CENTRE FOR MILITARY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Baltic Sea security

How can allies and partners meet the new challenges in the region?

Editor: Ann-Sofie Dahl

Baltic Sea security

Front row: Ann-Sofie Dahl, James Mackey, Christopher Coker.
Middle row: Claudia Major, Gudrun Persson,
Karoliina Honkanen, Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, Justyna Gotkowsk.
Back row: Andres Kasekamp, Andras Simonyi, Jakob Henningsen, Paal Sigurd Hilde.

ISBN: 978-87-7393-761-7

Contents

Introduction

Dr. Ann-Sofie Dahl, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Military Studies, Copenhagen

Ann-Sofie Dahl is Associate Professor (Sweden), Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Military Studies (Copenhagen) and Adjunct Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS, Washington, DC). She is the editor of *Trends and Threats: NATO in the 21st Century*. Her most recent book is *Du gamla, du fria. Moderat utrikespolitik från Högerparti till Alliansregering* (Stockholm: Medströms, 2014) and her most recent book on **Baltic Sea security is** *Northern Security and Global Politics* (coeditor with Pauli Järvenpää. London: Routledge, 2014).

In a joint op-ed in April 2015, the defence ministers of the five Nordic countries stated that the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea represent 'the greatest challenge to the European security architecture'.[1] Russia's aggressive behaviour put Baltic Sea security back on top of the NATO agenda for the first time since the Cold War and reintroduced the old, familiar strategic concepts of deterrence and reassurance. The countries in the Baltic Sea region are, to again quote the abovementioned op-ed, confronted with a 'new normal', which will define security in our region for the foreseeable future.

Developments have already had a major impact on political and military decisions in the countries surrounding the Sea, and the debate is likely to continue – even accelerate – in the run-up to the NATO Warsaw Summit in 2016. The issues at hand are complex: How should the countries in the region, their allies and partners meet the new strategic challenges posed by a Russia that is no longer a partner of the West? What can be done to strengthen and enhance regional cooperation? How can we ensure that security in the region remains on the strategic agenda? What are the views and perceptions of the strategic situation among the countries bordering the Sea, how do they differ and why? In short, how can the allies and partners meet the new challenges in the region?

To discuss these issues, the Center for Military Studies invited a group of experts to share their analyses of the strategic challenges in the Baltic Sea region at a conference in Copenhagen on June 2, 2015, which attracted a wide and active public audience. The speakers represented a broad range of nationalities, professional backgrounds and perspectives, with a mix of academia, think tank representatives and government officials.

This diversity is also reflected in the character of the presentations in this report. While some of the chapters provide forceful arguments in favour of specific viewpoints, such as greater U.S. involvement and increased NATO reassurance, other chapters are penned more as analytical essays on the security situation in the Baltic Sea region. Certain key aspects are analysed from multiple angles, for example the role of Russia and the response by NATO, which several of the authors for obvious reasons turn to in their chapters. Gathering such a broad spectrum of angles and perspectives is of value in and of itself for the analysis. The report thus offers a platform of perspectives for the continued discussion and analysis of Baltic Sea security.

The report is divided into three parts to reflect the structure of the conference. The first part and panel analyses the security situation: What is happening in the Baltic Sea region? How should the new Russian stance, which already became evident before the Ukraine crisis, be interpreted? What are the views in Washington and NATO? The second part and panel addresses the response and perspectives on Baltic Sea developments by a number of regional allies, diverging in some ways but mainly displaying the converging trend since February 2014. The final part and panel turns to NATOs two Nordic partners, which jointly occupy a substantial part of the Baltic Sea shoreline but remain outside of the collective defence measures in Article Five, which puts a limit to the extent and depth of military integration and joint planning in the Baltic Sea area.

A year and a half after Russia moved to annex Crimea and instigated the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, it seems likely that Russia will continue to be a troublesome neighbour. Instead of a tranquil backwater dominated by commerce, the Baltic region has become an area of intense strategic and political interest, where East meets West, and authoritarianism and disregard of international legal norms meet democracy and peaceful cooperation.

The effects of Moscow's new policies extend far beyond the territory of Ukraine or our own region and amounts

to a challenge to the international order as we know it – or knew it until the annexation of Crimea. While it does present some similarities to the world prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Cold War is however not back. But by exploiting weaknesses and deepening the split among the democracies in the West, Russia seems determined to undermine the role of the U.S. – in Europe and globally – and bring the unipolar system under American leadership to an end. In this strategic contest, the Baltic Sea region is central.

However, there is a risk that regional security will gradually drop from the position as top priority at a time of multiple threats. With the threat from ISIL reaching far beyond the Middle East – as witnessed by the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and elsewhere – and with a historic refugee crisis stemming in part from the war in Syria and further exacerbated by the ongoing Russian intervention, Baltic Sea security might not seem quite as urgent to all as it did only a short while ago, when the war in Ukraine was still making headlines. Lately, this may also be true in the region itself, and not just with regards to outside actors. In the fall of 2015, the attention of the countries in the Nordic–Baltic region appears increasingly divided, with the Baltic countries and Poland maintaining their focus on Russia, while the Scandinavian countries – Sweden and Denmark in particular – are increasingly occupied by the many economic and political demands generated by the refugee crisis. The current situation, offering a veritable buffet of crises and conflicts, thus offers plenty of distractions with the potential to remove the strategic focus from the Baltic Sea region.

At the same time, however, a variety of Russian military and political challenges to a good neighbourly situation continue to cause concern and further complicate the picture from a Western perspective. One such factor is Russia's use of untraditional methods, such as hybrid warfare – with 'little green men' acting as a vanguard – and cyber technology, which renders it difficult to determine when and where an attack demanding an Article 5 response has actually occurred. Scarce military resources also play a role. More than a decade of cuts to military budgets has reduced the number of options available on what to spend and how and where to deploy. Simply put, in practical terms, the choice for some countries might come down to sending F16s to bomb ISIL in Iraq and Syria or a maritime presence in the Baltic Sea; of expeditionary operations versus collective defence.

This report thus offers a platform for the continued and deepened discussion and analysis of the subject of security in our region. While developments outside of the region also warrant strategic interest, the different and complementary observations and analyses in the report serve as a reminder that the Baltic Sea region is an area of new and ongoing strategic interest for Denmark and its allies and partners.

This report is part of the research-based services for public authorities carried out by the Centre for Military Studies for the Danish Ministry of Defence and the political parties behind the Danish Defence Agreement. The report has undergone the quality control and peer review process that is standard for CMS publications. The chapters in this research report solely express the opinions of the authors and should not be interpreted as expressions of the Danish Government, the Danish Defence or other public authorities. For the conference programme in its entirety, please refer to page 51.

The conference was organized with support from NATO.

1. The Danish version was published as 'Nordiske forsvar samarbejder', *Jyllands-Posten*, 10 April, 2015.

Part 1
Security in the Baltic Sea region

NATO and Baltic Security

Christopher Coker

Christopher Coker is Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics. He is the author of *The Improbable War: China, the United States and the Logic of Great Power conflict* (Hurst 2014) and *Future War* (Polity 2015). His next book is *Rebooting Clausewitz*.

Like species, institutions evolve or perish. We used to talk about the 'survival of the fittest', a social Darwinist metaphor that has rightly fallen out of fashion. Today, scientists speak instead of the survival of the best-informed. Species that know what is going on in the neighbourhood tend to survive. The neighbourhood we are talking about is the Baltic Sea region, where NATO is challenged to evolve or perish; or at very best wither away. One of the problems facing the Alliance is that some of its members are far more concerned with other neighbourhoods. One is the Mediterranean (and the habitual problem of human migration); another is the Greater Middle East and the perennial challenge of terrorism. The Alliance's most important member considers that the real challenge stems not from non-state forces or even actors such as Islamic Caliphate (IS), but rather from a rising China and a Russia that resents the post-Cold War order. In its eyes, inter-state conflict may pose the greatest threat of all.

Europe has a profound interest in fostering a society of nation-states willing to share their sovereignty while abiding by certain basic norms. That such an order can advance the wellbeing of countries that do not yet belong to it (such as Ukraine and Georgia) is a proposition that European statesmen continue to promote. Russia, however, is challenging all of the post-Cold War platitudes that continue to underpin security thinking. One is globalization. At the time of the Kosovo war, NATO SACEUR Wesley Clark described the Alliance as 'a facilitator of globalisation'.[2] *The EU Security Strategy* (2003) was even more explicit. The Union saw itself as a 'facilitator of global civil society'.[3] All of which was fine except for the fact that not all the world is globalizing as rapidly as Europe. Indeed, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov describes his own country as merely a 'minority stakeholder' in globalization.

The problem with the narratives that Europe has fashioned in the last 20 years is that they overlook the reality of geography. *The Revenge of Geography* is the title of a book by Robert Kaplan.[4] Geography still matters – it matters to Russia (it always has); and it matters to China in the South China Sea, where there have been 61 incidents in the past 10 years.

Another, even more seductive, story is that of 'soft power'. 'Weapons of Mass Attraction' was Robert Cooper's definition of the importance of trade/investment and other instruments that the EU thought it could apply with impunity in its Eastern Neighbourhood. The problem is that countries without soft power, or much of it, tend instead to play up what they do have: hard power. Russia remains a nuclear power, committed to the modernization of its nuclear programme. It has increased its defence budget by 230% in the last 10 years. The West has told itself that numbers and size don't matter. 'Smart defence' is the answer; except for the fact that it really isn't. As it contemplates the present insecurity in the Baltic, the West must fall

back on the NATO Article 5 guarantee. Once again, it has to rely not on collective security but collective defence.

The problem is that the security of the Baltic states relies on the Article 5 guarantee, which in turn is only as strong as Article 3 – the ability of every member to defend itself. And of the three, Latvia is ripe for the plucking. Sharing a 700 km border with Russia, it finds itself at a distinct disadvantage. The country labours under the disadvantage that it has allowed defence spending to decline; it has not pursued security sector reform; it has no sizeable or well-disciplined, national territorial force capable of even putting up the resistance that the Finnish or Estonian armies might or that Lithuania hopes to now that it has decided to reintroduce conscription. It is also the country with the largest regional differences in economic development, the deepest social inequalities and the highest level of political corruption.

Were Latvia to be better placed, it would still face a number of security dilemmas. In order to defend the Baltics, NATO needs safe sea communications. In the Cold War at least, it only had to confront a conventional threat. Today, war has gone 'hybrid'. Imagine what would happen if the Russians tried to mine parts of the Baltic Sea (falling back, of course, on (im)plausible deniability). It is doubtful whether NATO would have the force strength to control access to ports east of Tallinn.

Add to this another factor: the Baltic states cannot be defended without NATO access to Swedish air space, a country that is not a member of the alliance and unlikely to join any time soon. In the Cold War, NATO was (we now know) able to rely on tacit support from the Swedish government. The Swedes operated a 'turnkey' policy; in a war, Swedish equipment would have been interoperable with NATO equipment, and Swedish air bases would have been made available to NATO air forces. To protect sea access to the Baltic today, NATO would require access to Gotland and air cover from Swedish bases. This is one of the reasons why Sweden is becoming anxious about Russian intentions, including any possible demands that Gotland be 'demilitarized' in the near future.

None of the Baltic states have thus far been able to create a credible forward-defence of their territory. Zbigniew Brzezinski has therefore suggested deploying a 'tripwire' force of U.S. troops.[5] But Cold War thinking was very different. Forwardly deployed forces were not a hostage to fortune; they would have been reinforced by 'follow-on forces'. In addition, there was also a nuclear tripwire (everyone knew that the war would have gone nuclear sooner rather than later). In those days, of course, NATO did not rely on 'smart' defence (a meaningless buzzword if there ever was one); it relied instead on *real* defence, which translated in turn into real deterrence.

Finally, NATO faces what the Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Martin Dempsey, calls an 'inflection point' in modern war.[6] Hybrid warfare is coming to a theatre of war near you, the most likely being Moldova or the Baltic. The Russians themselves do not call it hybrid, of course; they prefer other terms, 'non-linearity' being one of the favourites. Non-linearity is the disproportion between an outcome and the resources spent on achieving it. The greatest power our enemies have over us is to get into our minds, tap into our anxieties and get us to invest time and effort in dealing with what is not so much virtual as 'unreal.' Sweden must now entertain the threat that the Russians might want to demilitarize Gotland and the Finns that they might mine the waters off the Åland islands, preventing commercial traffic from sailing into their own waters and thereby crippling its trade with the rest of the world.

That is one of the reasons why, although NATO now hosts conferences on hybrid warfare, the term itself is not especially in favour in the Baltic states themselves. First, many see it as a useful way to locate a major dispute with

Russia under the umbrella of war. It is a way in which NATO can talk about maintaining its defence commitments under Article 5 while at the same time ignoring the fact that the Baltic states already feel at war or certainly at risk.

The first stage of hybrid war, if you read what the Russians write about it themselves, is 'information preparation'. In that sense, the war has already begun. Take the Russian Ambassador's nuclear threats to Denmark if it joined an American anti-ballistic missile programme; or the nuclear blackmail openly discussed by retired Russian generals at the Elbe group meeting; or the regular calls for a 'pre-emptive' occupation of the Baltic states by Russian political analysts, including those close to Putin.

