU cooperation regarding defense, justice, and home affairs and retains its own currency, the Danish krone, and an independent monetary policy. In the field of justice and home affairs, Denmark participated if the cooperation was intergovernmental. However, the changes introduced in the Lisbon Treaty from 2009 meant that justice and home affairs cooperation became supranational, barring Denmark from participating. In practice, Denmark only participates in the cooperation on visa rules and the Schengen Agreement, where the country has a special agreement. For all other cooperation on border control, immigration policy, civil law, criminal justice, and the police, the country remains in general excluded. Yet for certain matters Denmark has parallel agreements (so-called *parallelaftaler*), for example, granting access to searches in Europol's database.

Furthermore, until the abolition of the defense opt-out in a referendum in June 2022, due to the opt-outs Denmark did not participate in parts of the EU's foreign and security policy that affect defense, and thus Denmark could not participate in military cooperation on the EU level (for example, the European Defense Agency). While the country thus did not participate in EU military missions, it does contribute to civilian missions (as well as missions where the civilian and military component can be clearly separated).[5] The consequences of the opt-outs have become more significant over the last decade as the EU has strengthened its cooperation on security and defense matters. A report by the Danish Institute for International Studies shows that the costs of the Danish opt-out were likely to rise over the coming years, as Denmark would have had no influence on decisions that directly affect the country's security interests or economic interests regarding defense industry cooperation. The defense opt-out does not prevent Denmark from making defense cooperation agreements with important partners outside of the EU framework. Moreover, Denmark already can take part in the areas of the new EU defense cooperation that fall under the European Commission's policy areas of industry, transportation, and research.[6] However, new security challenges (such as political warfare, cyber and hybrid threats, and the need for interoperability and mobility of forces) increasingly create areas where substantial ambiguity exists over the applicability of the opt-out.

In the report's assessment, the opt-outs are progressively limiting Denmark.[7] The opt-outs can be removed, but only after another referendum. In

The main aim and purpose of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO) is to strengthen the participating nations´ national defence, explore common synergies and facilitate efficient common solutions. Image by: Johannes Jansson (Wikimedia Commons). August 17, 2009

2015, a referendum was held to change the opt-out for justice and home affairs into an opt-in model, where Denmark could choose to opt-in to existing and future justice and home affairs legislation. This would have allowed Denmark to assess participation on a case-by-case basis.[8] But the referendum failed, so the opt-out remains. While there is rather broad agreement among policymakers and experts that the opt-outs are hindering Denmark from beneficial cooperation with other EU countries, until the spring of 2022 it seemed unlikely that another opt-out referendum would be held soon, and polls suggested that abolishing an opt-out through a referendum would be unlikely. This, however, changed radically with the Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. As reaction to the Russian aggression and the resulting war between Russia and Ukraine, the Danish government made an agreement together with several supporting and opposition parties—the National Compromise on Danish Security Policy (*National kompromis om dansk sikkerhedspolitik*). The agreement, published on March 6, 2022, outlines a number of actions to strengthen Danish security and defense in light of the new security situation in Europe. These include, among others, increasing the defense budget to reach 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2033 and a referendum to abolish the EU opt-out on defense. The referendum took place on June 1, 2022, and was successful in abolishing the opt-out; 66.9 percent of voters decided to get rid of the opt-out, with only 33.1 percent choosing to keep it in place. In fact, in all constituencies throughout Denmark, most voters voted to abolish the opt-out.[9]

Aside from being a staunch supporter of NATO, Denmark is active in a variety of defense cooperation initiatives outside NATO and EU frameworks, including the British Joint Expeditionary Force,

the French European Intervention Initiative, the German Framework Nation Concept, and the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO).

