DETERRENCE THROUGH ADAPTATION: THE CASE STUDY OF LATVIA

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The publication "Deterrence Through Adaptation: The Case Study of Latvia" offers a collection of articles that reflect on topical security issues of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Authors from Latvia discuss transforming regional security policies, indicating risks and opportunities for the deterrence posture of the Alliance from the perspective of several dimensions. Authors also provide realities and recommendations towards #NATO2030 adaptation process. Particular attention is devoted to the transatlantic collective defence, nuclear policy, cyberspace, strategic communication, space, resilience, and the role of other emerging elements and actors. Issues beyond traditional national security challenges are also addressed.

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Cover design: Mikus Kovalevskis
Layout: Oskars Stalidzāns

ISBN 978-9934-567-73-5
UDK 327(474.3)
De866

NATO OTAN

This project is managed by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and supported by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division.

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NOTE BY THE EDITORS

The Latvian Institute of International Affairs (LIIA) is delighted to share a collection of articles on the various aspects of the deterrence from Latvia's perspective. This publication contributes to the discussion of the deterrence and defence posture with a collection of views from academics, think-tankers and practitioners of Latvia.

The publication "Deterrence Through Adaptation: The Case Study of Latvia" continues to build on the accomplishments of previous publications of the LIIA related to the #NATO2030 adaptation process. The publication provides an assessment of challenges and transforming realities and outlines prospects and scenarios from national security perspective. An outstanding group of distinguished national representatives offer their opinions on vulnerabilities, gaps and opportunities of particular dimensions of deterrence. The recommendations on the necessities for the next decade and beyond are provided.

The debate comes at a time when NATO is facing simultaneously challenges across many dimensions and fields. This situation has changed not only the NATO threat perception, but also the way in which countries operate in terms of their domestic and foreign/security policy. Emerging dimensions like space, cyber, strategic communication should be perceived as an incremental part of overall deterrence and defence posture. It is a complex issue that requires whole-of-government approach and intensified cooperation among Allies. All of that has been discussed in various chapters of this publication.

We acknowledge the generous support provided by the NATO Public Diplomacy Division. As this volume of articles demonstrates, solidarity and solid partnerships remain indispensable in order to efficiently navigate through times of uncertainty and shape national security strategies in a wider transatlantic framework.

We hope you will enjoy reading our publication!

COLLECTIVE DEFENCE: THE (UN)DEVELOPED PILLAR OF THE ALLIANCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LATVIA

MARTINS VARGULIS

The ability to adapt to an uncertain and ever-changing international security environment has been a precondition for NATO's success and development. Since the founding of NATO in 1949, the Alliance has experienced a number of internal and external shocks that have eventually come to affect NATO's future existence. Having experienced several turbulent periods, NATO has been able to adapt and find solutions to the challenges it faces. One of the most significant shocks in Europe, which also had a significant impact on NATO's adaptation process, was Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, which was a wake-up call for both the Alliance as a whole and each ally individually. This also highlighted gaps and weaknesses in the Alliance's perceptions, approaches and actions. Since 2014, the allies nationally and the Alliance as a whole have implemented a number of adaptation processes that have strengthened its deterrence and defence posture.

As frontline states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have been among the most active and vocal drivers of this adaptation process, calling on other allies to significantly strengthen the Alliance's ability to face the challenges highlighted and reinforced by Russia's aggressive approach. Through the support of the Alliance, a number of important security-ensuring measures have been put in place in the region, which have contributed to the security of all three Baltic States and strengthened their defence capabilities. Although measures implemented by the Alliance have contributed to the balance of military power in the region, the question remains of whether these measures are sufficient enough to deter the aggressor from any kind of contingency.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the Alliance's approach in the region in the post-2014 era, to evaluate how successful it has been, and to provide recommendations on the next steps that should be taken to further strengthen the Alliance's position in the region.

CREDIBLE COLLECTIVE DEFENCE SINCE 2014

Following Russia's aggression in Ukraine in 2014, there have been increasingly intense changes in the volatile international security environment, as several international players are adapting to the existing security challenges. Various security-promoting measures are being implemented within the framework of national and international security organisations, leading to changes in the national and regional security context. From the viewpoint of the security of Latvia, there have been several important decisions made that strengthen the security of the Baltics. Firstly, an historic decision was made at the NATO summit in Warsaw regarding the deployment of allied forces in the Baltic States and in Poland. Secondly, in Latvia, like in the other Baltic States, several security-reassurance measures have been implemented in cooperation with the allies to foster the deterrence policy. Thirdly, since the restoration of independence, the biggest increase in defence spending (of about 45%) for years has been experienced; this provides the financial base for the development and strengthening of the National Armed Forces and offers an opportunity to cooperate more closely with the allies through strengthening the national defence ability and participating in missions and operations abroad.