But there is another reason why many political scientists and military leaders in the Baltics themselves dislike the term hybrid warfare, and it is one that goes to the heart of NATO's security dilemma. The Alliance is not *doctrinally* prepared for what may happen next. It is, after all, a defensive alliance, ill-prepared to respond to challenges in ambiguous areas of security. Remember that Article 5 requires the agreement of its members that an armed attack has actually occurred. How easy do we think it will be to achieve such agreement if the Russians were to engage in a series of 'salami tactics' in which – over the months, even years – the sovereignty and independence of the Baltic states is compromised?

Perhaps it is time to even admit the heretical thought that Article 5, as presently constituted, no longer fits the purpose for which it was originally intended. It was recently revised to take into account the prospect of cyber-warfare (the very first example involved a Baltic State, Estonia, in what the Estonian Defence Minister at the time called 'the first act of World War III'). Introducing cyber-warfare into the equation was difficult enough; what is the likelihood of obtaining consensus on including hybrid warfare in the commitment?

---

2. *The Times*, 8 September, 1999.
3. *European Security Strategy* (Brussels), 12 December, 2003.
4. Robert Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography* (New York: Random House, 2012).
5. *Agence France Presse*, 21 January, 2015.
6. *The Diplomat*, 3 June, 2012.

Russia and Baltic Sea security

Gudrun Persson

Gudrun Persson is Associate Professor and works at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) in Stockholm, where she is Deputy Director of the Russia Studies Program and focuses on Russian security policy and foreign policy, as well as Russian strategic military thought. Among her latest publications are Gudrun Persson et al. (eds.) *Military Thinking in the 21st Century* (Stockholm, 2015) and *Learning from Foreign Wars: Russian Military Thinking 1859–1873*, Helion (2010/2013).

Recent developments and the Russian challenge raise a number of important questions for the West and future policies. Russia's challenge to the contemporary Euro–Atlantic security architecture is possibly even greater than generally understood. When studying the Russian understanding of national security and security policy and the Russian military thinking about future wars, it becomes apparent that the Russian challenge reaches far beyond Ukraine. In terms of military activity, we have seen much more active Russian behaviour over the past couple of years in parallel with the use of non-military means. Much of this behaviour is a reminder of times past and much is not necessarily new – albeit it takes place in a different environment and with other technological means.

Military capability can be assessed on three different levels: the conceptual level, that being doctrines and military thinking; the structural level, that being the organization; and personnel, that being education, motivation and the social situation. Here, the focus is on the conceptual level. Two areas will be highlighted in order to add something of importance to the current situation and clarify the scope of the challenge.

The first area is the use of history, a seemingly 'soft' topic; the other, the nuclear rhetoric, a very 'hard' area, which demonstrates how the increased domestic oppression in Russia and the external aggression are interacting and strengthening each other. Finally, a number of questions will be raised that must be addressed in order to meet the Russian challenge.

First, briefly, on the Russian understanding of 'national security', which is defined broadly. The National Security Strategy for Russia until 2020 encompasses nine different areas: (1) defence; (2) security of the state and society; (3) higher living standards; (4) economic growth; (5) science, technology and education; (6) healthcare; (7) culture (including history); (8) ecology; and (9) strategic stability and strategic partnership. 'National security' is defined as 'the protection of the individual, society and the state from domestic and foreign threats, which in turn ensures constitutional rights and freedoms, an appropriate quality of life for citizens, sovereignty, territorial integrity and stable development of the Russian federation, the defence and security of the state'.[7]

In addition, the law 'On Security' (article 4:1) defines security policy as being a part of both domestic and foreign policy. It comprises a whole range of political, organizational, socio-economic, military, judicial, informational, special and other measures.[8]

HISTORY AS A WEAPON

The use of history has become increasingly important for Russian national security, and the victory in the Great Patri-

otic War (1941–45) is being given an exceptional place. At the conceptual level, the National Security Strategy (2009) stipulates that '…attempts to revise the history of Russia, her role and place in world history…' have a negative influence on Russian national security. In the newly adopted Foreign Policy Concept (2013), one of Russia's objectives is to '…strongly counteract … attempts to rewrite history by using it to build confrontation and to provoke revanchism in global politics, and to revise the outcomes of World War II'. The newly revised Military Doctrine (2014) refers to the need to defend Russia's historic, spiritual and patriotic traditions and to strengthen military-patriotic education (§13c, §21f).

Over the past decade, the Russian political leadership has taken active steps to draw on its history in connection with its armed forces. The Russian Military-Historical Society – which was originally founded in 1907 and disbanded in 1917 – was re-founded in March 2013. The historical names of the Preobrazhenskii and Semenovskii regiments have been added to modern military units, the first official Russian monument for the 'heroes' of the First World War has been erected, and so forth.

One might wonder why the political leadership is paying such extensive attention to Russian history. After all, the Foreign Policy Concept of 2013 explicitly states that one of Russia's objectives is to '[contribute] to the de-politicization of historical discussions to ensure their exclusively academic character'. This objective does not, however, stop the political leadership from making statements concerning historical matters. On a number of recent occasions, the Russian President has given his view on certain historical events. In the Baltic Sea region, there are a number of pertinent examples.

In 2013, President Vladimir Putin made a controversial statement in which he claimed that the Soviet Union launched the Winter War with Finland in order to 'correct mistakes' that had been made when Finland gained its independence in 1917. The illegal annexation of Crimea was framed in the very same language: 'to correct a historical mistake'; this to open a Pandora's Box in European history.

Another example concerns the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and the secret protocol, with all its implications for the Baltic Sea region and Baltic states. Already in 2005, President Putin argued that it was rational for the Soviet Union to sign the Pact in order to protect itself, but his rhetorical tone has recently increased substantially. In his current view, the Pact was beneficial to the Soviet Union, and Poland fell victim to its own policies in the pre-war years.[9]

Both statements speak volumes about how the current political leadership is using history to legitimize and reach security policy goals. The engagement in issues related to the past is an effort of the current political leadership to try to create a national identity for the country that is linked with its armed forces. A special unit has been created within the armed forces to combat the 'falsification of history'.[10]

NUCLEAR THREATS

The second area highlighted here concerns nuclear weapons. Not only has Russia increased its aggressive behaviour with nuclear weapons in and around the Baltic Sea, the official nuclear rhetoric is also unprecedented in Russian and Soviet history. The Russian Ambassador to Denmark threatened the use of Russian nuclear missiles should Denmark join the NATO missile defence. According to his own statements, President Putin considered increasing the alert level of the nuclear forces in connection with the Crimean operation. At the Seliger youth camp in August 2014, he reminded the world that Russia is a dominant nuclear power. And at a meeting in March 2015 with the so-called Elbe Group, the Russians allegedly stated that Russia would use nuclear weapons in the event of a NATO build-up in

the Baltic states. This threatening rhetoric is remarkable, not least because it comes from one of the permanent UN Security Council members.

The role of nuclear weapons in Russian security policy is defined in the Military Doctrine, the Nuclear Deterrence Policy, and in key speeches and declarations by the political leadership. Of relevance here is the thought regarding nuclear de-escalation which, according to Russian researcher Andrei Zagorski, has been part of the Nuclear Deterrence Policy since 2000.[11] Nuclear de-escalation means the use of tactical (sub-strategic) nuclear weapons should a local war escalate into a regional war.

According to this line of thought, the use of nuclear weapons should then deter the enemy and de-escalate the conflict. These thoughts have become more frequent in the military debate in the spring of 2015 and demonstrate the political role of nuclear arms to remind the world of Russian strength. Although the newly revised Military Doctrine has not changed its wording on Russia's intentions to use nuclear weapons, some Russian military thinkers have criticized the doctrine for not including formulations about the 'preventive use' of nuclear weapons. This is a dangerous path. The notion of 'limited' nuclear wars was discussed in the 1970s and 1980s but eventually put aside due to its potentially catastrophic outcome. The fact that Russian military thinkers are entertaining such thoughts in 2015 is worth taking into account.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

The Military Doctrine and Russian military thinking on future wars reveal a number of points that disclose the magnitude of the challenges ahead. Russia wants a new Euro–Atlantic Security order to replace the one established by the Helsinki accords and in the 1990s. These claims have a territorial aspect in the re-drawing of maps, which the Crimean case illustrates, with immediate implications for the Baltic Sea region. In addition, there is an ideological or emotional aspect that directly affects the three Baltic states. According to the current Russian political leadership, this area – with its historic ties to tsarist and Soviet Russia – belongs to the Russian sphere of interest.

Furthermore, the Military Doctrine document points to 'a strengthening of global competition' and an increased 'rivalry in values and development models'. Russia views the events in Ukraine as a threat to its own national security. 'Information operations in order to influence the population, mainly the young citizens, in order to undermine the historic, spiritual, and patriotic traditions in the defence of the Fatherland' is now a fundamental domestic military danger.

Russia claims that the post-Cold War situation does not provide security for Russia. The goal is now to create a global order run by the Great Powers. The Vienna Congress of 1815 and/or Yalta in 1945 are good examples to follow, according to the Russian President. The Holy Alliance, the Concert of Europe, is the model where the Great Powers divided the continent in different spheres of interests and together controlled peoples such as the Poles and Hungarians. Today, such a system would mean that an authoritarian or totalitarian political system be recognized as equal to the Western democracies. What are the consequences of this line of thinking for the West?

The Russian view of 'war' and 'national security' is broadly defined and includes both Russian history and religious traditions. What does it mean for Russia and the West that Russian military thinkers and policymakers include areas not normally associated with warfare?

Finally, several Russian military thinkers entertain thoughts of a future 'war of civilizations' between ideas and cultures. General Vladimirov, for instance, notes that Russia needs to rally the country around the 'nationally vital resources': the Faith (Russian Orthodox Church), the People

(Russian, *russkii*), the State (Russia), the Idea (Russian culture) and the Language (Russian).[12]

These are echoes of the past, although not as eloquently formulated as the Tsarist 'Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality'. What is the response of a post-modern West to this challenge? It has been said that 'Russia is never as strong – or as weak – as she seems'. The course of Russian history shows that – eventually, when the empire has overstretched – the reforms will come. Until then, the West must recognize the scope of the current challenge posed by Russia and work out a long-term response based on a realistic, informed understanding of Russian military thinking and the dynamics behind the Russian behavior.

---

7. *Strategiia natsionalnoi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii do 2020 goda, 13 maia 2009* [National Security Strategy for the Russian Federation until 2020]. Available at http://president.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/424.
8. *Federalnyi zakon ot 28.12.2010 g. No 390-FZ, O bezopasnosti* [Federal law, 28.12.2010, No 390, On Security]. Available at http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/32417.
9. *Zaiavleniia dlia pressy i otvety na voprosy zhurnalistov po itogam vstrechi s Federalnym kantslerom Germanii Angeloi Merkel, 10 maia 2015* [Press conference after the meeting with the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel]. Available at http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49455.
10. *RIA Novosti*. 10 July 2013. http://m.sputniknews.com/russia/20130710/182161889/Russian-Military-Unit-to-Combat-History-Falsification.html.
11. Andrei Zagorski, 'Russia's Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Posture, Politics and Arms Control', *Hamburger Beiträge Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik,* Heft 156 (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg: February 2011).
12. Aleksandr I. Vladimirov, *Osnovy obsjtjej teorii vojny, Monografija v 2 tjastjach,* (Moskva: Universitet Sinergija, 2013), [The Principles for a General Theory of War], Tjast I, Osnovy teorii vojny [Part 1, The Principles for a Theory of War], pp. 477–494.

Why the Baltic Sea region matters to the United States

Andras Simonyi

Andras Simonyi is Managing Director of the Center for Transatlantic Relations,
SAIS Johns Hopkins University in Washington D.C. and the former ambassador of Hungary to NATO and the United States.

Why is the Baltic Sea region so important to the United States? The answer is fundamental: In the era of transitions from authoritarianism to democracy, from command economy to market economy, from exclusion to inclusion, this is where freedom exists in elections, in entrepreneurship, in social innovation, the integration of ethnic and minority groups into society, gender equality, tolerance and acceptance, and the freedom to express who you are without fear of adverse consequences.

Yet just across the border stands a Russia determined to turn back the clock and embrace a 19th–20th century view of the world marked by hatred, discrimination and military invasions. It is not alone in attempts to reverse progress; we experience backsliding in parts of once so promising Central and Eastern Europe. This is a country run by one person whose goal is to stir up trouble throughout the continent and impress upon his neighbours that their safety and security, indeed their way of life, will constantly be in jeopardy as long as he has a say about it. These are not idle threats that can be pushed to the side by those who wish to pretend that the invasion and annexation of parts of sovereign Ukraine is a hiccup, a mere problem with a difficult country that is not – and some hope will never be – a true member of the family of Western nations.

The constant incursions into the territories of Sweden, Finland and Estonia by land, sea and air are well planned, executed and very intentional. These incursions, accompanied by decades-long Russian military displays in the guise of cross-border exercises, cyber-attacks and nuclear chess in Kaliningrad, are not inadvertent encroachments of a few kilometres. In the case of the Baltic countries, they are designed to give substance to the threats of protecting ethnic Russian populations wherever they reside. They are bold statements conveyed in actions of Russia's superior military might, a test of the defensive capabilities of their neighbours and a willingness of these countries to defend each other. And it is a major test of NATO and the EU to see if this group of nations will come to the aid of its own members if and when it becomes necessary.

Russia has been tinkering with so-called Western 'red lines' for years, beginning with the invasion of Georgia in 2008 and now in Ukraine. Putin is convinced that the West will never challenge the annexation of Crimea into Russia; for him this is a *fait accompli*. And Putin is betting that those in NATO and the EU who value 'peace processes' over actual peace will prevail over those who are trying to rally action against the ever encroaching Russian covert soldiers and Russian agents in eastern Ukraine.