The UK has long been a close strategic partner for Denmark, visible in the close operational cooperation in Afghanistan and Iraq. The UK's decision to leave the EU, however, creates insecurity about the British contribution to future European security. That and the Trump Presidency turned Denmark's attention to France and Germany on security- and defense-related matters. Denmark and France share an active strategic military culture, characterized by the will and ability to conduct international interventions, and have shared operational experiences. Moreover, France has significantly increased its contribution and support for NATO, further aligning French and Danish interests.[10] Also, Germany is becoming a more interesting potential partner, albeit slowly. Germany does not share the same active strategic culture but instead has been passive in its security and defense policy, focusing on limited contributions to stabilization and reconstruction tasks. Nevertheless, Denmark and Germany have overlapping interests, especially regarding security in the Baltic Sea region (BSR). Germany is starting to take on a more active role. This creates potential for and an expectation of a deepening cooperation between the two countries in the future.[11]

Finally, Denmark participates in NORDEFCO together with the other Nordic countries. The relevance of NORDEFCO for Denmark has been debated over the years and complicated by diverging membership in NATO and the EU. Finland and Sweden are not members of NATO, and Norway and Iceland are not members of the EU. Danish interest in NORDEFCO has been rather limited until recently, but the changed threat perception of the BSR has changed this outlook to a certain extent.[12] Together with the Finnish and Swedish applications for NATO membership in 2022 and the abolition of the Danish defense opt-out from the EU, there is substantial potential for increased Nordic defense cooperation.

Threats

The current Danish Defense Agreement is from January 2018 and stretches until 2023. It represents a broad parliamentary consensus representing the views of the previous government (2015–2019) under Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and the three major opposition parties. The agreement provides a clear picture of the threat environment Denmark faces, highlighting four issues:

- a challenging and assertive Russia in NATO's eastern neighborhood
- continued instability in the Middle East and North Africa that drives militant Islamism and creates the basis for terrorism and irregular migration
- increased activity and climate change in the Arctic
- threats from cyberspace can have serious security and socioeconomic consequences, and influence operations can challenge democratic principles.[13]

In fact, three of these four aspects are relevant to the security situation in the BSR and the Danish security and defense approach to the region. Denmark's perception of Russia as a threat substantially changed after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the situation in Eastern Ukraine, and the nerve gas attack in Salisbury. In the most recent strategy for foreign and security policy, the Danish government points out that Russia continues to threaten its neighbors and actively undermines the European security architecture and democratic processes through various means, including cyberspace. The strategy states, "Russia has not changed its aggressive conduct in the Baltic Sea Region, and it is clear that the political leadership in Russia

wants a different Europe than the Europe built upon cooperation after the fall of the Berlin Wall."[14] The Danish government describes the situation with Russia and the Russian attempts to undermine the European order as "serious"[15] and notes that Russia works against the Danish interest of maintaining the rules-based international order. This position was strengthened further after Russian aggression against Ukraine and the resulting full-scale war. Nevertheless, the assessment remains that Russia does not pose a direct military threat to Denmark because it is not seen as willing to risk a military confrontation with NATO, even though Russia invaded Ukraine. Indeed, the Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen stated, "I strongly condemn Russia's attack. It's a terrible and unprovoked act that goes against the [United Nations] Charter and International Law."[16] The Danish government also deployed fresh forces to Eastern Europe as part of both the NATO Air Policing and the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) programs.[17]

The security situation in the Baltic Sea, North Atlantic, and Arctic is of direct relevance to the security of the Danish realm. It is in Danish interest to ensure free navigation in the BSR and to minimize tensions. Denmark's location has a crucial strategic role regarding access to the Baltic Sea; together with Sweden and Norway, it controls the main route of access to the BSR, the Øresund, as well as the Great and Little belts. Also, the island of Bornholm (and the archipelago Ertholmene) in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Poland belongs to Denmark and is the country's eastern-most territory. Historic fortifications in Elsinore, Copenhagen, and Bornholm illustrate the enduring importance of geography for anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD), even though it is usually the Russian A2/AD capabilities in the BSR that are being considered.[18] Denmark would most likely not be a frontline state in a possible military confrontation with Russia but would instead serve as a troop staging area.[19] The North Atlantic is of strategic interest to ensure the safe passage of NATO troop reinforcements from North America and due to its connection to the Arctic region, where Greenland and the Faroe Islands are both autonomous territories within the Kingdom of Denmark. The rising geopolitical uncertainty and the Russian military buildup in the region are thus viewed with concern about rising tensions.[20]