Since 2014, the security policy of Latvia has been most significantly influenced by the decisions made at the NATO summit in Warsaw. The summit agenda addressed two key items relevant to the Baltics: (1) strengthening the collective defence and deterrence policy of the Alliance, and (2) the response of the Alliance to challenges in the east, including future relations with Russia. The main focus at the summit was on matters of security for the Baltic States and Poland and the measures needed to deter Russia from potential aggression. With the adoption of decisions at the NATO summits in Warsaw (2016),

Brussels (2018) and London (2020), one of the priority foreign and security policy goals defined in various Latvia's national documents was achieved: "[...] to strengthen external security by achieving a long-term NATO presence in our region and to promote effective counter-terrorism efforts by the EU and NATO."[1]

The long-term presence of allied forces has been one of the key interests of the defence sphere since joining NATO; achieving this has been facilitated mainly by the aggressive conduct of Russia in the international arena and in particular its activities near the border of Latvia. In the context of these historical events, an allied troop presence has contribute to the overall strategic communication that aims to deter aggressors from any kind of aggression. Along with the decision to ensure the presence of allied forces in the Baltic States and Poland, a joint stance and approach on the part of the executive branch was observed. Assessments by the defence authorities (the Minister for Defence[2] and the NAF commander), the diplomatic corps, and the state president[3] agree that the presence of allied forces is perceived as an important achievement, which firstly "makes the state more secure", secondly strengthens cooperation with allied forces, and thirdly deters the opposing force from potential aggression.

The allied military presence in the region, enhanced elements of the command-and-control structure, and supportive civil-military mechanisms that were introduced all indicate that there are several gaps and vulnerabilities that existed in the region prior to the necessary adaptation process which was started in 2014. This has been an expression of the solidarity that the Baltic States have enjoyed in recent years. Although several important steps have been taken, the issue remains relevant: will adaptation measures be enough to deter Russia in the future? Is having the enhanced Forward Presence with additional command-and-control elements in the Baltic States a "done deal"? The short answer is "NO". On the one hand, it has complicated and changed Russia's military calculations. On the other hand, without further adaptation and strengthening, this may not be enough to deter Russia from conducting some form of contingency in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania separately and/or simultaneously.

PUTTING TOGETHER THE COMPLEX PUZZLE OF COLLECTIVE DEFENCE IN THE BALTIC REGION

From a military perspective, several important decisions have been taken that have an impact on the overall deterrence and defence posture, especially from the perspective of the Baltic region. The most important decisions from the Wales Summit were the approval of the Readiness Action Plan and the commitment to spend at least 2% on defence by 2024. At the Warsaw Summit, the allies agreed to enhance NATO's military presence in the eastern part of the Alliance, with four battalions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, on a rotational basis. Nowadays, these defensive battalions are robust and multinational, demonstrating the strength of the transatlantic bond and making it clear that an attack on one ally will be met by forces from across the Alliance. Both summits and the subsequent meetings of foreign and defence ministers illustrated that there was a consensus among the allies on the vulnerability that is present in the Baltic region. During recent years, NATO command and control has been improved and developed in the Baltic region (with a new HQ for the Multinational Division North in Adazi, Latvia), the Baltic air-policing mission has been enhanced, and NATO Integration Units based in all three Baltic States (among another five along NATO's Eastern Flank) have been established.

It is possible to identify several interrelated aspects that will further determine the credibility of NATO's deterrence and defence posture. First of all, time matters, especially in the Baltic region. Russia's aggression in Ukraine prompted the allies to adapt and make necessary decisions that enhance the speed of Alliance response forces and their ability to provide an immediate military response with a 360-degree approach. A new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) within the NATO Response Forces (NRF) of around 5,000 troops, with some elements able to deploy within 48 hours, was introduced at the Wales Summit. In 2018, NATO defence ministers agreed on the NATO Readiness Initiative – the "Four Thirties" – to ensure that NATO has 30 mechanised battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 combat vessels, all of which are ready within 30 days or less. Although both measures have been a step in the right direction in terms of increasing the overall readiness, they

may still prove to be insufficient when it comes to the defence of the Baltic States. Moreover, the time it might take to authorise the SACEUR to deploy the VJTF and the rest of the NRF creates serious problems for front-line allies, which could be overrun by the time other allied capitals weigh in. In the absence of consensus – which may be difficult to reach in cases where evidence that would support NATO involvement remains ambiguous – the VJTF, and with it the NRF, will remain unused. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to further increase the pre-authorised and exercised rapid response force pool which could be used immediately by SACEUR in a short-notice conventional scenario.