All too often, the argument is made in Europe that countering Russian aggression will 'lead to a third world war'. This is nonsense. Unfortunately, his thinking has infected some Europeans and even Americans. So the question becomes whether Ukraine is yet another testing ground for seeing just how far Russia can go without provoking an overwhelming response. Tinkering with the sovereign borders of Sweden, kidnapping an Estonian in Estonia;

these are all pages torn out of a playbook that suggest this is exactly what Russia is doing.[13]

Some in NATO believe that the Alliance ought to articulate more clearly under what circumstances Article 5 will be implemented given the new nature of the threat. They have gone so far as to suggest that NATO should have a list of actions that would be defined as crossing the threshold leading to invoking Article 5. This would not only be a mistake, but a major strategic blunder. It would be the *de facto* equivalent of allowing Russia to articulate under what circumstances NATO should and should not invoke Article 5. These musings are exactly the reason why Russia believes that it can use soft power to support and coerce some politicians and political parties in Europe to sit on their collective hands while borders in Europe are redrawn and constantly tested. Nevertheless, it is right for NATO to discuss and rethink its Article 5 obligations in order to ensure it remains the core of our Alliance.

No other countries are better positioned than the Baltic and Nordic countries to take the lead on finding responses to hybrid warfare. While it is hardly a new invention, Mr Putin is taking it to a new level. Propaganda, little green men, energy and of course high level corruption: you name it – all part of the ever sophisticated tool box of hybrid warfare. NATO is late and slow to figure out the threats it poses and how to counter it. The Alliance has yet to embrace the challenge fully and come up with equally sophisticated responses.

Energy is being used effectively as a soft-power tool by Russia. It is important to be clear on this point: energy security is as important for this region, and Europe as a whole, as is military security. Russia will be a long-term and important energy trading partner. This must be market-based and void of pressure, blackmail, corruption and graft. There is a window of opportunity to loosen Moscow's grip on pipelines and oil and gas markets and to discontinue the Russian practice of using hydrocarbon exports as political and economic extortion. But prices will not remain low forever and depending on that alone without introducing more diversity into the energy resource mix and more players will mire Europe in a never-ending series of short-term approaches to what are clearly long-term challenges. For the same reason, the proposal to build a Nordstream 2 pipeline, which would circumvent Central and Eastern Europe, would make Europe as a whole more and not less dependent on Russian supplies.

But this can only be accomplished by forming energy alliances among these countries and by not competing with each other; a process guaranteed to leave Russia in the driver's seat. Short-sighted energy planning has led to the increased import of Russian coal and higher European greenhouse gas emissions. The new Lithuanian port facility at Klaipeda represents an important step forward and can bring LNG from the United States to Europe. Introducing new players into this market will both help stabilize long-term prices and lessen the Russian energy dominance in Europe.

The new Russian military command structure, with its focus on military exercises in the western part of Russia, is designed to convey an unambiguous message that peace is not really on the agenda.[14] Lest there be those in the West who still believe that Russia is content to live within its own newly redrawn borders and has no desire to expand outward, it is worth taking note of the Macedonian unrest and other activities in the Balkans as well as the latest stirring of animosity in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

And if that is still not enough to convince those who place process above action, all one needs to do is focus on the vocal re-adoption of the 'first use of nuclear weapons doctrine'. These military actions are always the bastion of a country that cannot compete on the global political or economic stage without coercion, extortion and corruption.

Putin's Russia will not take on the onerous task of changing internally, as doing so would strip the power out of the hands of those who thrive on the loss of rights and freedoms, people who have become obscenely wealthy while the Russian middle class slips into the economic abyss. Putin's Russia will continue to focus on the outside world, where it can generate overwhelming nationalist support for its theme of Russia vs. the West.

And yet staring just across that border are countries that have thrived by doing exactly the opposite of what Russia is setting about. These Baltic states which fought hard to establish democracies and generally successful economies, fly in the face of the Russian model. But as many great statesmen and women have said in the past, thriving democracies without the military force necessary to defend this way of life are unsustainable. The new military arrangements among Sweden and Finland are a great start but must go much further. These must be more than mere 'cost efficiencies', and the recent action to increase Swedish defence spending is welcome in that regard. But we remain stymied as to why the Nordic arrangements are not more inclusive of the Baltic countries. We have heard the oft-repeated comment that making the Baltics part of these arrangements would somehow lessen NATO's responsibility for them or somehow lessen NATO's commitment to them. This argument, to be perfectly frank, is nonsense.

Indeed, including the Baltic States in Nordic security arrangements would convey to Russia, the rest of the West, and importantly to the United States, how serious these countries are in terms of defending these hard-won freedoms. It would convey that there are no differences to be exploited by Russia and that all of these countries share a commitment to a strong and viable defence of their collective borders. Moreover, it would send a bold message to the rest of NATO and the EU that territorial integrity is more than just a concept in the Baltic Sea region.

As the United States gears up for elections in 2016, we can almost guarantee that Russian aggression will be a theme for virtually every candidate. But so will the European willingness to provide for its own defence in equal partnership with the United States, not just dependence on the good will of the American people. Embarking on a programme of increased defence spending, increasing capacity and capabilities, and opening the market to a diverse mix of energy resources and suppliers will be essential to convey the seriousness of this region in remaining firm and united against a revanchist Russia looking to pounce on any weaknesses it may perceive in this region.

---

13. Estonian intelligence officer Eston Kohver was lured into a trap and kidnapped on Estonian territory in 2014. Russian officials insist that he was caught in Russia. He was found guilty of spying, arms smuggling and violating border regulations and sentenced to 15 years in prison in August 2015.
14. In 2010, Russia merged six military districts into four strategic commands, where the commanders exercise control over all of the forces and assets deployed in their territory, including the Navy, Air Force and Air Defences. The Moscow and Leningrad military districts merged into a Western strategic command with headquarters in St. Petersburg. The Northern Fleet and Baltic Fleet merged into this structure.

NATO's new Baltic challenge

James Mackey

James H. Mackey is Head of the Office of Euro–Atlantic and Global Partnership in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division at NATO Headquarters. In this capacity, he is responsible for overseeing NATO's relationship with partner countries in Western Europe, the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Asia Pacific region.

The past two years have seen the Baltic Sea turn from a region of cooperation into one of contest. The dramatic increase in Russian military activity in the region, coupled with its violation of international law and international commitments in Ukraine, have forced the Baltic Sea states and the NATO Alliance to which many of them belong to reassess the security situation in what was otherwise thought to have become a 'quiet' part of Europe.

The Baltic Sea area held (and continues to hold) a great deal of promise for regional security cooperation, including areas that would directly address Russian security interests. For more than a decade, NATO has been conducting activities in the Baltic aimed at increasing transparency and confidence among the Baltic Sea littoral states. These include submarine search and rescue exercises open to all of the NATO partners as well as scientific research on how to identify and properly dispose of mines and dangerous chemicals dumped on the seabed, a legacy of previous conflicts in the region. In the period immediately prior to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, NATO was negotiating a multi-million Euro project with Russia to destroy outdated and unstable munitions in Kaliningrad, a project that would have improved the safety and security of Russian citizens in the enclave as well as that of the citizens in neighbouring NATO member states Lithuania and Poland.

Unfortunately, Russian activities in Ukraine and the Baltic region have forced NATO to put all of these activities on hold. Cooperation is impossible when one of the sides fundamentally violates international law and its international commitments. Moreover, Russia has dramatically increased tensions in the Baltic Sea by carrying out unannounced, large-scale military exercises, unsafe military air activities that pose a high risk to civil aviation, and the non-transparent militarization of Kaliningrad. Hopefully, the potential for regional security cooperation in the Baltic Sea, including with Russia, can be fulfilled in the future. But this cooperation can only take place in an atmosphere of transparency and commitment to international laws and norms. In the near to mid-term, the Baltic Sea is likely to experience continued tensions.

So what can NATO do in the current situation of uncertainty to promote security for its members and the Baltic Sea region in general? NATO's response must be threefold: 1) ensuring deterrence through a strong commitment to the security of its member states; 2) assisting regional approaches to security such as Nordic Defence Cooperation and Nordic–Baltic Defence Cooperation; and 3) further deepening its already robust bilateral cooperation with partner states Sweden and Finland. If NATO is successful in implementing these three lines of effort in the Baltic Sea, where the conditions are ripe for a strong response to the Russian challenge, then it could hold valuable lessons for how NATO could respond in other contested regions.

NATO's first priority in the Baltic Sea area needs to be

ensuring deterrence through a strong commitment to the security of its member states. This has been NATO's mission for six decades, but recent events to both the east and south of the Alliance have reinforced the message that NATO must continuously adapt to new security challenges in order to carry out its primary mission. In the face of growing regional tensions in recent years, NATO has implemented a series of reassurance measures for its Allies, including increased air, sea and land patrols and exercises. These immediate measures will be augmented by mid-term efforts within the Alliance Readiness Action Plan (RAP). The NATO Response Force will more than double in size from its current 13,000, and NATO is creating a 5,000-strong Spearhead Force, which will be ready to deploy anywhere on Alliance territory at short notice. NATO is also establishing new command units across the eastern part of the Alliance to make it easier for Alliance forces to exercise, deploy and reinforce when needed.

All of these actions can and will be carried out in full compliance with the NATO–Russia Founding Act, the Helsinki Final Act and all of the relevant international arms control treaties, such as the Vienna Document and the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. Russia has chosen to disregard all of these documents. NATO strongly believes that long-term security can be achieved for all states in Europe through adherence to existing transparency and arms control regimes, so its efforts will now leave the door open for Russia to return to cooperation in the future. At the same time, the defensive actions that NATO is undertaking will promote regional security by demonstrating to would-be aggressors that the Alliance is ready to fulfil its commitments to the security of its member states.

A second area in which NATO can work to increase regional security is by facilitating regional approaches, such as the Nordic Defence Cooperation and Nordic–Baltic Defence Cooperation. The Nordic Defence Cooperation has offered a very good example of how like-minded states in a region can band together to find pragmatic and resource-efficient solutions to security challenges. Whether through joint training and exercises, joint research and development or even joint acquisition, such regional approaches allow states to amplify the impact of their investments in defence while continuing to respect national and Alliance commitments. The members of the Nordic Defence Cooperation group have been at the forefront of a number of projects under the NATO Smart Defence Initiative, which promotes just such joint research and acquisition.

The Alliance must look for ways to further promote this cooperation in the Baltic Sea, including preferential access to Allied research facilities and funding and potentially through the creation of Baltic Sea-focused working groups within the armaments working groups and in the defence planning process. Efforts should also be undertaken to enhance the 'Baltic' aspect of this work by including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland more deeply, building on the already deep cooperation among the Nordic states. A strong set of regional defence bonds in the Baltic Sea area will help reinforce the overarching security guarantees provided by NATO.

The third means by which NATO can contribute to security in the Baltic region is by further deepening its already robust bilateral cooperation with partner states Sweden and Finland. Both partners are longstanding contributors to NATO-led operations and have used this experience plus participation in PARP, the force planning process for partners, to build a high degree of interoperability with the Alliance. In recognition of their substantial contributions to NATO-led operations, NATO designated both Sweden and Finland 'Enhanced Opportunities Partners' following the Wales Summit. This status will give them greater access to political consultations with the Allies, deeper and earlier access to NATO exercises (in particular, exercises for the NATO

Response Force, to which both countries contribute), and expedited access to consultations and force contributions in crisis situations. The 'Enhanced Opportunities' status has also become a vehicle for deepening NATO cooperation with the two partners on Baltic Sea security.

NATO and its two trusted partners have agreed to step up the exchange of intelligence and real-time information at all levels, to have regular political consultations on the security situation in the region, and to coordinate their respective military exercises in order to take best advantage of joint training opportunities. As an example of the deepening of this relationship, Sweden and Finland have already been given access to the planning for NATO's High Visibility Exercise in 2018, which will take place in Norway. While there has been much media speculation about whether Sweden or Finland might apply for NATO membership, such speculation misses the point that there is a great deal that we can do short of membership to deepen our security relationship, particularly in the strategic space we share: the Baltic Sea. A deeper NATO partnership with both Sweden and Finland will be a further contribution to the security of the entire Baltic Sea region.

The challenge of a resurgent Russia will remain with us for many years to come. While the Baltic Sea region could have been the model for security cooperation in post-Cold War Europe, Russia has instead chosen to make it a region of contest. The best response that NATO, its member states and partners can make to this challenge is to deepen their own coordination and cooperation. Such cooperation will strengthen the security of the Baltic region while showing Russia the path that it must take to return to the rules-based international order.

Part 2
The Allies

Baltic Sea security: The view from Berlin

Claudia Major with Milena Kleine

Claudia Major, PhD, Senior Associate at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Berlin, where she directs the project 'Security and Defence in Northern Europe – SNE'. Milena Kleine works for the SNE project at SWP and is finalizing her MA at Sciences Po Paris and the Free University of Berlin.

In terms of security policy, the Baltic Sea region has until recently been of 'friendly disinterest' for Germany. German security policy was built more on an east–west axis, with the northern and southern dimensions receiving less attention. This did not preclude cooperation and consultations with the Nordic and Baltic states, but there was less of a strategic approach compared to other regions.