Contrary to other states in the BSR (especially the Baltic states), Denmark does not focus exclusively on the BSR, but rather on Russian political warfare in general (for example, cyber attacks and disinformation operations). Furthermore, the country's security and defense policy is to a large extent focused on the North (that is, the Arctic and North Atlantic) and the Middle East and North Africa (that is, security concerns related to terrorism and migration).

Danish Approach to Maintaining BSR Security

The 2018 Defense Agreement set the goal of increasing the annual defense budget up to 4.8 billion kroner by 2023,[21] and an additional agreement in January 2019 added another 1.5 billion kroner for 2023. This means that Denmark will spend 1.5 percent of its GDP on defense in 2023, compared to 1.2 percent in 2018.[22] These financial resources were meant to strengthen the Danish military's contribution to NATO's collective deterrence, support international operations, ensure the country's national security, and bolster total defense (for example, cyber capabilities and rescue and emergency services). Yet despite this increase, under the last defense agreement Denmark would not have reached NATO's 2 percent GDP spending target. First the national compromise on Danish security policy—agreed on March 6, 2022, in the wake of the Russian aggression against Ukraine—explicitly states that Denmark will reach the 2 percent spending target in 2033. While this provides a concrete

target to achieve the 2 percent, it is also criticized for not being fast enough considering the changed security situation. Instead, the country emphasizes its active contributions and high levels of involvement in a variety of international missions as its important contributions to NATO. While Denmark had parliamentary elections on November 1, 2022, and negotiations about the formation of a new governing coalition are ongoing at the time of writing (December 2022), the fact that these agreements are generally made by a broad parliamentary consensus means that the likelihood of any additional renegotiations before the defense agreement ends in 2023 is rather small. However, once the new government has been formed, negotiations for the new defense agreement will commence and most likely be a major priority in the spring of 2023.

The explicit goal of the current defense agreement is to ensure that "together with NATO, the Danish Armed Forces have sufficient potency, weight and robustness to deter and prevent other countries from attacking our allies—and ultimately ourselves."[23] Already in 2017, then Danish Defense Minister Claus Hjort Frederiksen made clear that "as close NATO allies, [Denmark's] security starts in the Baltic States."[24] This clearly shows the Danish understanding that the measures undertaken are meant to deter Russian (and other) aggression, to avoid the "bang," so to speak. For this purpose, under the current agreement that ends next year, a deployable brigade has been established, frigates are equipped with area air defense missiles, an anti-submarine capacity will be established, and special operations strengthened. Demonstrating that it is a committed and engaged NATO core member state is crucial for Denmark, considering that the country's security is guaranteed by the Alliance. Hence, the ability of Danish forces to contribute substantially and purposefully to international operations is improved through increasing air transport capacity, the financial reserves for international operations, and the Peace and Stabilization Fund. Additionally, a light infantry battalion was established to serve both collective defense efforts and international operations.[25]

If deterrence fails, there is a clear understanding that NATO's collective defense requires Denmark (together with its Allies) to be able to defend the Baltic countries. The geographic position of the country means that it might serve as a staging area for troops and reinforcements, while Danish forces are deployed abroad. Thus, there is a need to strengthen domestic structures to protect allied soldiers, Danish territory, and crucial infrastructure. Consequently, the Home Guard and the Total Defense Force have been strengthened. While the negotiations for the next defense agreement have not yet officially started, a further strengthening of Danish capabilities and the country's security and defense posture with a focus on the BSR and Arctic is expected.

