

NATO Expansion and the Price of Deterrence in the 21st Century

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Abstract

NATO is required to protect each Alliance member. Based on current political and military conditions in the Baltic States, NATO can no longer successfully deter Russian aggression as revealed by recent open source war games conducted by RAND. NATO would be left with nothing with bad options if Russia pursued a campaign similar to its efforts in Ukraine. Therefore, NATO must continue to adapt to the 21st Century and a resurgent Russia. This adaptation would include a military force capable of deterring Russia's Western Military District, broadening its exercise program, and a earmarking a force capable of relieving the deterrent force. These military options would be supported by a NATO information campaign and political commitments. NATO must consider Russian interests and how best to work with and around President Vladimir Putin's current administration.

NATO Expansion and the Price of Deterrence in the 21st Century

I believe the U.S. already understands and will understand more and more that only a strong Russia will respond to the genuine interests of the United States.

—Vladimir Putin¹

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States regrettably relegated Russia to the political sidelines despite its centuries-long historical impact on European affairs, seat on the UN Security Council and huge nuclear arsenal. Simultaneously, the West collectively failed to fully integrate Russia into western institutions. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its crumbling economy created conditions for the eventual rise of fervent Russian nationalism. The West's inability to cultivate a closely aligned Russia now has strategic ramifications in 2016 and beyond.

In the aftermath of the Cold War and German reunification, NATO and the United States demobilized hundreds of thousands of forward stationed Soldiers and discarded standing general defense plans that were regularly exercised demonstrating real deterrent effect against the Soviet threat. In a series of RAND corporation war games between 2014 and 2015, David Shlapak and Michael Johnson concluded that Russian Federation forces operating from the Western Military District and Kaliningrad Oblast would capture all three Baltic States' capitals in 36-60 hours of active combat operations.² Based on current force postures between NATO and the Russian Federation, the United States and NATO cannot militarily deter Russia aggression against NATO's Baltic member states. There would be serious strategic ramifications for the United States and NATO if Putin's Russia decided to test NATO's Article V commitments based on its military actions in Georgia and Ukraine.

Despite Russia's local superiority in the Baltic States, there is still time to change both political and military calculus to prevent hostilities. From a military perspective, NATO and the United States must change the military calculus that the RAND survey illustrated with regard to Russia's military capabilities resident within its Western Military District. NATO basing requirements, military force levels, and mission command authorities must change to successfully deter Russian capabilities. NATO and the United States must aggressively pursue an information campaign amplifying President Barack Obama's Tallinn speech on September 3, 2014. In his remarks he stated, "Article 5 is crystal clear: An attack on one is an attack on all. So if, in such a moment, you ever ask again, "who will come to help," you'll know the answer -- the NATO Alliance, including the Armed Forces of the United States of America!"³ On the diplomatic front, the West must also better recognize Russian strategic interests. Viewed from Moscow, NATO expansion and American capabilities threaten Russia's existence and interests. Through transparency and political realism, the West can reduce friction with a Russian Federation that is a global competitor again.

The Current Military Reality in the Baltic States

David Shlapak and Michael Johnson's RAND study appears to be one of the best open source war game products available to analyze the current military posture. It correlated closely with other open source documents available, though other sources may provide a different analysis. Simple geography gives Russia a marked advantage in a failed deterrence scenario. All three nations are severely exposed to Russian military power. From the Russian border to the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian capitals is between 200 and 300 kilometers – a quick one day drive for mechanized forces.⁴ Although there are some physical barriers (lakes, rivers and

forests), the highway network does allow for rapid ground movement. The Kaliningrad Oblast and Baltic fleet provide Russia with an extended area access denial (A2D) envelopment that can interdict NATO air, sea and ground reinforcements.⁵ The bottom line is that the Baltic nations are located at extended distances from the majority of NATO lines of communication and all routes to reinforce them from Central Europe are tenuous.