The Ukraine crisis thrust the region to the forefront of security considerations. While Germany responded with considerable commitments in NATO, EU, OSCE and multilateral and bilateral formats, the conceptual underpinning of a northern or north-eastern axis in German security policy requires further definition.

The focus here is on the German response to the Baltic security conundrum within NATO. Germany's contribution to the NATO response to Russian behaviours and the perception of this role are puzzling: on the one hand, Berlin committed itself quicker and more substantially to the Alliance's adaptation decided at the 2014 Wales Summit than its previous behaviour in NATO would have led one to think (remember Libya and Berlin's nickname as a *status quo ally*).

On the other hand, Berlin is sometimes criticized for its assessment of the security situation, which leads the German government to insist on both deterrence *and* détente with Russia, and to advocate a military posture for NATO that focuses on responsiveness and readiness rather than forward defence. *Deterrence and détente*, in reference to the 1967 Harmel Report, has indeed become the German *leitmotiv*. Thus, while Germany, quite surprisingly in view of some of its previous positions, developed into the backbone for NATOs strategic adaptation decided at the Wales Summit, it takes the blame for not responding sufficiently to the needs articulated in particular by Eastern European Allies.

DETERRENCE, DEFENCE...

In reaction to the Ukraine crisis, NATO allies adopted the most fundamental military adaptation of the Alliance since the end of the Cold War at the 2014 Summit in Wales, the main instrument being the Readiness Action Plan (RAP). The objective is a large-scale reinforcement and reorganization of defence capabilities. Collective defence has been reinstated as the core task of NATO, requiring considerable political, military and financial input from all of the Allies.

Germany played a considerable role in shaping the Wales decisions and has undertaken crucial contributions to implement pillars of the RAP, reassurance and adaptation. As regards the reassurance measures, Berlin has increased its naval participation in the Baltic Sea and is sending significantly more soldiers on exercises. Beyond the NATO framework, the federal government made strong efforts so as to also reassure allies on a bilateral basis. After some initial hesitation, Germany provided the Baltic states with equipment.

As for the adaptation measures, Berlin is taking part in all NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU), the small regional units that are set up initially in the Baltic states, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria to facilitate the relocation of forces into the region and assist in the planning and coordination of training and exercises. Berlin is also doubling its personnel (from 60 to 120) at the Multinational Corps Headquarters North-East (MNC NE), which Germany, Poland and Denmark are jointly running in Stettin. The MNC NE will increase its readiness, take on more tasks and become a hub for regional cooperation.

Germany is also the first state to take on the command of the new spearhead force, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), in 2015. Germany, the Netherlands and Norway provide most of the troops in the 2015 set-up phase and will bear the associated costs. With approximately 2,700 of some total 5,000 soldiers, Germany will provide the majority of troops.

At first glance, the German contributions appear rather compartmentalized: the VJTF, the Stettin HQ, contributions to reassurance measures and additional personnel for NATO. In overview, however, Germany turns out to be providing the backbone for the implementation of the Wales decisions.

The current focus on collective defence as *primus inter pares* among the three NATO core tasks (the others being crisis management and cooperative security) suits German preferences. Berlin never really warmed to out-of-area operations, such as in Afghanistan. Besides, the German public – sceptical of the use of military force – finds it easier to accept the idea of using the *Bundeswehr* in a collective defence scenario than in crisis management operations in faraway countries. Quite ironically, the return to collective defence nevertheless poses a challenge to the German armed forces: it was mainly the operation in Afghanistan over the last decade that formed the basis for strategic thinking and guided decisions on how to structure the armed forces and how to equip and train soldiers. Planning, equipment, training and exercises and the force structure need to be adapted in order to again assure collective defence.

The new tasks pose daunting political, military and financial questions for Berlin. Politically, Germany must create the preconditions for rapid decision-making on any deployment and Germany's share therein, including, where applicable, multinational structures. Militarily, German obligations signify a long-term, increased demand for personnel, equipment and exercises as well as a reform of existing plans and processes. Financially, the substantial contributions and the changes necessary to be able to make them can hardly be borne from current funds.

Moreover, in view of the upcoming NATO summit in Warsaw, debate has started as to whether Wales is enough; that is, whether NATO should not do more to assure credible deterrence and reassurance, including the permanent stationing of troops and equipment in Eastern Europe. This is likely to be a difficult issue for Germany.

Besides the commitment to the RAP, Germany seeks to develop answers within NATO, the EU and on a bilateral basis on how to deal with potential hybrid aggressions. For Berlin, this requires an appropriate mix of civilian and military instruments in the areas of prevention, resilience, communication, deterrence and defence. It also includes the necessity to improve EU–NATO relations.

When the German Foreign and Defence Ministers visited the Baltic countries in April 2015, a series of cooperation agreements in areas such as energy, culture, education and civil society was signed to improve the ability to counter hybrid threats. There was a particular focus on media and communications, the overarching goal being to foster and promote independent, objective and professional media to counter Russian propaganda. This includes exchange

programmes and grants for journalists and students, cooperation in journalist professional education, an increased *Deutsche Welle* programme in Russian, and media programmes for schools. While Germany's partners have welcomed this commitment, some also criticized it as a way of avoiding stronger military commitment.

... AND DÉTENTE

While contributing substantially to the deterrence and defence efforts in Europe, Berlin – in reference to the 1967 Harmel Report – maintains that, in order to reach security, the complementary component next to deterrence is détente. Thus, Berlin has suggested initiatives to keep the channels for dialogue with Moscow open. This explains its commitment in organizations like the OSCE (where Berlin will assume the Chairmanship in 2016), the EU, and the Normandy and Minsk groups. This German approach is also visible in initiatives such as calls for meetings of the NATO–Russia Council, the objection to abrogate the 1997 NATO–Russia Founding Act, or the set-up of a Russia–NATO crisis mechanism, as suggested by Berlin in December 2014. This resulted in criticism of Berlin as being a 'Russia hugger' and failing to take the fears of other allies seriously enough.

A TEST CASE FOR A NEW GERMAN SECURITY POLICY OR LEADING BY DEFAULT?

The German reaction to the Ukrainian crisis is part of the broader debate launched in 2013–14 about whether Berlin should take up a greater share in international security; that is, one that corresponds to its political and economic weight. Following the setup of the new government in December 2013, the President, Defence Minister and Foreign Minister delivered remarkable speeches at the Munich Security Conference in January 2014.

The key messages conveyed that Germany must be ready for earlier, more decisive and more substantive engagement; that while Germany's traditional culture of military restraint remains valid, it must not become an excuse for staying on the sidelines. Germany, in many ways the central European power and a country deeply connected to global networks, must also be ready to do more to guarantee the security that others have helped it to maintain for decades and to protect the international order from which it benefits. These speeches mark the official beginning of an (at least) rhetorical shift in German foreign and security policy.

The German reaction to the Ukraine crisis in various contexts (EU, NATO, OSCE, Minsk, Normandy, bilateral) can indeed be interpreted as the expression of a greater willingness to live up to international responsibilities and assume a leadership role in the EU, as seen during the financial crisis since 2008 and the 2015 refugee crisis. However, this does not mean that Germany will always take the decisions that correspond to what the partners expect nor that it will act consistently.

Nevertheless, in view of its various contributions, Germany has gained some measure of political weight. But this is also due to the fact that traditional leaders are either occupied by other issues (France in Africa), do not have the necessary means available in the foreseeable future (Great Britain) or, despite providing essential support, prefer to leave the front row to the Europeans, at least for the moment (the U.S.).

Russia as a challenge in the Baltic Sea region: A view from Poland

Justyna Gotkowska

Justyna Gotkowska is Senior Fellow at the Department for Germany and Northern Europe at the Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw.

The annexation of Crimea and military intervention in Eastern Ukraine, along with domestic developments, have confirmed that Russia is generating a deep-rooted, long-term challenge to the West. In this situation, the West must send the correct signals to Russia: that it is serious about the security and defence of its members and that it treats the challenge posed by Russia as a strategic one.

The regime in Moscow is autocratic and subscribes to a paranoid world view, seeing Russia as vulnerable to external and internal threats because of the policy of regime change allegedly pursued by the West. At the same time, there is a perception of the West as weak and that this weakness should be exploited. Russia also faces economic problems and, due to the fear of social unrest and rifts within the elites, the regime may seek out conflict in order to consolidate society and political elites. Growing militarization is an immanent feature of the current system.

In foreign policy, Moscow's primary goal is to subdue the 'the near abroad', i.e. the countries in the post-Soviet space, politically, militarily and economically, by incorporating them into Russian-led integration projects, such as the Eurasian Economic Union, and thereby to preserve its own national security. Since Ukraine is a key country from this perspective, Moscow cannot allow it to take a pro-Western course. However, Moscow's strategic goals extend beyond 'the near abroad'. It aims to challenge the post-Cold War order and set up new rules for the European security architecture. Moscow aims at limiting the presence and influence of the United States in Europe, to undermine NATO, to weaken the EU, and to get a new deal on security and economic issues with major European countries on Russian terms.[15]

In this context, the Baltic Sea region is one which Russia would like to 'Finlandize' and maintain as a buffer zone. It is a region that Russia may use to provoke confrontation and achieve the goals of dividing the West, undermining the credibility of NATO and to show that U.S. security guarantees are non-binding. The geopolitics of the Baltic region allows for that. Russian military activity in the Baltic region has been increasing since 2008.

This trend has become more noticeable since the annexation of Crimea. NATO, Sweden and Finland have confirmed new patterns of provocative behaviour. Russia's increasingly confrontational behaviour includes violations of national airspace and territorial waters, the intimidation of planes and vessels in international airspace and waters, and an increasing number of military exercises based on aggressive scenarios, including a nuclear attack on Warsaw (Zapad 2009) and simulated bombing raids against Sweden and Denmark. By demonstrating such military force, Russia is putting its political will and military capabilities in the region on display – capabilities needed both for an assault on NATO member states and non-aligned countries but

also to deny reinforcements to NATO forces. Moscow wants the region and the West to become divided and feel threatened; the goal is to convince the elites and societies that it is better to compromise with Russia than risk a state of permanent instability or even open military conflict.[16]

The near future may prove an uncertain and unstable period for the Baltic Sea region and for Russia–West relations. First, the risk of unintended clashes may increase with the rise of provocative actions perpetrated by Russian air and navy units.[17] Second, the risk of provoked confrontation may also increase. We must consider a broad scope of scenarios ranging from hybrid warfare to conventional strikes and even the use of tactical nuclear weapons. If Russia believes that using military force provides good opportunity to achieve its strategic goals against the West, it will do so.

Such a move will, however, be based on the Kremlin's assumption that the West and NATO will be more willing to compromise on the sovereignty of its members and collective defence principle than prepare for an open war with Russia. At the same time, the Kremlin is a rational actor that calculates the chances and risks of its actions; it is aware of its own military dominance in the region but also of Western/U.S. military superiority in general.

SHOULD WE MEET THE CHALLENGE – AND HOW?

NATO's presence on its eastern flank should not be perceived by Moscow as a lukewarm policy of reassurance, but rather as a credible policy of deterrence. If Russia sees NATO's policy as a sign of weakness or compromise, this may encourage Moscow to test the cohesion and credibility of NATO by provoking a confrontation in the Baltic Sea region. The current NATO activity in the Baltic states is the result of a compromise from the Wales Summit: NATO agreed to continue to unilaterally abide by the NATO–Russia Founding Act, but at the same time to step up its involvement on its eastern flank and adapt its structures to new challenges in collective defence. This decision underlines the division between the new and old member states, although this time in a changed environment, where Russia treats NATO as a foe while NATO continues to treat Russia as a partner.

The compromise reached needs to be exploited fully to enhance NATO's presence on its eastern flank. The full implementation of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) adopted at the Wales Summit in 2014 is key.[18] Three elements of the RAP stand out as the most important: First, the reform of the NATO Response Force (NRF) should be fully implemented, including making its new high readiness component, the VJTF, fully operational before NATO's Warsaw Summit in the autumn of 2016. Second, NATO's command structures should be effectively adapted to the new realities on the eastern flank. This should be done by making the new elements of the command structure that is being established in the countries on NATO's eastern flank (NATO Force Integration Units, NFIUs) fully operational. The NFIUs should provide support to VJTF operations in these countries and enable support planning and exercises based on Article 5 scenarios. Moreover, the Polish–German–Danish Multinational Corps Northeast in Stettin (MNC NE) should be fully developed to deal with the new role and tasks it will be fulfilling in the future. The MNC NE will be the operational HQ for the NRF forces in the event of their deployment in the region. It is also important to increase international (U.S. and regional, including Swedish and Finnish) participation in the MNC NE. Third, NATO's advanced planning for collective defence operations on the Eastern flank should be improved: This is key for conducting Article 5 operations in the region. Without detailed defence planning, there is no real improvement of NATO's ability to react to threats on NATO's eastern flank.

On top of this, NATO needs a strategic, long-term adaptation, i.e. strengthening NATO's capabilities and force

structure, to the challenge posed by Russia. Prior to NATO's Warsaw Summit in 2016, Poland, as the host country, aims to put forward a number of proposals to discuss this issue.[19] These include (1) changing the profile of the NATO force structure to allow NATO to respond not only with a brigade but also with a division and more; (2) improving the heavy capabilities that increase the credibility of conventional deterrence; and (3) increasing NATO's common funding for the development of military infrastructure that enables NATO to receive reinforcement forces on the eastern flank.