Military Presence

To help strengthen NATO's deterrence posture in the BSR, Denmark is actively contributing with its armed forces. Denmark provides up to 200 troops to the British-led eFP in Estonia, together with France, Belgium, and Iceland.[26] Such a contribution was made in 2018, 2020, and again in 2022 with around 200 soldiers stationed in Tapa, about 70 km outside of Tallinn. In 2021, as in all uneven years, Denmark contributed with a smaller number of staff officers.[27]

Denmark also serves as a framework nation together with Estonia and Latvia for the Multinational Division North Headquarters (MND-N), with participation from Canada, the UK, and Lithuania. The headquarters is in two places: Ādaži, Latvia, and Karup, Denmark. Based on existing extensive bilateral cooperation between Denmark and the Baltic states (the so-called Brigade Project), the Danish division was transformed into MND-N in the spring of 2019, and

in October 2020 NATO approved MND-N as a NATO Headquarters and as part of the NATO force structure. Its main purpose is to support defense planning of the Baltic states, and the coordination of regional military activities, including eFP forces.[28] Similarly, in 1999 Denmark, together with Germany and Poland, founded a multinational corps headquarters in Poland, which later became part of NATO's force structure and today is known as Multinational Corps Headquarters North East.[29]

Additionally, Denmark regularly leads NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission.[30] Denmark contributed with 4 F-16 aircraft and around 60 personnel from September to December 2021 and again in early 2022. Denmark also participates regularly in Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) and NATO Standing Mine Counter Measures Group 1. The Danish frigate *Peter Willemoes* participated in SNMG1 from January until the end of April as an extra contribution, additional to Denmark's planned contributions. Moreover, the country deploys one officer each to both the Latvian and Lithuanian NATO Force Integration Units and one senior adviser each to the Estonian-led NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CoE) and the Latvian-led NATO Strategic Communication CoE.

Denmark is also part of the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). Although seen as a supplement to NATO, it became fully operational in 2017 as part of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.[31] In the context of the JEF and NATO, Denmark also has participated actively in a range of exercises focusing on the BSR over the past years.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Denmark took concrete steps to increase its contributions to NATO's deterrence and defense posture. The country got parliamentary approval to offer for deployment a battalion battle group up to 1,000 personnel; a frigate contribution; air force contributions, such as a surveillance aircraft, radar operators, and a mobile air defense radar; support forces and staff contributions to NATO headquarters; and an adapted mandate for the use of force for deployed troops.[32] In autumn 2022, the Danish frigate *Esbern Snare* participated in NATO's Task Group 441.01, which is part of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.[33] In May 2022, Denmark deployed an 800-personnel strong battalion battle group to Latvia to contribute to NATO's defense plans and readiness.[34]

Total Defense

Denmark's multiple military contributions in NATO's defense and deterrence posture in the BSR are one way of addressing the threat of an aggressive Russia, but its threat assessment also pointed at Russia's cyber and disinformation operations and attempts to undermine the rules-based international order and European security. Therefore, Danish officials do not consider it sufficient to only rely on military tools in addressing such political warfare.[35]

In Denmark, *TotalForsvaret* (Total Defense) is a cooperation among four components: the Danish military, the Home Guard, the police, and emergency services. The origins of the Danish Total Defense can be traced to World War II when it became clear that the defense of the country could not rely solely on the military but also needed to include other parts of society. By coordinating civilian and military efforts, it aims to ensure the effective and balanced use of resources during a catastrophe, crisis, or war, with the overall purpose to keep Danish society functioning.[36] Total Defense has always been a part of Danish emergency preparedness. In the absence of a conventional military threat after the Cold War, it focused on how military resources can support civilian society in peacetime in case of large-scale accidents, natural disasters, and other catastrophes,[37] and on how military and civilian cooperation can support international operations in war and peacetime.[38] An example of this are the varying responsibilities given to the Home Guard, a volunteer organization. Part of