Second, the stress-tested large-scale reinforcement of allied troops in a contested environment is another piece of the puzzle. Russia is already able to carry out a short-notice attack that would cut off the Baltic States from the mainland of the Alliance. As warned by the former Commander of the United States Army Europe, (ret.) Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, in a very short amount of time, Belarusian and Russian troops could connect and block the borders of Poland and Lithuania, and that's how they could isolate three NATO allies from the rest of the Alliance.[4] Russia's A2/AD capabilities make the reinforcement of additional allied forces challenging. In this context, large-scale military exercises, trainings, and demonstrations of the Alliance's ability to reinforce forces, including through the transatlantic link, is a vital element in NATO's overall deterrence and defence posture. It is important that the Alliance has executable plans and a common understanding on how to reinforce forces with additional units and supplies in the event of a military conflict. The purpose of exercises like Defender Europe 2020 could build strategic readiness by deploying a combat-credible force to and across Europe. These exercises should provide the ability to coordinate large-scale movements with allies and partners.

Third, the Alliance's adaptation process in the post-2014 era has largely been land-based, leaving the maritime and air dimensions vulnerable. Russia has superiority in the region, both in the air and at sea. Given the costs associated with the development of these two dimensions, the Baltic States won't be able to provide a full response to these challenges without a significant contribution from the Alliance. One of the most topical and critical points in this regard is the collective response to air defence, especially in the context

of the SSC-8 missiles developed by Russia in recent years. In order to have a credible deterrence and defence posture, investments in the air and maritime domains are critical and of the utmost importance.

Last but not least, the ability of the Baltic States to jointly provide as large and long-lasting a response to aggression as possible is essential for a collective deterrence and defence posture. In this context, joint and coordinated actions by the Baltic States are important. Since 2014, the Baltic States have been united in their public statements and have strengthened several elements of military cooperation. All three are members of 2% club. However, there is significant room for improvement in this cooperation as well. Firstly, it is related to joint large-scale procurements, which the Baltic States have been struggling with, especially in the above-mentioned context of air defence. Second, there is the need for tested and synchronised military plans. As the Baltic States may be separated from the rest of the Alliance on D-Day, it is important to send signals that their actions in such circumstances will be united and planned in advance. Together, the Baltic States are able to deliver a more significant counterattack than each country separately.

COMMON THREAT PERCEPTION – A PRECONDITION OF DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE POSTURE

Solidarity and the desire to protect our country and our allies are essential preconditions in the overall context of collective defence. Following Russia's aggression in Ukraine, a number of decisions were taken at the Wales Summit in 2014 and at the Warsaw Summit in 2016 that illustrate the shift in consciousness and thinking among the allies. Both summits noted that the Allies had "reached" a common perception of threats, as Russian aggression in Ukraine has had long-term consequences for transatlantic security.

This approach was not observed before the events in Ukraine, when there were strong calls for dialogue with Russia among the allies. From the point of view of the Baltic States, such an approach was considered unfavourable and even risky. This was based on a national threat assessment that emphasised both Russia's ambitions and the boosting of its military capabilities along

Baltic border. Nevertheless, Russia's actions in Ukraine were a "wake up call" for the allies themselves. A common understanding of Russia's ambitions and revisionist approach in the international arena was demonstrated. This was also a turning point from the perspective of the security of the Baltic States. Having agreed on far-reaching measures to strengthen the Alliance's collective defence and rapid response capabilities, as well as to strengthen the central role of transatlantic security in maintaining a clear and common understanding of the threats and challenges, heads of state and government were able to communicate and illustrate the solidarity and unity that existed.

In the last couple of years, however, the issue of solidarity, especially when it comes to transatlantic relations, has been rightly analysed (read: disputed). One of the most important elements of solidarity is a common understanding of the level and classification of threats. The challenges for the transatlantic relationship continue to be exacerbated by the different characteristics of the security environment and diverse threat assessments among allies. In this context, the internal misalignments of European allies play an important role. Although the US's focus has continued to be divided between the challenges posed by Russia and those by the People's Republic of China, its position *vis-à-vis* Russia has remained strong, especially within the new US administration. The contradictory views of European member states regarding Russia still exist and are alarming from Latvia's point of view. Any attempt to strengthen cooperation (dialogue) in relations with Russia is seen as detrimental.

According to a survey made by the Pew Research Center, "when asked if their country should defend a fellow NATO Ally against a potential attack from Russia, a median of 50% across 16 NATO member states say their country should not defend an Ally, compared with 38% who say their country should defend an Ally against a Russian attack"[5]. Half of the societies of allied nations are against involvement in the conflict with Russia. This type of research only stimulates Russia's appetite to test the Alliance's unity and solidarity.