It might also become necessary for NATO to return to previous discussions about establishing permanent bases on the eastern flank as an effective deterrent against Russia. Furthermore, NATO has to acknowledge the Russian nuclear doctrine (first use of tactical nuclear weapons on a conventional battlefield if necessary to 'de-escalate' a conflict). NATO must be prepared to deal with such scenarios, develop a clear strategy and demonstrate political will with regard to such threats.

The West must therefore send the right signals to Russia. So far, this message may have been perceived by the Kremlin as ambiguous, which allows for misperceptions and miscalculations in Moscow and could lead to aggressive Russian actions. The U.S. presence in the region is and will probably remain rather symbolic and limited to a relatively small force (even though the U.S. is still the largest military contributor). The U.S. expects Europe to become more involved in ensuring security in the Baltic Sea region; thus, the scale and sustained nature of the European contribution, as well as the political and military credibility of the Western European allies, will be crucial, but also remain a question mark.[20]

The continued under-financing of the armed forces of Western Europe may limit the sustainable military capabilities and could affect the ability to be continuously present on the eastern flank, as agreed in Wales. Only small increases in some of the Western European countries are planned for the years to come. Therefore, there is a need for Europe to take security and defence more seriously and realize that the changes made thus far may not prove sufficient to meet the challenge.

---

15. Witold Rodkiewicz, Jadwiga Rogoża, Agata Wierzbowska-Miazga, *Russian Policy towards Ukraine: Local Action, Global Goals*, OSW Analysis, 20 August 2014, http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-08-20/russian-policy-towards-ukraine-local-actions-global-goals
16. Justyna Gotkowska, *Russian War Games in the Baltic Sea Region: The Swedish Case*, OSW Analysis, 22 October 2014, http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-10-22/russian-war-games-baltic-sea-region-swedish-case
17. Thomas Frear, Łukasz Kulesa, Ian Kearns, Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014, European Leadership Network, *Policy Brief*, November 2014, http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/dangerous-brinkmanship-close-military-encounters-between-russia-and-the-west-in-2014_2101.html
18. NATO,The Readiness Action Plan, update from 25.06.2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm
19. Tomasz Siemoniak, *Polish Defense Priorities in a Changed European Security Environment*, speech at CSIS, 19 May 2015, http://mon.gov.pl/aktualnosci/artykul/najnowsze/2015-05-18-wicepremier-tomasz-siemoniak-z-wizyta-w-usa/
20. Justyna Gotkowska, *NATO's Presence in the Baltic States: Reassurance of Allies or Deterrence for Russia?* OSW Commentary, 29 April 2015, http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2015-04-29/natos-presence-baltic-states-reassurance-allies-or-deterrence

Why Narva is not next

Andres Kasekamp

Andres Kasekamp is Professor of Baltic Politics at the University of Tartu and the Deputy Director of the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute. He holds a PhD in modern history from University College London and has been a visiting professor at the University of Toronto and Humboldt University Berlin. His book, *A History of the Baltic States*, has been translated into eight languages.

Since the annexation of Crimea, analysts have asked, 'Is Narva next?' The international media has descended on Narva to ask whether 'little green men' could suddenly appear there. An Estonian border town 150 km from St. Petersburg with an overwhelmingly Russian-speaking population, Narva is a symbol for the larger Baltic question and the future of NATO. A chorus of prominent analysts and public figures, including former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, have warned of the 'high probability' of future Russian action against the Baltic states.[21]

Indeed, there is abundant evidence of increasing military activity in the Baltic Sea region as a spill-over from the Ukrainian crisis. Russian air force planes have been flying in a dangerous manner with their transponders switched off, and Russian warships have made their presence felt. In response, NATO has beefed up its air policing mission and increased troop deployment for exercises to reassure the Baltic states and deter Russia.

Although there might initially appear to be some superficial similarities to the Ukrainian case, the differences are clearly more significant. First of all, the Baltic states are members of NATO and the EU, and Russian action against them would therefore have immeasurably graver consequences.

The success of the Crimean operation depended on an element of surprise; few expected or planned for Ukraine to be attacked by Russia. The Russian preparations went undetected (or were at least not correctly understood). It was able to use its military bases already on Ukrainian territory, and top Ukrainian commanders defected to the Russian side. Russian actions exploited a unique post-revolutionary situation with confusion regarding the legitimacy of the interim authorities in Kiev. The border with Russia in eastern Ukraine was lengthy, porous and weakly guarded. The fact that the Ukrainian forces did not open fire in Crimea encouraged Putin to believe that the same could be easily accomplished in eastern Ukraine. When Ukrainian forces resisted, however, they succeeded in winning back territory until Russian forces intervened directly.

In contrast to Ukraine, Estonia has the capacity to respond quickly. Estonia is a well-governed state and one of the least corrupt in Europe. The country capitulated meekly to the USSR in 1940 in the vain hope of not provoking Moscow: the lesson drawn in the contemporary Estonian defence doctrine is always to offer military resistance. The Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces has stated that the first 'little green man' to appear on Estonian soil will be shot immediately.[22]

Hybrid war is nothing new for the Baltic states, which have already experienced elements of hybrid war, including cyber-attacks, economic pressure and disinformation campaigns. Even the Soviet-sponsored, failed Communist

insurrection in 1924 had many common features with events in 2014, as did the Soviet annexation in 1940. A key feature of the Russian operations in Ukraine has been the denial of direct military involvement. Thus, the separatists claim to have obtained their Russian arms and equipment from overrun Ukrainian bases – which is impossible, since Estonian forces only use standard NATO equipment. Putin does not consider Ukraine to be a genuine nation, but rather a part of the larger Russian nation – Greater Russia (and many Russians agree with him). However, even Putin understands that Estonia, though small, is completely distinct – there is no historical dispute about Narva belonging to Estonia.

Perhaps the greatest concern has been caused not by the military but rather the ethnic factor. Putin has justified aggression against Ukraine with the need to 'protect' Russian-speakers. This is a dangerous fall-back to the pre-1945 world, where dictators claimed the right to change borders by force to bring co-ethnics into their fold. Putin's reasoning in Ukraine is a dramatic escalation from the spurious excuse, used six years earlier in South Ossetia, of protecting Russian *citizens*.

Russophones in Ukraine were swayed by the demonstration of power and rational calculations to side with the victor. Material considerations also played a role; for instance, pensions are higher in Russia than in Ukraine. Such incentives do not apply in the Baltic case, where the standard of living is higher than in Russia. This is especially evident in the border areas, with the Pskov Oblast bordering Estonia and Latvia one of the poorest in the entire Russian Federation. People in Narva regularly cross the bridge to Ivangorod and are well aware of how life is more miserable on the Russian side of the border. Narva's supermarkets became a popular destination for consumers from St. Petersburg after Putin slapped counter-sanctions on EU agricultural produce. Wages are lower and unemployment higher than in Tallinn, but Narva's economic statistics are similar to those of other peripheral Estonian towns far from the capital.

While most Estonian Russophones support the annexation of Crimea, it would be wrong to jump to the conclusion that they would desire similar Russian intervention at home. Indeed, the images of carnage in eastern Ukraine are a powerful argument in favour of maintaining peace. Rather than asking residents for their opinion about Crimea or Putin, it would be more insightful to ask whether they would prefer roubles to euros or the Russian healthcare system to the Estonian one. Even Estonian Russophones who are non-citizens enjoy the right to freely travel and work within the EU, a privilege that would be sorely missed. Although there is a sharp contrast between Estonian and Russian-speakers in terms of their support for NATO and perceptions of a threat from Moscow, more importantly, there is little difference regarding the will to defend their country. [23]

It was previously believed that the integration of the Russian minority would be resolved over time – that Soviet nostalgia would fade with the passing of the older generation. The first warning signal that this assumption was false came with the conflict over the relocation of the Tallinn Soviet war monument ('the Bronze soldier') in 2007. Russia has used its 'compatriots' instrumentally in order to undermine societal integration and maintain a sense of grievance and marginalization. The conflict in Ukraine has been accompanied by an unprecedented level and sophistication of hostile information warfare. Most Estonians and Russophones live in separate information spaces, with Russian TV being the prime source for the latter. The Baltic states were among those who proposed that the EU take countermeasures to combat Russian media falsifications. The Estonian government has decided to fund a new Russian language TV channel – not to provide counter-propaganda, but to strengthen the identity of the local community.

Some analysts have argued that it is not important what people in Narva actually think, because Russia could ignite trouble simply by inserting a few outsiders. A related question is whether NATO allies would be willing to 'die for Narva'? The logic of this hypothetical argument is that Putin's ultimate aim is not territorial expansion, but rather dividing the West by undermining NATO and the EU. An operation limited to Narva could leave NATO with a dilemma in terms of how to respond, especially since Russian military policy envisages the 'de-escalation' of conflicts by nuclear means, i.e. threatening to carry out a limited tactical strike to convince NATO to refrain from coming to the assistance of an ally under attack. Andrei Piontkovsky has turned this question around, asking whether Putin is willing to die for Narva.[24] Such a gamble would obviously involve high risks for Putin, but the Russian leader has demonstrated that he is much less risk-averse than Western leaders.

Visiting Tallinn in September 2014, U.S. President Obama stated that the 'the defence of Tallinn and Riga and Vilnius is just as important as the defence of Berlin and Paris and London'.[25] In order for the validity of this statement not to be tested, deterrent must be credible.

21. Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, 'Putin Could Attack Baltic States Warns former Nato Chief'. *The Telegraph*, 5 February 2015. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11393707/Putin-could-attack-Baltic-states-warns-former-Nato-chief.html
22. Sam Jones, 'Estonia Ready to Deal with Russia's "Little Green Men". *Financial Times*, 13 May 2015. Available at: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/03c5ebde-f95a-11e4-ae65-00144feab7de.html
23. Juhan Kivirähk, *Integrating Estonia's Russian-Speaking Population: Findings of National Defense Opinion Surveys* (Tallinn: International Centre for Defence and Security, December 2014). Available at: http://www.icds.ee/publications/article/integrating-estonias-russian-speaking-population-findings-of-national-defense-opinion-surveys/
24. Paul Goble, 'Refusing to "Die for Narva" Would Be End of NATO and the West, Piontkovsky Says' *The Interpreter*, 29 April 2015. Available at: http://www.interpretermag.com/refusing-to-die-for-narva-would-be-end-of-nato-and-the-west-piontkovsky-says/
25. The White House, 'Remarks by President Obama to the People of Estonia', Tallinn, Estonia, 3 September 2014. Available at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/03/remarks-president-obama-people-estonia.

Norway, the Ukraine crisis and Baltic Sea security

Paal Sigurd Hilde

Paal Sigurd Hilde is Associate Professor at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies (IFS), Norwegian Defence University College.

Norwegian Minister of Defence Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide has repeatedly stated that the Ukraine crisis has led to a 'lasting change' in the European security landscape. The crisis has undoubtedly had a dramatic impact on perceptions of European security. The extensive media coverage garnered by two studies by the European Leadership Network with titles conjuring images from the Cold War – 'Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters between Russia and the West in 2014' and 'Preparing for the Worst: Are Russian and NATO Military Exercises Making War in Europe more Likely?' – serve as good examples.[27]

Despite the Defence Minister's strong words, the effect of the Ukraine crisis on *Norwegian* security policy has been far less dramatic. It has served to highlight the increasing Russian military and 'hybrid' capability and its willingness to use it. Nevertheless, the Norwegian response has primarily been one of change of intensity and scope rather than direction. The reason is simple: already in late 2007/early 2008, the renewed self-assertiveness of Russian foreign and security policy moved Russia back to its traditional place in the front and centre of Norwegian security policy. The August 2008 Georgia crisis served as a watershed in NATO for renewed attention to Russia. For Norway, the crisis was more a catalyst for the attention and support garnered by a Norwegian initiative to make the Alliance more visible and better capable of meeting domestic challenges.

In essence, the Ukraine crisis has thus served mainly to intensify the Norwegian pursuit of the security policy it has promoted since 2007–08. In other words, the crisis has triggered 'more of the same' rather than 'lasting change'.

THE BALTIC SEA REGION IN NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY

One of the few substantial changes in Norwegian security policy, the Ukraine crisis has provoked the 'discovery' of the Baltic Sea region. Traditionally, the Baltic has held a peripheral position in the Norwegian security outlook.[28] With a lengthy coastline and an economy heavily reliant on maritime trade and offshore riches, the Norwegian emphasis on having 'Allies with strong naval forces' predates the Cold War.[29] The build-up from the 1960s of the Soviet Northern Fleet on the Kola Peninsula intensified this emphasis. With the strong Swedish military forming a 'Chinese wall' against attacks directly from the east, from the Baltic region, Norwegian Cold War security and defence policy was almost exclusively directed towards the north and the sea.

At the end of the Cold War, defence cooperation stood at the core in Norway´s security and defence policy towards the Baltic region. Norway quickly joined its Nordic neighbours in supporting the efforts of the Baltic states to establish armed forces and, later, join NATO. The Nordic capacity-building assistance lasted until the accession of the Baltic states to NATO (and the EU) in 2004. Since then, the main emphasis has been on more equal bi- and multilateral defence cooperation.