Danish Home Guard 1st Lt. Tim Dalvang Andersen instructs a 50-minute presentation on orienteering during the U.S. Army Basic Instructor Course at Nymindegab Camp in Norre Nebel, Denmark. Image by: 2nd Lt. Rebecca Linder (Wikimedia Commons). July 7, 2016

Denmark's armed forces, it is similarly divided into three branches: army, navy, and air force. Founded in the aftermath of World War II by a group of resistance fighters, the Home Guard served to support the Danish armed forces during the Cold War, with a clear focus on territorial defense. However, in the 1990s the focus shifted to include more civilian support functions in line with the changed threat environment.[39] Today, its main tasks are to support the military forces, both domestically and internationally, as well as the policy, emergency services, and other Danish authorities.[40]

The notion of Total Defense received renewed attention in the aftermath of the terror attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 in Bali in 2002, with a focus on unconventional threats. Traditional territorial defense had become less important and was replaced with a focus on international operations to defend Denmark from unconventional threats where they originated. Accordingly, the 2005 Defense Agreement focused on restructuring conscription away from traditional territorial defense focused on mobilization, as other skills and competences had become more important in the context of the fundamentally different threat environment in the early 2000s.[41]

Recently, however, considering the ever-changing threat environment, the focus has shifted again toward increased political warfare in the gray zone between peace and conflict as well as Russia's

assertive behavior. This is reflected in the move to establish a total force concept, *Totalstyrkekoncept*, as the organizational basis for integrating reserve forces into the established structures of the armed forces and Home Guard in 2014.[42] The Total Force concept and its integration of full-time employees, reservists, and volunteers allow the Danish armed forces a more effective and flexible way to collect, adapt, provide, and deploy the necessary competences to meet the different tasks and challenges covering the whole spectrum from peace to war.[43] Additionally, Danish Total Defense received renewed attention in the last defense agreement: an increased intake of up to 500 additional conscripts per year provides more conscripts for the national emergency preparedness service and the obligation to serve another six months in the Total Defense Force was expanded to 5 years after completing conscription.[44] If necessary, in the event of crisis or war, the Total Defense Force can be activated together with the Home Guard to undergo further security and force protection training. This includes an ability to call on former employees should the need arise. This is part of a larger initiative to strengthen the Home Guard's and Total Defense Force's ability to mobilize. In an exceptional situation, such as a large-scale crisis or war, the two forces could mobilize around 20,000 troops that could be deployed for host-nation support on 30-day notice,[45] signifying a return to traditional territorial defense focused on mobilization capabilities. Especially in the context of a potential conflict with Russia, it is crucial that Denmark provide host-nation support for the Allied forces, serve as troop-staging area, and protect Danish infrastructure at the same time.[46]

However, Denmark's new approach to Total Defense is plagued by several limitations, especially in comparison to other Nordic countries. The current structure is a set of ad hoc ministerial relationships rather than its own organizational structure. The approach is based on the principle of sectoral responsibility, where each individual sector and its respective authorities ensure emergency preparedness in maintaining critical infrastructure and societal functions during a crisis or conflict. While the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (*Politiets Efterretningstjenste*, PET) offers advice to the individual sectors based on its threat assessments,[47] there is no overarching organizational structure in place. Only the prime minister's office and its emergency response group[48] can change and direct the individual ministry's planning and prioritization. Additionally, it is characterized by a mismatch between the lofty political ambitions and limited financial framework: Risking "the Total Defense Force . . . being undermanned, sparsely equipped, and lacking the core military capabilities to fill its role in the host nation support operation."[49] For successful implementation of the new total force concept, it is crucial that a more specific political and legal framework is devised, preferably locating the responsibility for the Total Defense Force clearly with the Danish armed forces to establish clearer priorities and an understanding of its role and importance in ensuring Denmark's security and societal resilience in the future.[50]