Figure 1. NATO's Old and New Front Lines⁶

The Baltic States' border with Russia is roughly equivalent to the intra-German border during the Cold War. In the 1980s, NATO defended the German border with eight Army Corps with 20 divisions. Today, the Baltic States have nine infantry (light and motorized) battalions and two mechanized battalions, plus whatever Allied rotational forces are in country.⁷ According to the *Army Times*, these rotations are typically of battalion or company size for the United States from the 2d Cavalry Regiment (Stryker), the 173d Airborne Brigade or the regionally aligned Armored Brigade. Other NATO countries also have rotational forces in the area of operations, but their presence in country is limited in time and numbers. In the Russian Western

Military District, RAND estimates that four tank, five mechanized, five motorized, eight airborne and three naval infantry battalions are likely available.⁸ These battalions possess significant firepower and mobility advantages when compared to their Baltic counterparts. Additionally, Russia will have the preponderance of artillery with up to ten artillery battalions supporting their possible maneuver plans.⁹ NATO will not have air superiority. Russia will have the capability to impose local air superiority whenever it wishes to support operations and subject NATO ground formations to air attack.¹⁰ Russia naval and air assets will prevent NATO from using the Baltic Sea as a reliable line of communication. In RAND's war games, Russian advantages in ground maneuver and joint fires enabled it to rapidly destroy NATO military formations and seize critical objectives. NATO reinforcements did not arrive in time to alter Russian military gains.¹¹

As it stands now, Russia could feasibly seize all three Baltic nations and force NATO to acquiesce to their aggression, counter-attack to eliminate Russian occupying forces, or escalate the conflict through other means. All three choices are less optimal and significantly more costly than pure pre-conflict deterrence.¹² NATO and the United States must change the military calculus in the Baltic in order to successfully deter Russian military capabilities and its inherent geographic advantages. This is not a US problem, it is a NATO problem.

First and foremost, NATO and the United States must forge political consensus within the Alliance (and within their domestic governments as well) in order to meet the defense spending goals agreed upon at the NATO summit in Wales in 2014. According to US defense officials, only four NATO countries, the US, UK, Greece, and Estonia, will

meet 2 percent GDP spending goals in 2015.¹³ While the Ukraine crisis spurred planned increases in Eastern Europe, the rest of the Alliance has not followed suit. As of late 2015, American defense spending accounts for 70 percent of the Alliance's defense spending, 20 percent more than during the Cold War.¹⁴ With the Russian Federation steadily modernizing its military despite its oil price depressed economy, NATO must match Russian modernization and current capabilities to provide effective deterrence. US political leadership will be required to forge consensus throughout the Alliance, but this is just the start of the problem.

If and when NATO meets its spending obligations, NATO military readiness and capabilities must be integrated. Certain deployment authorities should be delegated to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) to better respond to hybrid threats prior to conventional hostilities. In response to emerging threats in 2003, NATO created the NATO Response Force (NRF) that consists of 13,000 to 20,000 troops. Operational command of this force alternates between NATO's two standing joint force commands in Brunssum, The Netherlands and Naples, Italy. It is directly controlled by the SACEUR but can only be deployed after approval by the Atlantic Council.¹⁵ This slows its ability to deploy quickly. Additionally, it has not deployed in large numbers on an emergency deployment exercise (EDRE) situation. NATO should authorize the SACEUR to deploy this force as he sees fit within NATO's area of operations based on military conditions in lieu of complete political understanding. Additionally, SACEUR should have this authority with not just the NRF, but designated national forces on a rotational basis as well. These measures would help deter Russia from resorting to

hybrid (read deniable) military actions such as those that they successfully accomplished in Crimea.

After the Ukraine crisis, NATO created the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). This is a joint force headquarters consisting of a multifunctional brigade sized element consisting of five maneuver battalions, maritime, air, a chemical/nuclear battalion and special operations forces.¹⁶ It is capable of deploying in 48 hours. This makes it a more credible deterrent force than the NRF; however, this force's capability to deploy in 48 hours is still not quick enough to get to the Baltic States if Russia achieves strategic surprise as it has done with several snap exercises conducted by the Western Military District. Should Russia again achieve strategic surprise, even the VJTF will not arrive in the Baltic theater of operations quick enough to alter the ground situation.