An imperfect but adequate indicator for the significance of the Baltic region in Norwegian security policy is the attention awarded it in the security policy chapters of the long-term plans for the Norwegian armed forces. In the last 15 years, parliament has adopted four (main) such plans: in 2001 (St. prp. nr. 45 for the period 2002–05), in 2004

(St. prp. nr. 42 for 2005–08), in 2008 (St. prp. nr. 48 for 2009–12) and in 2012 (Prop. 73S for 2013–16). In these plans, the word 'Baltic'[30] is mentioned 11 times in 2001, 10 times in 2004, 17 times in 2008 and four times in 2012.[31] While several of the documents note the significance of the Baltic region as part of Norway's neighbourhood, overwhelmingly the word 'Baltic' appears in a sub-chapter on Nordic–Baltic defence cooperation. Only the 2008 plan expresses concern for the security situation in the region; yet also here, about half of the references are in the context of Nordic–Baltic defence cooperation.

THE IMPACT OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS

The Ukraine crisis rendered the Baltic region the focal point of tension between NATO and Russia. The NATO assurance measures adopted in the spring of 2014 were primarily directed towards the Baltic states and Poland. Also in Norway, the Baltic saw a substantial spike in attention. Norwegian ministers, including the Prime Minister, publicly emphasized the significance of Norwegian participation in exercises in the Baltic states and Baltic Sea – and Norway's overall contribution to the NATO assurance measures.[32] Furthermore, participation in exercises planned well before the Ukraine crisis, which otherwise most probably would have gone unnoticed politically, were now highlighted. Concern for the situation in the Baltic became a frequent topic in speeches by Norwegian politicians, particularly the Minister of Defence.[33] By comparison, prior to the Ukraine crisis, the Norwegian attention to and emphasis on the Steadfast Jazz 2013 exercise – a politically important exercise for Poland and the Baltic states – was limited.

In the report from a group of experts appointed by the Ministry of Defence in late 2014 to assess Norwegian security and defence policy in the run-up to the next long-term plan, the word 'Baltic' is mentioned 22 times.[34] Not one is a traditional reference to defence cooperation; rather, the report emphasizes the security situation in the Baltic region. It notes, for instance, that '(t)he Baltic states are randomly being subject to pressure from Russia and perceive the situation to be challenging. Sweden and Finland, which Russia considers Western and NATO-friendly, are also concerned about Russia's behaviour in the region'.[35]

The report also highlights the significance, both directly and indirectly, of the Baltic region for Norwegian security. Most significantly, it uses collective defence in the Baltic as one of three scenarios to 'illustrate some of the situations the Armed Forces must be prepared for.'[36]

WHY THE EMPHASIS?

Two interlinked factors explain the current emphasis on the Baltic region. The first and most obvious is the tense situation in the region and Norway's desire to contribute to the success of NATO's assurance measures and the wider Readiness Action Plan adopted at the 2014 Wales Summit. The current emphasis in NATO on visibility and engagement in-area is precisely what Norway has sought since 2007–08. Oslo realizes that it must put its money where its mouth is. Moreover, participation in assurance measures in the Baltic states and Poland have largely replaced participation in operations as the standard for showing solidarity and participating in NATO burden-sharing. Norwegian engagement in, and emphasis on, the Baltic region is, thus, a natural expression of its traditional emphasis on keeping NATO strong, visible and engaged at home.

The second factor is less obvious but equally important. The Ukraine crisis and subsequent tension between NATO and Russia have triggered a significant increase in Russian military activity, frequently perceived as provocative, in the Baltic region. In other words, the increased tension has led to dramatic change. In the European Arctic, where Norway borders Russia, the picture is different. Russian military activity has also increased there, but the change has been

neither as radical nor the activity as openly provocative as in the Baltic region. As regards the effect of the Ukraine crisis on European Arctic relations ('the High North'), the report from the group of experts concludes that '(t)hus far, the consequences have been modest'.[37]

To borrow words from Norwegian High North policy, the continued low tension in the High North has thus allowed Norway to emphasize its engagement in the Baltic region. Had tension at home – in the North – been more dramatic, Norway would most likely have focused its limited military strength there and worked even harder to secure a visible NATO and U.S. presence in Norway and off its coasts.

To conclude, the Ukraine crisis has not had a dramatic impact on Norwegian security policy. It has, however, put the Baltic Sea region on Norway's security policy map like never before. Two core reasons explain this: that the Baltic region has been the focal point of Russian military activity and NATO–Russia tension and that the High North has not. Yet there are good reasons to question how lasting and deeply embedded the current emphasis on the Baltic really is. The strategic factors underlying Norwegian security policy, notably the significance of the North and the seas surrounding Norway, have not changed. In other words, Norway's interests in supporting NATO's assurance measures in the Baltic region should be seen as more political than strategic. The space to watch in the development of Norwegian security policy is when Norway again seeks to draw the Alliance's attention towards issues and areas of strategic significance for Norway. A Norwegian initiative emphasizing NATO's naval forces and maritime engagement would, for instance, not be surprising in the preparation for the 2016 Warsaw Summit.

---

26. E.g. '"NATO in an Era of Global Competition" – A Norwegian Perspective', 20 June 2014, https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/aktuelt/NATO-in-and-Area-of-Global-Competition/id764468/
27. The reports are found at www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org.
28. See Paal Sigurd Hilde: 'Nordic–Baltic Security and Defence Cooperation – the Norwegian Perspective', in Ann-Sofie Dahl and Pauli Järvenpää (eds.), *Northern Security and Global Politics: Nordic–Baltic Strategic Influence in a Post-Unipolar World* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 93–107.
29. Olav Riste quoted in ibid.
30. Search words in Norwegian were 'Baltikum', 'baltisk' and 'Østersjø(en)' (Norwegian for the Baltic Sea).
31. The documents may be found here: https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokument/prop/id1753/?ownerid=380
32. See e.g. reference to Prime Minister Erna Solberg in 'Sender hærstyrke til NATO-øvelse i Latvia' https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/Sender-harstyrke-til-NATO-ovelse-i-Latvia/id2000025/
33. See e.g. Speech by Ine Eriksen Søreide: 'One for all, all for one', 18 March 2015, https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/speech-by-ine-eriksen-soreide-one-for-all-all-for-one/id2401315/.
34. Group of Experts: *Unified Effort*, (1 May) 2015, https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/fd/dokumenter/unified-effort.pdf.
35. Ibid. p. 17.
36. Ibid. p. 55.
37. Ibid. p. 20.


ESPAGNE
SLOVENIE
SLOVAQUIE

A2/AD Strategy for deterring Russia in the Baltics

Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen

Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen is Professor MSO at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen. He was previously the Head of the Strategy and Policy Office at the Danish Ministry of Defence. From 2010 to 2014 he was the director of the Centre for Military Studies. He has recently published *The Military's Business* with Cambridge University Press.

Christian's Island in the Baltic Sea is the eastern-most point of Denmark. The island remains the property of the Ministry of Defence, with a commandant appointed by the Minister, a remnant of the war Denmark fought with Britain from 1807 to 1814. This was primarily a naval confrontation which occasionally spilled onto land, as when Royal Marines occupied the island of Anholt in 1809, fortifying the lighthouse and renaming it Fort York.

Having been deprived of its main ships of the line after the British bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807, the Danish navy had to rely on smaller ships such as the Kallundborg Class, which was 20 meters long with a crew of 70 sailors that manned the oars and the two guns. The Kallundborg Class was part of a fleet of 250 vessels, which might seem rather feeble compared to the previous standards of the Danish navy but was nonetheless able to engage 96 British naval vessels, including 16 ships of the line and 30,000 sailors and marines, as the British tried to keep the Baltic trade open. The Danish skirmishers forced British ships into convoys, but despite the Royal Navy protection, the Danes were able to seize British shipping amounting to a value of half the Danish Crown's pre-war annual revenue.

The remains of one of the bases can still be found on Christian's Island. The main fortifications, however, were around Copenhagen and at Kronborg, which were the strongpoints of a system including 96 fortifications with 900 guns in Denmark supplemented by 1,000 guns in Norwegian fortifications.[38] Using these fortifications and the small vessels, the Danes were able to deny the British command of the seas and increase the cost of maintaining control over the seas to the point where Britain paid a considerable military and commercial price for operating in the Baltic and Kattegat. This was a nineteenth century version of what current American maritime strategists term Anti-Access and Area Denial.

Anti-Access and Area Denial (A2/AD) is also the U.S. perspective on the Chinese investment in missiles, submarines, command and control assets, and other military systems that dramatically increase the cost of the U.S. power projection west of Japan. A2/AD strategies are presenting the United States with the prospect of losing planes and even carriers in a military confrontation that the U.S. is largely unprepared for after the 15-year focus on counterinsurgency operations and the subsequent period of austerity. This means that the U.S. force structure depends on very low levels of attrition. By increasing the costs of intervention in this manner, the Chinese are attempting to deter the United States and ultimately challenge the United States status as a western Pacific power.[39]

A2/AD is changing the premise for the use of force by Western powers, which since the end of the Cold War have relied on the ability to project power virtually unopposed. For a number of observers, recent Russian actions demonstrate that this is an issue in Europe as well as Asia.

Richard Fontaine and Julianne Smith argue that Russia has the capability to 'deny access to the countries on NATO's eastern flank long enough to establish facts on the ground that would be hard, and perhaps impossible to reverse'.[40] The House of Commons Defence Committee followed the same line of argument when it concluded in a 2014 report that NATO 'was poorly prepared for a Russian attack on the Baltic, and that poor state of preparation might itself increase the likelihood of a Russian attack'.[41] From this perspective, A2/AD capabilities prevent Western relief of the Baltic states in the same manner as Chinese capabilities might prevent the relief of Taiwan.

A2/AD thus reduces the value of deterrence because it increases the costs of helping allies to the point where the commitment to do so might be called into question. As such, these capabilities encourage behaviour that challenges the Western will to project power. For example, China has done so by declaring an Area Defence Zone that the United States subsequently challenged, flying strategic bombers through the zone.

In the eyes of some, Russia is following a similar script in the Baltic region. After the Russian intervention in Ukraine, the Baltic region became a focal point for Russian challenges to the West. Russian military capabilities in the Baltic region are nowhere near the military assets that the USSR was formerly able to deploy.[42] In order to pursue an A2/AD strategy, however, the full spectrum of Cold War capabilities is hardly necessary.

Russia has thus increased its military activity in the Baltic Sea region. *The European Leadership Network* counted 40 air incidents and three naval incidents in the region from March 2014 to March 2015.[43] The 40 air incidents are more than a third of the total number of NATO's incidents with Russia in that period (note that Sweden and Finland are obviously not Alliance members). The majority of these incidents consisted of the habitual harassment of NATO planes that took part in the NATO air policing operation in the Baltic countries.

A number of more dramatic incidents did occur, however. In November 2014, there were sightings of a supposed Russian submarine in the Stockholm Archipelago. In March and December 2014, a Russian military aircraft flying without using its transponders almost collided with a commercial airliner in the region. According to the Danish Defence Intelligence Service, the increased Russian air activity in the region took place as part of the largest Russian air exercise in the region since 1991. In its public *Risk Assessment 2014*, DDIS concludes that 'even though most flight patterns were familiar, some of the activities were of a more offensive character than observed in recent years and likely also involved simulated missile attacks by tactical aircraft against Danish territory'.[44]

What Russia is really challenging with these and other actions is the credibility of deterrence in the region. The complicated Alliance structure, which includes NATO members and nonaligned countries with separate and sometimes complicated bilateral relations with Russia, gives Moscow scope for probing the cohesion of the countries in the region. A2/AD capabilities become a part of that, but these capabilities can also become an effective countermeasure to Russian incursions, thereby demonstrating the solidarity, Alliance commitments and military capabilities of the countries in the region.

Just like the Danes were able to deny the Royal Navy easy access to the Baltic and dramatically increased the costs for operating there during the Napoleonic Wars, A2/AD capabilities can underscore and enhance the deterrence capabilities of the Alliance and partners in the Baltic Sea. The Danish experience 200 years ago demonstrates that in the brown water maritime environment of the region, A2/AD makes considerable sense. This was also the experience during the Cold War, when NATO, Sweden and Finland

were focusing on closing the Baltic to Warsaw Pact forces in the event of an attack and preventing Warsaw Pact forces access to the territory of Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

Since the end of the Cold War, military technology and the geopolitical realities around the Baltic have changed, but this only increases A2/AD capabilities: a coherent effort between NATO and partner countries in the region would deny Russia the possibility of operating in ways that challenge the deterrence posture. One cannot prevent reckless flying by Russian military planes, for example, but the significance of these actions can be greatly diminished by a coherent response that demonstrates a capability to counter the access of Russian military platforms to the region and denies Russian forces the Baltic Sea as an area of operations in the event of hostilities.

The strategic aim for an A2/AD approach in the Baltic should be to (1) demonstrate the capacity to make the Baltic Sea a 'poisoned lake' and (2) demonstrate the ability to rapidly come to the support of the Baltic countries. Closing off the Baltic Sea would thus mean the opportunity to prevent the 2,900 tons of cargo that sails annually to the Russian ports in the Baltic Sea (2013 figures) [45] from reaching their destination. This is more than half the container throughput in Russian ports, and if one includes the substantial traffic through Baltic and Finish ports in the blockade, stopping the container traffic in the Baltic Sea would have potentially serious consequences for the Russian economy and enable that which T.X. Hammes has termed 'off-shore control'.[46]

Obviously, this would not directly influence the all-important Russian oil sector, nor would it prevent Russia from redirecting trade to Arctic or Pacific ports, but by making the Baltic Sea a 'poisoned lake', the costs of incursions would increase dramatically. Since the issue is deterrence, increasing the potential costs of operations should serve to direct Russian ambitions elsewhere. This would be an obvious benefit to the nations in the regions, but also a benefit to NATO, since Russian ambitions are more manageable elsewhere.