Interestingly, the newest defense agreement also considers how to strengthen national emergency management in order "to utilize the full potential of overall resources and capabilities."[51] More resources in terms of additional conscripts and money have been granted. The emergency services used to have their own political agreements,[52] and their inclusion in the current defense agreement is another sign that the importance of a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach to contemporary security challenges has been recognized. Also, the agreement's considerations on the threat in cyberspace bridge the public and private space and exhibit a Total Defense approach. Danish society is one of the most digitalized societies in the world, making it dangerously vulnerable to cyber attacks on the public and private

sector and individual citizens for both political and economic goals. These attacks threaten to undermine the foundations of democracy. Defense in cyberspace must thus be "based on closer interaction between both the public and the private sector, with a view to enhancing the protection of critical national infrastructure, e.g. within telecommunications, energy, health, finance, and transportation."[53]

There are two main Danish intelligence services: the PET as part of the police handling domestic matters and the *Efterretningstjenste* (FE) as part of the armed forces handling foreign intelligence. Additionally, there is the Intelligence Regiment (*Efterretningsregimentet*, EFR), which is part of the Royal Danish Army. To address cyberspace threats, the Center for Cyber Security was set up in 2012 as part of the FE.

The Center for Cyber Security advises public authorities and private companies on how to prevent, respond to, and protect against cyber attacks. Among its chief responsibilities are threat assessments; the supervision of the telecommunication sector regarding information security and preparedness; as well as the provision of information, advice, and guidelines regarding preventive measures strengthening cyber security. The center's Network Security Service monitors Internet traffic and reports and assists in cases of possible attacks.[54] As part of the defense agreement, in 2018 the center created the Cyber Situation Centre under its existing Network Security Service, with the aim to provide a 24/7 situational awareness and serve as the national contact point in relation to the EU Network and Information Security Directive.[55]

Since 2015, Denmark has had a national strategy for information and cyber security. The most recent strategy from December 2021 aims to strengthen Danish cyber capabilities (in line with the defense agreement) through four strategic objectives: protecting vital societal function, improving and prioritizing levels of skills and management, strengthening the cooperation between the public and private sectors, and participating in the international fight against cyber threats.[56] The strategy is to be implemented through 34 initiatives, to which the government has allocated 270 million kroner (about $38 million).[57]

In terms of critical functions, Denmark has one of the highest levels of security in the world regarding its energy supply. It has been energy self-sufficient since 1997, and half of the country's demand for electricity is met by renewable sources such as wind and solar power. The country also has some of Europe's strongest supply links to neighboring countries.[58] Since 2006, Denmark has imported 1.72 billion cubic meters of gas from Russia through Germany. Until recently, Denmark resold the gas. Due to a renovation of Denmark's largest gas field (Tyra Field) between 2019 and 2023, however, the country relied on this Russian supply to cover somewhere between 35 to 50 percent of the Danish demand.[59] The Tyra Field is expected to reopen in winter 2023/2024 and its production capability will exceed Danish demand. Additionally, Denmark is increasing its production of bio-gas and will resume its role as energy exporter once the Tyra Field is reopened.[60] Energy security has been the subject of a high-profile debate surrounding the construction of the gas pipeline Nord Stream 2, which serves to export Russian gas to Germany through the Baltic Sea. Since this pipeline runs through Danish waters near Bornholm, Denmark had the possibility to veto the construction of the pipeline through its territorial waters. After the Ukraine crisis, the Danish Parliament decided that security concerns and foreign policy interests should be a part of the planned project's assessment, together with environmental and economic concerns. Under unofficial American pressure, Denmark resisted approving the route for 2 ½ years, but finally endorsed the pipeline in 2019.[61] In any case, even continued Danish resistance would most likely not have meant the end of the pipeline project, but a re-routing instead. With the opening

of the Baltic Pipe pipeline in the autumn of 2022, Norway is Denmark's primary source for gas.[62]

Despite the Center for Cyber Security, national strategies, and the country's (near) energy self-sufficiency, Denmark is challenged by the lack of a concrete definition of critical infrastructure, the principle of sectoral responsibility, and coordination issues. The debate about Huawei and the 5G network also highlighted the issue of ownership of critical infrastructure. Currently, Denmark has no answers to these questions,[63] but answers are urgently needed to ensure Denmark has the right tools to address political warfare and other threats.