If NATO's standing response and Baltic State national forces are insufficient to deter Russia, then NATO needs to pursue a different strategy. Based on current mission statement defined by NATO's Article V mutual defense clause and the resources available to the Alliance as whole, this is not an insurmountable problem. In the RAND study, their war games indicated that NATO required seven maneuver brigades, three of them armored, backed with NATO air and naval power to slow down the Russian offensive.¹⁷

NATO should deploy a standard rotational joint force operating in the Baltic nations. One NATO multinational corps could take the joint task force headquarters for one year. From its standing force pool, NATO could then rotate brigade combat teams and enabling assets in direct coordination with the Baltic States' defense forces on six,

nine or twelve month rotations depending on national caveats. From non-Baltic States, NATO should be able to generate armored brigade combat teams and enablers as rotational forces, allowing Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to concentrate their armed forces on homeland defense. This puts a large rotational force, not capable of offensive operations, on the ground prior to hostilities. These forces could then practice 1980s REFORGER-like (Return of Forces to Germany) exercises designed to integrate each rotating force into the general defense plan.

Combined with this rotational force, NATO should consider increasing the Baltic nations' firepower and mobility resident within their military formations through subsidies and equipment support. Based on the terrain, all three nations need a mixed capability to defend in open and complex terrain sets with both mechanized and light infantry formations. These forces must provide the strategic defensive depth within their national borders to counter potential hybrid threats that Russian Special Forces have successfully implemented in Georgia and especially Ukraine.

NATO will need to modernize critical capabilities in order to counter certain Russian capacities. First, NATO units will need to take a hard look at the integration of air defense assets within its maneuver formations. In the US, manpower requirements stripped air defense assets from every maneuver brigade. In a NATO-Russia conflict, especially in the Baltic States, NATO ground units will need to provide their own tactical air defense coverage in addition to theater integrated air defenses. In RAND's war games, Russia hammered NATO ground units with joint fires.¹⁸ Second, NATO's maneuver formations need active defense suites (ADS) to counter Russian anti-tank missiles (ATGM). Latest generation Russian "Kornet" ATGM's can penetrate the

M1A2's armor with a five to eight kilometer range. This generates a range advantage for Russian maneuver units equipped with it. Third, the United States needs an extended range FGM-114 Javelin missile. Both the 2d Cavalry Regiment and 173d Airborne's primary tank killing system is this missile. The Javelin's relatively short range puts US forces inside Russian engagement zones. Finally, NATO must develop better electronic warfare (EW) capabilities resident within ground formations. While NATO maintains tremendous capacity to conduct EW, much of it resides within the joint air component. Brigade combat teams do not have the means to find Russian EW suites without help from higher headquarters' assets and they should have the means.

NATO should also develop a credible relief (counter-attack) force based in central Europe, possibly assigned to 1st German-Netherlands Corps in Munster, Germany or Multi-National Corps Northeast in Szczecin, Poland. This formation should also be a Corps-sized element, most likely consisting of US, German, French, British and Polish mechanized units. This formation would provide a second echelon of sufficient size to render effective relief of NATO forces stationed further east. Part of this formation's mission will have to be neutralization of the Kaliningrad Oblast. It is not required to occupy the oblast, but it is necessary to neutralize the effects Russian Federation forces can exert from within it. It will need to be able to conduct offensive unified land operations at distances exponentially greater than Britain's XXX Corps did in Operation Market-Garden in September 1944. If required, this formation must succeed, unlike the Allies at Arnhem.

When reviewing potential deployments, the Conventional Forces on Armed Forces in Europe Treaty should be considered. Initially signed in 1990, it was updated

again from 26-31 May 1996. This treaty limited the locations and numbers of conventional combat systems that Russia and NATO are allowed to maintain in Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic. Both sides were limited to 16,500 battle tanks and 27,300 armored combat vehicles operated by active forces. Additional combat platforms could be held in storage and the treaty included a verification regime.¹⁹ However, this treaty is no longer practically enforced by either side. NATO declined to ratify an updated treaty after Russian operations in Georgia and its continued military presence in Moldova. Russia refused to abide by the treaty after continued NATO expansion east starting in 2007. In 2015, Moscow announced, "The Russian Federation has taken the decision to halt its participation in meetings of the [consulting group] from March 11, 2015. Therefore, Russia is ending its actions in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, announced in 2007, completely."²⁰ Although the treaty may still be on the books, with the Russian Federation's withdrawal, the treaty no longer limits NATO deployments in any way.