In the nineteenth century, the Danish conflict with the British primarily demonstrated the ability to use asymmetrical strategies to great advantage in the Baltic Sea. Proving that point did not win the war for the Danes, however. The current security environment is very different and presents more opportunities for an A2/AD strategy, the crucial difference being that Denmark is allied (in various ways) with all of the countries in the Baltic – except Russia. This should make an A2/AD strategy a credible deterrent. It is also an inherently defensive deterrent type, which therefore suits the strategic culture of the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes.

One more lesson is worth remembering, however. After the England Wars, Anglo–Danish relations returned to normal fairly quickly and, over time, developed into the close ties we see today. If history teaches us anything, it is to be good at deterrence but equally good at furthering a peaceful dialogue.

38. Ole Frantzen et al., *Danmarks krigshistorie 700–2010* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, Gads Forlag, 2010).
39. Mikkel V. Rasmussen, *The Military's Business: Designing Military Power for the Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 116–125.
40. Richard Fontaine and Julianne Smith, 'Anti-Access/Area Denial Isn't Just for Asia Anymore', 2 April 2015, *DefenseOne*, http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2015/04/anti-accessarea-denial-isnt-just-asia-anymore/109108/
41. House of Commons Defence Committee, *Towards the Next Defence and Security Review*: Part Two-NATO, 22 July 2014, §41, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/358/35807.htm
42. Danish Defence Intelligence Service, *The DDIS Risk Assessment 2014: An Assessment of Developments Abroad Impacting on Danish Security* (Copenhagen: 2014), https://fe-ddis.dk/sitecollectiondocuments/fe/efterretningsmaessige-risikovurderinger/risikovurdering_2014_englishversionrv.pdf, pp 14–15.
43. http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2015/03/11/4264a5a6/ELN%20Russia%20-%20West%20Full%20List%20of%20Incidents.pdf.
44. *The DDIS Risk Assessment 2014*, p. 15.
45. http://www.globalports.com/globalports/about-us/our-industry-overview/container-market/key-russian-gateways.
46. T.X. Hammes, 'Off-Shore Control: A Proposed Strategy for an Unlikely Conflict', *Strategic Forum*, National Defence University, June 2012, http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a577602.pdf

Part 3
The Partners

NATO's Nordic partners

Ann-Sofie Dahl

The Enhanced Opportunities Programme (EOP) embarked upon by NATO at the Wales Summit in September 2014 provided the allies and partners with a new platform to take cooperation to the next level with a select group of partner countries. The EOP is a pragmatic and flexible model, based on individual, tailor-made arrangements with each of the five partners, often jokingly referred to as NATOs 'gold card holders'.

The process to create this new tool for deepened cooperation between allies and partners was based on two basic conclusions. First, the urgent need to further deepen military cooperation, create improved mechanisms for political consultations, and facilitate participation in NATO exercises and training – and much more – with a number of NATO's outstanding partners in regions of major strategic significance for the Alliance: all of which was achieved with the EOP.

The group of five represents the different categories of partnership that NATO has organized over the past two decades. More importantly, they also reflect the main strategic hotspots of today's world.[47] These range from the Asian–Pacific region, where Australia is NATOs primary partner, to Jordan – in the Middle Eastern turmoil next door to Syria – to Georgia, one of two countries with an individualized NATO Commission [48] – and on to the two partner countries in the strategically sensitive Baltic Sea: Sweden and Finland. Though profoundly different in many ways and thus confronted with a wide range of security concerns, all five EOP countries represent strategically important regions in which NATO must be able to rely on local partners that can be trusted to make solid contributions to enhancing security. Simply stated, these are partners that NATO needs to handle regional security – and vice versa.

The second conclusion behind the EOP departed from a sober realization on both sides that these are partners which, for various reasons, would not or could not join the Alliance as members in the foreseeable future. The reasons for this vary widely among the five partners. The two Nordic EO partners, Sweden and Finland, are reported to be warmly welcome into the group of allies the minute they decide to take this step, for which they are militarily, but not yet politically, ready.

The fact that the EOP countries are not on the path towards membership – and therefore not likely to be included in NATO collective defence measures any time soon – therefore necessitated a process of creative thinking in order to find other ways to further involve these partners in the efforts to maximize security in the various regions.

FROM PFP TO EOP

In this work, the Nordic partners have played active and constructive roles, as they have throughout the existence of the NATO partnership programmes. Sweden and Finland were actually the very first two countries to sign up for the first partnership model introduced by NATO, the Partnership for Peace, in May 1994. In the two decades since the creation of partnership, the two Nordics have taken advantage of every opportunity granted to them to cooperate with NATO, at HQ (through missions in the Manfred Wörner Building), in Mons and elsewhere, and in operations and missions world-wide, starting with KFOR and through ISAF (and, in the Swedish case, including the *Operation Unified Protector* in Libya).

Contrary to the majority of the countries in the (at that point) rapidly expanding group of partners, the two Nordics did not see the PfP as a first step towards NATO membership. Rather, partnership was seen as an instrument for politically and militarily strengthening the transatlantic ties and for developing and improving military interoperability with NATO after the many decades of (official) neutrality between the two blocs.[49] But after several rounds of enlargement – and especially after the 2004 'Big Bang' when seven countries transferred from partner status to membership, including the three Baltic states in the Nordic 'near abroad' – Sweden and Finland found themselves in the company of an extremely heterogeneous group of partners, consisting of the European nonaligned countries plus basically the faraway partners in 'the stans'.

The PfP had clearly become both obsolete and impractical. The need for a new model became even more urgent with the closing of ISAF, which had allowed the contributing partners to enter into a close and confidential relationship based on practical, day-to-day cooperation with NATO, with little distinction on the Afghanistan ground between ally and partner.[50] A new format was needed to maintain the level of close cooperation with those partners who had made significant contributions to ISAF and elsewhere; thus, the launch of the Enhanced Opportunities Program.

Again, the Nordic partners were actively involved already from the start – and even before. It was actually Sweden that came up with the original idea of comparing the EOP to a 'gold card' arrangement, where participants are rewarded for their contributions and given special privileges, but which involves obligations as well as rights and may be taken away from the 'cardholders' should they fail to deliver.[51] The concept was coordinated and fine-tuned with Finland, after which the two Nordics presented it as a joint idea to NATO, often referred to at NATO HQ as the Alliance's 'special special partners'.

At that point, the Russian intervention in Ukraine and illegal annexation of Crimea had further accelerated the process for finding a new *modus operandi* with the Nordic partners. Tension in the Baltic Sea had already increased noticeably in the years prior to February, 2014, with Russian military aggression at sea and in the air turning into a regular occurrence for the countries in the region – especially for the two nonaligned Nordics – and leaving the already vulnerable Baltic states in an even more exposed position. For the defence of the NATO allies in the region, the Baltic states and Poland in particular, the two Nordic partners are clearly key actors. 'History has shown that most military operations in the Baltic region require access to what is today Swedish and Finnish air, sea, and land', Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis argue.[52]

Together with the Danish island of Bornholm, the Finnish Åland Islands and Swedish Gotland – in the middle of the Baltic Sea and a short distance from Kaliningrad, and until recently without any military presence, and still with primarily a symbolic one – are strategic gems for any power aiming for control of the Baltic Sea. As Edward Lucas concludes in his recent report on Baltic security, '(i)f carried out successfully, control of those territories would make it all but impossible for NATO allies to reinforce the Baltic states'.[53]

IN LIEU OF MEMBERSHIP

The fact that the two countries in control of such strategic assets are not members of NATO adds a major complicating factor to Baltic Sea security. As mentioned above, however, NATO should not count on Sweden and Finland to change their security doctrines any time soon. Debate on defence and security has intensified in both countries, and opinion polls have shown a steady rise in the last few years in the number of Swedes and Finns in favour of NATO membership, with several polls even reporting a pro-NATO majority

in Sweden. Nevertheless, this should not be interpreted as a sign that Nordic applications are about to be submitted to NATO.

Optimistic speculations about a rapidly approaching change of doctrine in Sweden have all underestimated the degree and depth of support of what is still incorrectly referred to as 'neutrality' as well as the longevity of the many myths surrounding nonalignment. As three former ambassadors have pointed out, '[i]t is quite striking what a powerful role this call to "understand the Russian point of view" plays among the arguments of the opponents of Swedish NATO membership'.[54] In the Swedish case, despite growing popular support and several political parties changing their positions to advocating NATO membership (most recently both the Center Party and Christian Democrats), a solid and ideologically diverse majority in the *Riksdag* remains strongly opposed to such a step.

Since it is generally recognized that Sweden and Finland are not in a position to defend themselves on their own against outside aggression and NATO cannot protect the Baltic allies without the two Nordic partners, other forms and venues of cooperation are therefore necessary in lieu of a forthcoming change of doctrine. For Sweden,[55] apart from the EOP such cooperation includes NORDEFCO, extensive Swedish–Finnish defence cooperation – even envisioned by some to end in a formal defence alliance – bilateral agreements such as the one just signed with Poland and, of course, bilateral military cooperation with the U.S.. This intensified military cooperation on a bilateral basis with the U.S. is in many ways reminiscent, and in line with, the extended period of close cooperation which Sweden pursued throughout the Cold War with the Nordic NATO allies, the UK and in particular the U.S.; only now it is no longer secret.

Yet another highly valuable instrument has been provided by Denmark, which has stepped up in 2015 as the best friend of the two Nordic partners in NATO. An ambitious initiative to take enhanced partnership to the next level was introduced in the spring of 2015 by Denmark and focuses on four areas of cooperation: enhanced situational awareness, strategic communication, intelligence cooperation and military-to-military cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.[56] The work is expected to be finalized in time for the foreign ministerial in December 2015. [57]

A number of paths are thus at the disposal of the two Nordic partners to deepen the already existing forms of military and political cooperation. It is, however, important for Sweden and Finland to appreciate – and for NATO allies to point out – that partnership can only take a country so far and that there is a very clear, distinct line that excludes partners from the collective defence in Article 5; also for those in the top EOP league. And that the very best way for Sweden and Finland to enhance security in the Baltic Sea region is by joining NATO as full members.

47. For an extensive presentation of the different categories and forms of NATO partnership, see Trine Lockhardt, 'Introduction. Changing Partnerships in a Changing World', in Trine Lockhardt (ed.), *Cooperative Security: NATO's Partnership Policy in a Changing World* (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2014).
48. Three, if counting the NATO–Russia Council (NRC), which had been suspended after Russia's illegal intervention in Ukraine. The other one is the NATO Ukraine Commission (NUC).
49. Please note that 'neutrality' has not been a correct term to describe the official security doctrines of the two countries since 1995, when they both joined the EU, and changed the vocabulary in their doctrines to 'nonalignment'.
50. Ann-Sofie Dahl, 'Operational Partners or Allies-to-Be?', in Ann-Sofie Dahl (editor), *Trends and Threats: NATO in the 21st Century* (Copenhagen: Centre for Military Studies, 2014).
51. Interview, 19 May 2015.
52. Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis, 'The Baltic States: The United States Must Be Prepared to Fulfill Its NATO Treaty Obligations', *Backgrounder*, No 3039, 29 September 2015 (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation).
53. Edward Lucas, 'The Coming Storm: Baltic Sea Security Report', *Center for European Policy Analysis*, June 2015, p. 9.
54. Tomas Bertelman, Johan Molander, and Sven-Olof Peterson, 'Myths about Russia and Swedish Non-Alliance', The American Interest, 18 August 2015.
55. The next chapter, by Karoliina Honkanen, provides a detailed presentation of Finnish policy.
56. Interviews in Brussels and Copenhagen, May and June, 2015.
57. It has also been suggested from the Swedish side that NATO should establish a Baltic Sea Commission, similar to the format that Ukraine and Georgia have with NATO. Anna Wieslander, 'A "New Normal" for NATO and Baltic Sea Security', *Atlantic Council*, 5 October 2015.

Finnish views on partnership cooperation

Karoliina Honkanen

Karoliina Honkanen is currently Defence Counsellor at the Mission of Finland to NATO in Brussels. She has previously worked in various functions in the Finnish Ministry of Defence, the Finnish Defence Command and the Finnish institute of International Affairs. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs nor the Finnish Ministry of Defence.

Finland is a close and active NATO partner and has long cooperated with the Alliance in crisis management operations and other activities. For the first time during the two decades of Finland's partnership cooperation with NATO, the Alliance now has a strong and renewed focus on north-east Europe due to the shifts in the security environment. In this situation, there is a clear mutual interest for the Allies and regional partners to exchange views and deepen their cooperation.

Three topics will be touched upon here from the Finnish perspective. First, the Finnish views on the Enhanced Opportunities partnership (EOP) will be introduced, which is the key framework for Finland's cooperation with NATO. Second, Finland's view on NATO's role in the region and how Finland herself is adapting to the new security environment will be described. Third, a few pragmatic suggestions will be offered about what the Allies and partners could do together to counter the security challenges in the region.