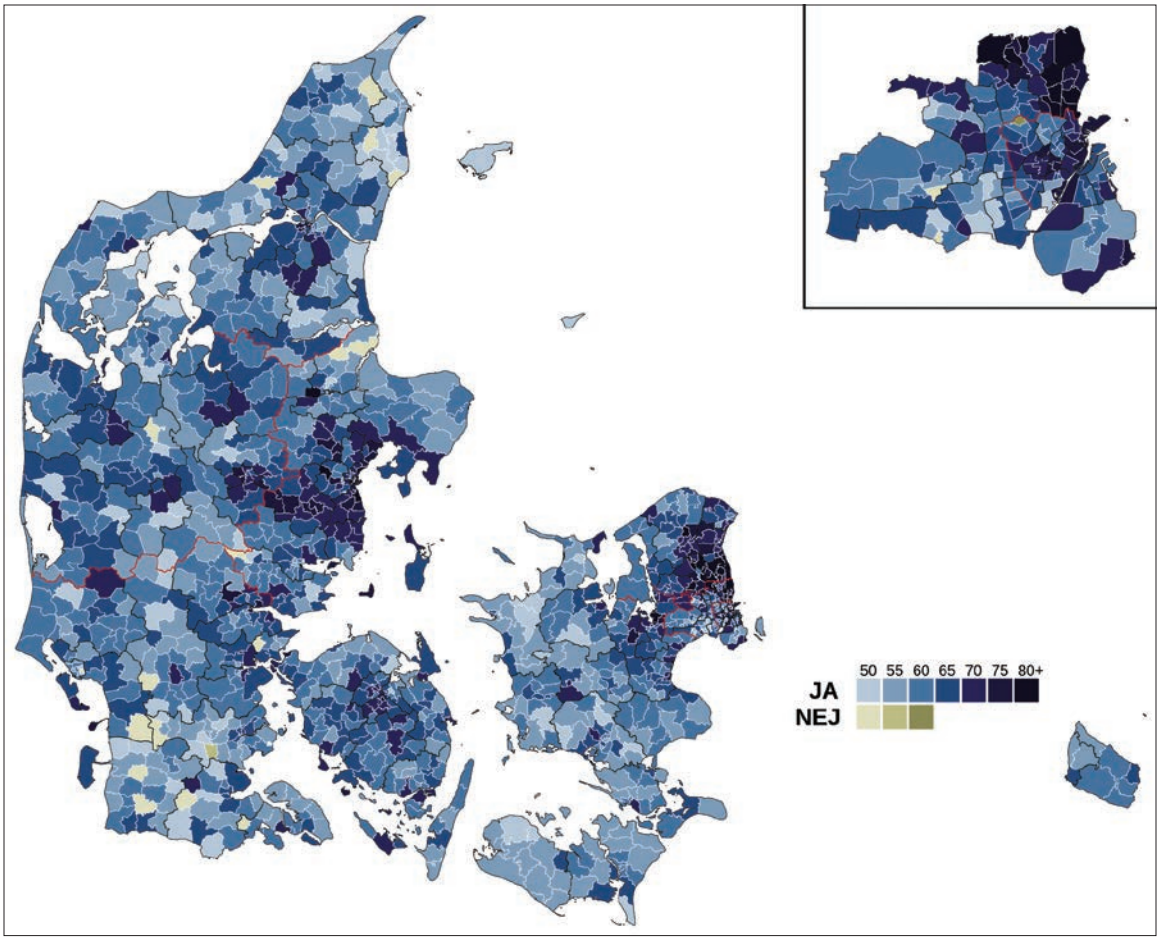
Despite its weaknesses, the Danish approach to Total Defense has shifted in line with the threats the country is facing and returned to territorial defense and strengthening military and civilian cooperation. Denmark's contemporary Total Defense addresses the new security challenges in two ways: deterrence and response. Total defense increases "deterrence by denial" by strengthening society's resilience and contributes to deterrence through punishment by mobilizing larger forces and offensive capabilities. In addition, reaction capabilities to such attacks are improved, mitigating their effects on society. However, to ensure its security in the future, Denmark should test its new Total Defense set-up with exercises. Likewise, it is crucial that Denmark continues to strengthen and streamline cooperation and coordination between the different sectors and respective authorities.