Most of these recommendations do not require additional forces; they do require reorganizing the Alliance's combat forces and the will to maximize their defensive effectiveness and deterrent value. They require additional funding for readiness, training and ensuring interoperability. They require political will to station forces forward against a focused threat. They do require NATO to adapt to Russian strengths. These measures require NATO members to authorize the SACEUR to deploy and support national forces operating in both the Baltic covering force as well as the Central European Counter-Attack force in light of Russian hybrid operations and its effective information campaign with Russian Diasporas. These changes significantly alter the

military calculus in the region, significantly increasing NATO's deterrent effect vis-à-vis Russia.

The NATO Information Effort

The changes in NATO's military posture by themselves will not achieve the desired deterrent effect. NATO's information campaign should incorporate three lines of effort: political leverage and commitment, theater security cooperation and economic independence. President Obama's Tallinn speech and subsequent NATO public statements are a good start point. NATO must demonstrate its ability to deter Russia. In this regard, NATO should revamp its military exercises, ensuring the international media reinforces its messaging. The Alliance also should continue to reduce its economic dependency on Russian petroleum resources. Under President Putin, Russia has not hesitated to play the gas card to alter the local domestic politics of nations dependent on Russian oil.²¹

Politically, NATO and American leaders continue to say all the right things with regard to Article V. However, deeds have not followed as rapidly as the words. From 2010 to 2014, NATO budget outlays declined 8 percent in real dollar terms and 20 percent when compared to Cold War fiscal outlays in 1990.²² The rest of the Alliance needs to contribute to their collective defense and not free ride under the US security umbrella. Based on fiscal outlays, several new members of NATO cut their defense spending after gaining admission.²³ The only good news is that Russian aggression in Ukraine forced some NATO nations to reconsider their fiscal priorities. In 2015, nine NATO nations increased their spending or sped up equipment acquisition time lines.²⁴

Despite being pushed by the SACEUR, General Phillip Breedlove, NATO reform is moving more slowly than he would wish. General Breedlove stated in his "from the

cockpit letter”, “The effectiveness and sustainability of these strategies, in the 21st Century Security Environment, must be rooted in operative alliances and legitimate institutions invested in synchronized lines of effort. Whatever the final form our adaptation measures take, they must be affordable and sustainable, so that NATO can effectively respond to emerging threats in the long run over what is likely to be an extended period of global instability.”²⁵ Reading between the lines and given other statements General Breedlove has made publicly, the pace of change is not fast enough to match Russia’s more aggressive capabilities. Gaining consensus in a large alliance will always be slower than dealing with a single nation’s ability to mass military resources.

General Breedlove needs political backing from elected politicians to achieve the requirements and provide the authority to allow NATO to adapt to 21st Century threats posed by Russia. The political backing would include continued clearly articulated statements by NATO heads of state that confirm every NATO nation’s willingness to act in accordance with Article V. NATO nations should authorize SACEUR to rapidly move certain national armed forces across international boundaries. This would enhance NATO’s military responsiveness significantly. Finally, they must provide the budget to build readiness, as well as train and equip military units capable of defeating Russian aggression. The US and Germany have both made recent changes that support this direction. In the US, the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) funds almost \$1 billion dollars for enhanced presence in the European Theater that includes forward basing for a division forward command post, a regionally aligned armored brigade combat team, and a rotational combat aviation brigade. The latest National Defense Act quadruples

ERI funding for EUCOM. The other three US services received similar outlays.²⁶

Germany intends to bring 100 main battle tanks out of storage and restore them to operational condition by 2017.²⁷ Change is possible, but it needs to move faster.