The Finnish approach to partnership cooperation with NATO is substance-driven and pragmatic. The main goal has always been to maintain and develop the defence capability and interoperability of the Finnish Defence Forces, and this purpose will also remain valid in the future.[58] The new government, which took office in May 2015, is committed to continuing this close pragmatic cooperation with NATO.[59]

The scope of the Finnish cooperation with NATO is wide – ranging from operations, training and exercises and capabilities cooperation to cyber defence, civil emergency planning and involvement in NATO's activities to reinforce stability and security and defence sector reform in third countries. Finland also cooperates closely with NATO's agencies and contributes personnel to the NATO Command Structure and NATO Force Structure. In addition to this pragmatic cooperation, Finland considers political dialogue of utmost importance. This dialogue should take place on all levels, including the highest political one.

Finland and Sweden have very similar goals in their partnership cooperation with NATO, and the two countries have worked together to shape NATO's partnership policies. The EOP framework, launched at the Wales Summit in September 2014, reflects the Finnish and Swedish long-time thinking on partnerships, as it is tailor-made and flexible. Since the partners constitute a very heterogeneous group, cooperation needs to be tailored according to the diverging interests, objectives and capabilities of the partners. Instead of being a fixed group, the EOP constitutes a platform for individualized cooperation between each EOP and the Alliance.

The EOP enables the capable and willing partners to go even deeper in the existing areas of cooperation and to identify new opportunities for cooperation. In the Finnish view, the EOP should be mutually beneficial and thus provide added value not only to the EO partners but to the

Allies as well. On the national level, the efforts have very much focused on the practical and systematic implementation of the EOP. To this end, the Finnish Defence Forces have prepared a roadmap for EOP cooperation. The key areas in the coming years will include participation in demanding exercises and the Enhanced NRF (NATO Response Force). While EOP is the priority for Finland, it also finds the Interoperability Platform (IP), currently consisting of 25 partners, to be a useful format.

CHANGES IN THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Finland shares the same understanding of the Baltic Sea security situation as the Allies. It has consistently condemned the Russian aggression against Ukraine as a violation of international law and has consistently stood behind the EU sanctions against Russia. Finland has seen the increased Russian military activity in the air and on the sea as well increasing exercise activity, some of which has taken place close to its borders.

From the Finnish perspective, NATO's role in the Baltic Sea region is a stabilizing factor. It is important that there is no doubt about NATO's commitment to fulfil its Article 5 obligations, should the need arise. The assurance and adaptation measures of the RAP (Readiness Action Plan) are welcome from a Finnish perspective. It is essential that all of these measures are defensive, proportionate and in line with NATO's international commitments.

The Finnish response to the changed security environment is twofold: First, it has always taken good care of its own defensive capability and will continue to do so. To mention a few examples of the level of activity:

- The Finnish defence solution relies on general conscription and territorial defence. Finland annually trains approximately 20,000 conscripts and 26,000 reservists, regularly organizing demanding, large-scale exercises. In June 2015, for example, there was an army exercise involving some 10,000 personnel (Wihuri 15) in Northern Carelia.

- Regarding funding, there is broad political and popular support for increased defence spending in the coming years. Finland is seeking to maintain a balanced defence budget, also in the future, with over 20% of the defence budget allocated for the procurement of new material.

- An important element of Finnish security is the concept of comprehensive security, which aims at seamless cooperation between the various authorities and agencies to address interconnected security challenges. This system of intensive cooperation helps it address the consequences of asymmetric, hybrid warfare.

Secondly, Finland continues to deepen its international defence cooperation in several fora: with NATO, in the EU, NORDEFCO, the Nordic–Baltic framework and bilaterally. Currently, there are ongoing efforts to deepen the Finnish–Swedish bilateral defence cooperation. In January 2015, the defence forces of both countries put forward a report with recommendations for practical steps for closer bilateral cooperation, covering all services and joint capability areas.[60] The focus on the national defence capability, the bilateral Finnish–Swedish cooperation and the NORDEFCO activities all support the NATO efforts in the Baltic Sea Region.

HOW CAN WE MEET THE CHALLENGES?

From the Finnish perspective, there is much that the Allies and partners in the region can do together to tackle the challenges that we share. The EOP provides a good framework to do so. To mention four concrete proposals, some of which have already been initiated:

1. NATO and its regional partners should share informa-

tion and exchange views on the strategic situation in the region as well as on concrete activities. This would help produce a better situational picture capable of contributing to a shared understanding.

2. NATO and its regional partners should continue their close cooperation as well as identify new opportunities for cooperation on exercises. Finland and Sweden already participate actively in NATO exercises and exercise together with the fighter squadrons of Allied countries participating in the Baltic Air Policing. Examples from the spring of 2015 include BRTE (Baltic Regional Training Event), BALTOPS and Saber Strike. In addition to NATO exercises, the Allies and partners in the region could consider opening up and linking their national exercises more in the region.

3. NATO and its partners should work together towards enhancing the military transparency in the region. The increased military activity in the Baltic Sea region underlines the importance of various confidence-building and transparency measures, such as Open Skies as well as Vienna document instruments to notify exercise. As NATO and its partners continue to implement the existing CBM and transparency instruments, we should call on Russia to do the same. Moreover, the countries should work together to modify the Vienna document instruments in light of the Ukraine crisis.

4. NATO and its regional partners should share best practices on e.g. combatting hybrid threats and on building resilience. In addition, the efforts to increase EU–NATO cooperation in response to hybrid threats should be intensified.

To sum up, there is abundant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation while keeping in mind that differences between the Allies and partners continue to exist.

---

58. Karoliina Honkanen: 'Finland and NATO: Pragmatic Partners', in *Perspectives on European Security, STETE/The Finnish Committee for European Security Yearbook 2011*; Ministry of Defence/Tasks and Activities/Defence Policy/Cooperation with NATO, www.defmin.fi.
59. The Strategic Programme of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government, 29 May 2015, states that 'Finland is a militarily non-allied state which is engaged in a practical partnership with NATO and it maintains the option to seek NATO membership'. Available at http://www.vn.fi.
60. Final reports on deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden (17 February 2015); Joint statement regarding deepened defence cooperation between Finland and Sweden (22 May 2015). Available at www.regeringen.se and www.defmin.fi.

Conclusions

Ann-Sofie Dahl

The analyses presented by the authors above point towards a number of themes that are likely to remain of significance for security in the Baltic Sea region, and which will continue to shape and influence the debate, especially up to the Warsaw Summit in 2016. One such theme emphasized by the authors is the need for a long-term perspective. The gradual change in Russian behaviour, from being a putative partner of the West to a much less beneficial stance – including Russian challenges to principles that are central to the European order, such as disrespect for established borders and agreements and the active use of military instruments in foreign policy – will be with us for the foreseeable future. In this new and complex world, the Baltic Sea region will remain central to security, also beyond the region itself and in a broader, geopolitical context.

With a number of crises and conflicts currently competing for our strategic attention, it is therefore important not to gradually downgrade regional security, and lose track of the significant issues and values at stake there, with an impact far beyond our geographic borders.

Several authors also underline the need for a greater and deeper understanding of Russian military thinking – and of the role of the military in political and strategic thinking; all of which is key to the ability of the West to formulate a response to Russian aggression. Understanding Russia's intentions and capabilities, how they change over time and how they evolve in different contexts and sectors – from the Arctic over the Baltic and Black Seas to the Middle East and beyond, as well as through diplomatic fora such as strategic bilateral relationships, with NATO, the EU, the UN and elsewhere – is an important challenge for the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. To improve our shared and differing understanding of Russia, including disagreements over how to interpret the change in Russia's stance and how it will evolve in the future, will continue to be a crucial task.

Another theme underlines the importance of the military and political involvement of the United States for European security, and the challenges related to maintaining the transatlantic link, in spite of Russia's attempts to divide Europe. The 12-month period leading up to the U.S. presidential elections may be of particular importance in this respect, as Moscow might see it as a strategic window of opportunity.

At the 2014 Wales Summit, collective defence emerged as NATO's number one priority, with extensive packages to provide reassurance to the vulnerable allies bordering on Russia. In practical terms, however, collective defence, as pointed out above, is plagued by a number of uncertainties. One complicating factor in this regard is the nature of modern – Russian – warfare, which makes it increasingly difficult to determine when and how an attack has taken place, and subsequently for allies to reach agreement in this regard and take measures. The diverging, even conflicting, perspectives within the transatlantic community and inside Europe on the nature and extent of the current challenges are to some extent reminiscent of the 'old and new Europe' discussed a decade ago, and facilitate the Russian objective of dividing the West.

At the Wales Summit, the Allies agreed to the goal of 2% military spending. While some countries already meet this goal, it is equally important to spend wisely rather than

single-mindedly focusing on mere numbers, as is pointed out in the report. In the contemporary Baltic Sea region, it may also be necessary to revisit 'old' concepts, such as total defence and civil defence (an organizational model maintained primarily by Finland after the end of the Cold War) as part of a comprehensive approach to national defence.

As the authors note, the good news emerging from the current security situation is the fact that Nordic cooperation has perhaps never been better, closer or deeper than at present. Cooperation amongst the Nordics and within the extended group of the Nordic-Baltic 8 (NB8) has been rapidly expanding in a growing number of areas, within the NORDEFCO framework as well as bi- and even trilaterally in the Baltic Sea region. The stronger involvement of the three Baltic states in arrangements such as NORDEFCO would further strengthen both the regional effort as well as the NATO dimension.

A final theme mentioned here deals with NATO's two Nordic partners: Sweden and Finland. These countries will remain partners and are unlikely to become members of the Alliance in the foreseeable future. Cooperation with the two nonaligned countries – which jointly occupy a substantial and strategically vital part of the Baltic Sea shores – is likely to benefit by departing from recognition of this fact. Efforts should thus concentrate on ways to maximize the outcome of military and political cooperation, given the range of security doctrines in the region. A wide array of instruments is available and are being used, with participation in joint exercises only one of many. Additional value is provided by the increasing number of agreements that the two partners have entered into and which are mentioned in the report, such as the recent Swedish–Polish agreement on military cooperation, 'Host Nation Support' agreements with the U.S., and the extensive scheme of military cooperation which the two are currently involved in together with Denmark, providing yet another venue of close cooperation with NATO.

One line of argument here is that the present security situation provides an argument in favour of NATO membership vis-à-vis the two nonaligned countries. The fact that NATO membership does not happen overnight but involves a more or less lengthy formal and legal process – also for the Enhanced Partners – should be made clear to the two Nordic countries. In addition, as is pointed out on previous pages, it should be emphasized that, while a dialogue about security and stability in the Baltic Sea is of great importance in and of itself in order to enable all involved to see the challenges of today and tomorrow more clearly, such debate is no substitute for formal alliance membership and careful political action.

Baltic Sea Security · Conferance program

09:30 - 09:50 Welcome (Kristian Søby Kristensen, Centre for Military Studies)
09:50 - 10:00 Introducing the conference (Ann-Sofie Dahl, Centre for Military Studies)

10:00 - 11:45 Panel 1. **Security in the Baltic Sea region**
How has security in the Baltic Sea been affected by developments in the last year, how has the West handled the challenges so far, what are the views in the US and NATO – and what is Russia up to in the region?
Moderator: Ann-Sofie Dahl (Centre for Military Studies)
Speakers: Christopher Coker (London School of Economics)
Gudrun Persson (FOI, Stockholm)
Andras Simonyi (SAIS, Washington, DC)
James Mackey (NATO HQ)

12:45 - 14:30 Panel 2. **The Allies: How do we, and should we, meet the challenge?**
NATOs allies in the Nordic-Baltic region approach the current security challenges from different angles, depending on their national perspectives. What is going on in the Baltic Sea region, and how should we deal with it? Perspectives from Berlin, Warsaw, Tallinn, Oslo and Copenhagen.
Moderator: Kristian Søby Kristensen (Centre for Military Studies)
Speakers: Claudia Major (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin)
Justyna Gotkowska (Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw)
Andres Kasekamp (Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, Tallinn, University of Tartu)
Paal Sigurd Hilde (Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, Oslo)
Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (Ministry of Defence, Copenhagen)

15:00 - 16:30 Panel 3. **The partners: How can allies and partners work together to counter the challenges?**
Two of the countries in the Baltic Sea region are NATO partners, now part of the new Enhanced Partnership Program that was launched at the NATO Summit in Wales. How can Sweden and Finland contribute to enhancing security in the region, and how can the regional allies and partners work together to meet the challenges?
Moderator: Henrik Ø. Breitenbauch (Centre for Military Studies)
Speakers: Ann-Sofie Dahl (Centre for Military Studies)
Karoliina Honkanen (Finland's Delegation to NATO)
Jakob Henningsen (DANATO)

16:30-17:30 Conclusion and reception

The Centre for Military Studies is a research centre at the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. The centre undertakes research on security and defence issues as well as military strategy. This research constitutes the foundation for the policy research services that the centre provides for the Ministry of Defence and the political parties to the Defence Agreement.

This report is a part of the Centre for Military Studies' policy research service for the political parties behind the Defence Agreement. The purpose of the report is to inform and qualify debate and decision-making on Baltic Sea security. This is done by an analysis and discussion of the current situation, as well as of how the challenges to security and stability are met by the allies and partners in the region.

This report's analysis is based on scientific methodology and the report has undergone the quality control and peer review process of all CMS publications. Its conclusions should therefore not be understood as the reflection of the views and opinions of the Danish Government, the Danish Armed Forces or any other authority. For the conference program in its entirety, please refer to Appendix II.

The conference was organised with support from NATO Public Diplomacy Division.

Read more about the centre and its activities at

http://cms.polsci.ku.dk/.