The Effect of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on Denmark

Denmark assists Ukraine with both substantial financial humanitarian aid (so far over 650 million kroner through a variety of measures) and military equipment, such as anti-tank weapons, security equipment, first-aid kits, and a mobile hospital. Already before the Russian invasion, the Danish military was involved with instructors, advisers, officers, and interpreters in training and advising Ukrainian forces under the Canadian-led Operation *Unifier* and the British-led Operation *Orbital*.[64] While the training on Ukrainian territory was suspended, Denmark contributes to a British-led training project for Ukrainian recruits and will also assist Ukraine by training Ukrainian soldiers in Denmark.[65]

A short time after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Center for Cyber Security came out with a warning about the possibility of increased cyber attacks in the context of the war between Russia and Ukraine and requested Danish companies to strengthen their IT security. In May 2022 the Center raised the level of threat for a destructive cyber attack against Denmark to medium, after cyber attacks had been reported by European NATO Allies.[66] The Center also indicates that any escalation of the conflict toward a military confrontation between NATO and Russia would increase the threat significantly.[67]

On the political level a significant change happened with the *National Compromise on Danish Security Policy* from March 6, 2022, mentioned above. In the agreement the Danish government and a broad majority of parties represented in the Danish parliament[68] agreed on a range of measures to ensure Denmark is equipped to handle the changed security situation and to address Russia's aggression. The measures include an increase in the defense budget of an additional 3.5 billion kroner per year for the next 2 years, the aim to reach the goal to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense agreed upon within NATO by 2033, and most significantly to hold a referendum to abolish the Danish defense opt-out from the EU.[69] As described herein, the referendum was held on June 1, 2022, and the abolition of the defense opt-out signifies a major change in Danish security and defense policy. This change in Denmark's security and defense alliances and the massive shift of European security caused by the war between Russia and Ukraine will have a major effect



A map showing the results of the 2022 Danish referendum to abolish the Danish "Opt-out" from EU cooperation on security and defense matters. Image by: Gust Justice (Wikimedia Commons). March 6, 2022

on the negotiations of the new defense agreement in 2023. Denmark has taken concrete steps and increased its contributions to NATO's deterrence and defense posture, and it is widely expected that the next defense agreement will signify a further strengthening of Danish security and defense.

Conclusion

The new threat environment—with an increasingly aggressive Russia that is clearly willing to violate international law—requires a comprehensive approach. This is reflected in the current defense agreement, which represents a substantial boost of resources for Danish security and defense policy. It has strengthened the Danish contribution to NATO's collective deterrence and defense posture and refocused the Danish approach to Total Defense by strengthening societal resilience and mobilization readiness.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and resulting war has caused a significant change in the perception of the European security environment. Consequently, Denmark made the choice to abolish its opt-out from EU cooperation on security and defense matters, increased defense spending, committed to reach the 2 percent target in 2033, and increased its contributions

to NATO's deterrence and defense posture. In 2023, the Denmark's major political parties will negotiate the country's new defense agreement. It was already determined that the agreement will reach over a 10-year period, in contrast to the more usual 5 years of the past defense agreements. A substantial increase in budget and capabilities is expected, but its extent and the prioritization of tasks and capabilities remains to be seen. PRISM

Notes

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