Politically, continued improvements across the Alliance would enhance NATO's second component - the information campaign. This campaign would be directed against three audiences: each nation's own population, the Eastern European nations and the Russian political and military leadership. During the Cold War, NATO executed huge REFORGER exercises that demonstrated will, intent and capability to defend against Soviet Guard Armies. These exercises directly impacted all of Europe with massive reporting, large deployments from the continental United States, maneuver damage to the German countryside and budget costs to move mass formations across the continent. NORTHAG and CENTAG fought Corps-sized mock battles for over a month every other year.²⁸ Soviet observers were everywhere, to include the Frankfurt Post Exchange. In the late 1980's, there was no doubt in the Western public mind or the Russian military that NATO had the will and ability to defend Germany. NATO needs to recapture the REFORGER spirit in the 21st century.

In its Wales Summit declaration on 5 September 2014, NATO's stated that its Readiness Action Plan would "strengthen NATO's collective defense. It also strengthens our crisis management capability. The Plan will contribute to ensuring that NATO remains a strong, ready, robust, and responsive Alliance capable of meeting current and future challenges from wherever they may arise."²⁹ The plan is a good start covering immediate assurance operations in threatened areas and committing to

generating adaptations to deal with long term threats along NATO’s southern and eastern edges. Peeling back the onion reveals its scale and potential problems.³⁰

Table 1. NATO’s Scheduled Exercises

Exercise Name	Time	Location	Military Numbers	Type of Exercise
Joint Warrior	11-23 APR	North Atlantic	13,000	Naval
Dynamic Mongoose	4-15 MAY	Norwegian Coast	5,000	Anti-Submarine
Baltops	5-20 JUN	Baltic Sea	4,500	Amphibious/Naval
Sabre Strike	8-19 JUN	Baltic States and Poland	3,000	Land
Noble Jump	10-21 JUN	Poland	2,100	VJTF
Trident Joust	17-28 JUN	Bulgaria, Romania, Italy,	1,500	Command Post
Trident Juncture	21 OCT - 6 NOV	Spain, Portugal, Italy	25,000	NRF

This is just a partial listing of NATO’s scheduled exercise, including what Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) deemed most important on its own webpage. NATO has conducted hundreds of other exercises throughout the continent as well. Significantly, the VJTF conducted its first exercise in Poland and the NRF practiced operations in Portugal, Spain, Italy and adjoining seas.

Exercise Trident Juncture illustrates part of the information campaign problem. Although NATO addressed many key training objectives for adapting to future operations, reviewing the exercise’s own scenario statement does not clearly articulate NATO resolve to deter Russia. In its basic scenario statement Trident Juncture states, “Rising political instability, ethnic tension and persisting socio-economic challenges are climaxed by a blatant invasion of one state’s territory by another. Ultimately, the crisis leads to an UN-mandated and NATO-led, non-Article V Crisis Response Operation under Chapter VII of the Charter of the UN, in a region far from NATO’s home territory.”³¹ Trident Juncture 2015 further attempted to train NATO forces to execute: operations in a high-intensity, joint war fighting situation; countering hybrid warfare threats; practicing Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense (TBM), cyber; chemical, biological

and radiological defense; violence against civilian populations; and preventing humanitarian crisis. These mission sets would be executed while “wielding soft power and public diplomacy and countering a deceptive and controlled media environment and its effects.”³² Although these training objectives helped train the NRF to execute its mission, it does not challenge the Alliance to meet Russian aggression under Article V conditions.

In the given scenario, the Alliance gets substantial strategic warning – specifically through a UN designated Chapter VII mandate. Russian military leaders fully understand strategic surprise and political and military deception (*maskirovka*) and will minimize strategic early warning. Second, this exercise took place almost as far away from the Baltic as possible. This may be understandable from a political perspective so as to not overly worry Russian leaders; however, it should be noted that the same concerns are not provided by Russian leaders during their snap training exercises conducted on Russian territory. Capstone exercises should be operated under worst case scenarios. A lightning advance into the Baltic States is the worst case scenario for NATO at the present. NATO is not conventionally existentially threatened on any other front. Geographic and current military conditions protect Turkey, Greece, Norway and the Balkan states from similar exposure. Finally, this exercise was a stepping stone. It did not require no-notice emergency deployment to an unknown operating area. NATO’s capstone exercise must include these requirements to provide a reliable deterrent to Russia.

NATO’s exercise regimen must be conducted with full transparency with Russian leadership. Through various sources and observers, Russia will be cognizant of NATO

activities. Proven speed and power projection capabilities are required to drive this point home to them. NATO's exercise program does not adequately address the public domain. The only exercise that the author is aware of that US mainstream media mentioned at all was the 2d Cavalry Regiment's Dragoon Ride. The Baltic States civilian response to US troops in their country demanded the US media cover it. Follow on Trident Juncture exercises should strive to generate that level of media coverage in locations critical to defending the eastern approaches and in a manner that causes Russia to take pause. More importantly, NATO elected leaders should acknowledge and trumpet what these exercises are about – assuring Eastern Europe's population that NATO can and will defend them. In an era where Europe is concerned over its economy, mass migration, and a resurgent Russia, Ben Franklin's words of old still ring true, "If we do not hang together, we shall surely hang separately."³³

NATO's has a robust theater security cooperation program. The bulk of these exercises will not generate overt deterrence. They will build capacity and ability to operate in unified land operations with every NATO ally. NATO does this well and will continue to build capacity through bilateral and multi-lateral exercises that operate below the media cut line.

Russia's New Strategic Vision

Russia's world view is significantly different when looked at through their lens as opposed to from a NATO perspective. While Russia may have lost the prestige of being a true superpower, it never lost its status as a great power. Its nuclear arsenal, geographic size and permanent seat on the UN Security Council ensured a major role in the world. From a western point of view and following decades of Soviet domination, it

was natural that Eastern Europe would democratize, transition to free markets and seek a new long term security situation. Russia sees it differently.

Alexey Meshkov, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister recently summed Russian resentment in a December 2015 article, when he stated,

Today, the situation in the European security sphere is perhaps at its lowest. The current problems did not emerge yesterday: They have been accumulating for years. The prime cause of the serious cooling of the political climate in Europe was certainly not the Ukraine crisis. The roots of the contradictions that came to a head during the conflict in Ukraine go way back to the 1990s... In reality, however, our Western partners proved unprepared for a direct and equal dialogue with Russia, without imposing their approaches and criteria on us. Although the Cold War is history now, its leftovers remained in the minds of many people in the United States and Europe: an ideology of confrontation, hostility and distrust... The opportunistic trend towards the consolidation of the international positions achieved as a result of the Cold War prevailed at the time. Washington and Brussels presumably decided not to abandon the foreign policy mechanisms that had evolved over decades, but use them in a new situation, this time to strengthen their domination in the world.³⁴

Seen from a Russian world view, this is plausible. It certainly accounts for their change in direction from the 1990's to the present. Under Boris Yeltsin, Russia attempted an "Atlanticist" policy to integrate with Europe economically, reducing strategic arms and even cooperating in Balkan peace keeping operations.³⁵ A series of events created a backlash in Russia domestic policy that would derail closer affiliation with Europe. First some Russians viewed START II as an unequal concession in reduction of nuclear arms. Russian land based ICBM's took significant cuts against relatively small US cuts despite the fact that the overall number of warheads achieved parity.³⁶ NATO intervention in the Balkans displeased Russian conservatives. However, two key events shifted Russia from an Atlanticist policy to a Eurasian policy. First has been the enlargement of NATO. NATO has steadily moved into what Russia perceived as its traditional sphere of influence. The second was the Bush administration's unilateral

decision to withdraw from the 1972 ABM treaty.³⁷ This was a cornerstone of Russian strategic decision making. This Russian perception of NATO encroachment and unilateral US attempts to employ a missile shield they cannot replicate colors their reality today.

On 26 December 2015, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an updated national security strategy. In Olga Oliker's view, "Russia is focused on increasing its influence and prestige and cementing its national unity; a Russia that believes that it is accomplishing its aims, but which simultaneously feels threatened by the United States and its allies."³⁸ In this document, Russia clearly articulates its desire to restore its place in a multi-polar world, listing several key national security themes.³⁹ In her translation of the document, Oliker states Russia will stress its prestige and standing in the international arena by solving international problems and creating one of the top gross domestic products (GDP) in the world.⁴⁰ They intend to do this through international organizations and developing new regional partnerships and tightening links to China and India bilaterally. "Cooperation with the US and EU is not excluded, and may even be necessary, but depends on those entities' appropriate respect for Russia's interests."⁴¹ Probably most important to NATO, Russia's perception of NATO changed from a danger to a threat. According to Oliker, "in Russian military parlance, a danger is a concern, while a threat could spark conflict. A number of specific capabilities (e.g., Global Strike) were classed as threats. This strategy asserts that the U.S. and its allies are seeking to contain Russia in order to maintain their dominance of world affairs, which Russia's independent foreign policy challenges. It describes NATO as a threat because the alliance is expanding its military infrastructure towards Russian borders."⁴²

Knowing how Russian leaders think and what they think are important is critical to balancing NATO's legitimate security requirements against Russian perceptions as NATO navigates the early 21st Century.

Conclusions

Thucydides remains invaluable today. Fear, interests and honor are particularly relevant in European security affairs. Eastern Europe rightly fears Russian domination due to recent events in the Ukraine. NATO must pay the price in fiscal outlays and political capital in order to honor its security commitments to every ally. The Baltic nations are the most exposed in the Alliance. RAND's war game rightly points out that without successfully deterring Russia in the Baltic States; NATO is left with nothing but bad options to restore their independence. NATO's political leadership must acknowledge that it is in their collective, long term interest, to support SACEUR's desire to become adaptable in the long term while assuring in the short term.

This must include the fiscal wherewithal and giving SACEUR authorities and the capacity to fully implement a rotational defense forces in the Baltic nations consisting of at least seven maneuver brigades (four of them from the Baltic States themselves) and supporting enablers. Forward basing these formations is absolutely critical if NATO is truly going to provide a credible deterrent effect. NATO must continue to execute full scale training events for the NRF and VJTF, but they should be specifically designed to counter potential Russian capabilities. NATO should consider designating a second response force to relieve Eastern European nations in the event of crisis. Finally, NATO's theater security cooperation efforts must continue to develop the skill sets necessary to conduct unified land operations as part of a combined force. All 28 nations must be able to participate as fully as possible in all Alliance requirements. At

every opportunity, NATO must re-emphasize to the Alliance's populations and the Russian leadership the will and ability to counter Russian aggression.

NATO must account for capability gaps with Russia's revamped military. First, air defense formations must be brought back into the maneuver brigade task organization. In the short term, putting FIM-92 Stinger missiles back into the hands of infantryman and logisticians would be a start. Longer ranged weapons will be required in a contested air environment. US and NATO ATGM's need increased range without sacrificing lethality. Extended range Javelin missiles or ground based AGM-114Hellfire missile could fill those gaps, especially in US infantry brigades. US maneuver brigades need to be able to target Russian EW threats. Finally, the US and NATO should buy Israel's Trophy Active Defense System (ADS) system. US defense dollars funded its development. NATO formations will fight in a cloud of lethal ATGMs and the technology already exists to counter it.

NATO must thread the needle between a strong, practiced, defensive deterrent force with the Russian perception that this force in fact threatens Russia. The first requirement is that NATO should stop expansion. With the remote possibility of Sweden and even more remote chance of Russia joining the alliance, no other nation in Europe is a net provider of security. NATO expansion stretched NATO resources without bringing significant assets to the Alliance. Montenegro's recent addition to the alliance, although politically and morally understandable is not going to make a net contribution to NATO security. It unnecessarily reinforces Russian anti-western attitudes, exposed when Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov declared NATO's

expansion to include Montenegro “a mistake, even a provocation” and an “irresponsible policy.”⁴³

President Obama’s Moscow visit in July 2009 may provide part of the solution. In her book *Lonely Power*, Lilia Shevtsova noted, “Bucking the skeptics, Obama attempted to tie engagement to addressing (Russian) society while avoiding tension with the Kremlin. He was the first leader to speak to Russian society over the heads of the elite, meeting representatives of the younger generation, business leaders, NGO’s and the opposition.”⁴⁴ This engagement with the Russian people, consistent and pursued in the long term would help counter Russia’s internal nationalistic propaganda. Inviting both international and Russian media would provide transparency to NATO defensive training exercises. Over time, it would also signal a clear commitment by NATO, backed by political will and actual military capability, towards Russian political and military elites.

Endnotes

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