According to a survey made by the Institute of Land Warfare, "while NATO does exhibit many positive signs, particularly related to some member states, significant negative indicators of political will do exist because of following reasons:

1. NATO lacks sufficient key leaders who support the use of force to defend the Baltics.
2. NATO displays evidence of diverging alliance missions, threats, interests, perceptions of Russia and domestic interests, all of which diminish common understanding of the threat.
3. NATO retains significant strength in the third component – a potentially-effective solution – due to latent military and economic power".[6]

The (un)willingness to protect allies poses significant challenges in the context of collective defence. First of all, it affects the speed of decision-making. Being aware that there is no consensus among the allies, Russia will be able to exploit the lack of political will. By pursuing covert hybrid warfare operations, Russia may thus deter most allies from engaging in the first phase of a conflict or crisis. Second, it may provide an incentive to Russia to implement a large-scale A2/AD systems. A large-scale and unexpected conventional attack could lead to a blockade of the Baltic States to separate them from the rest of the Alliance. In this case, reinforcements from allied forces will be crucial. The involvement of the allies will be based on the willingness (support) of societies to protect the Baltic States that emerged during peacetime. In order to meet the challenges posed by Russia (as well as China), the Alliance's common resilience and the allies' willingness to improve each other is of the utmost importance.

NATO (NOT THE EU) AS THE MAIN ELEMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE DEFENCE

Since regaining independence, the "proximity" of Russia's threat and the potential for conflict and / or tension have affected Latvia's overall foreign and security policy in varying ways and with varying intensity. The dynamics of Russia's domestic political development, which has influenced its revisionist foreign policy, has created the need for Latvia to integrate more closely into NATO and the EU. Although the issue of the EU's strategic autonomy has been topical in internal EU discussions and forums since Latvia's accession to the EU in 2004, as part of Latvia's official policy, providing defence has first and foremost been seen and sought through the prism of NATO's adaptation

and security efforts. Thus, for example, the National Defence Concept adopted in 2020 emphasises the growing risks of confrontation and conflict, which in Latvia's geopolitical situation particularly strengthens the importance of national defence capabilities and close cooperation with NATO allies.[7]

From Latvia's perspective, Russia's aggression in Ukraine in 2014 and the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008 further emphasised the role of the transatlantic Alliance and the need for their involvement in the Baltic region. Latvia has consistently called on the allies to take essential national and NATO-level decisions that would promote Latvia's ever-growing vision of NATO as the main guarantor of security.

A clear separation between the powers and functions of NATO and the EU in the field of security and defence has been reaffirmed in other official national primary documents. As defined in the National Defence Concept adopted in 2020:

- It is in Latvia's interests to continue to engage in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy and to continue to contribute to EU military missions and operations in regions whose security situation also directly affects the security of EU member states.
- Latvia supports EU defence initiatives, such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund, that strengthen the security of EU countries.
- Latvia provides collective defence only through NATO; although defence cooperation within the EU may complement NATO's efforts, it may not overlap with them[8].

As indicated above, in Latvia's view, the role of the EU in the context of security / defence is complementary, not in competition with, NATO in terms of supporting collective defence. The development of EU debates on strategic autonomy, which influenced the development of the Strategic Compass, from Latvia's perspective is seen as a challenging aspect and a challenge itself. Recognising that the Strategic Compass is an ambition for not only for a common EU force but also a command structure, this creates internal dissatisfaction, anxiety, and a lack of support for the further development of this debate. There are several historical factors that prevent Latvia from strengthening this approach, both at the level of ideology and in terms of practical action.

Deterrence is one of the central pillars of Latvia's security policy. Deterrence is successful if the adversary is convinced that the losses from engaging in hostilities will outweigh the benefits. In order to facilitate deterrence, various instruments of strategic communication have been used to find the most appropriate messages for potential aggressors about the damage they may suffer from engaging in any kind of war against Latvia. From this perspective, the role of NATO – and not the EU – is perceived as the most suitable in the context of Latvia's security policy. In this context, despite the decisions taken prior to Russia's aggression in Ukraine regarding NATO / allied engagement in the region, there are still calls to strengthen cooperation with the allies. From the perspective of conveying strategic messages, the involvement of specific countries and the way in which the allies ensure a presence of forces in the region are decisive.

Power and strength are respected in the Kremlin. For this reason, the involvement of countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada and, in particular, the United States in the region will determine the credibility of deterrence and reduce the likelihood of a miscalculation. It is not only the involvement of the allies, but also the development of national capabilities – including elements of both soft and hard power – that determine the success of deterrence. The historical perception that the United States, as the main strategic partner that is able to defend security by deterring opponents from initiating any kind of conflict, has created a situation in which Latvia, in conjunction with other Eastern European countries, is opposed to closer and stronger EU strategic autonomy. The progress of strategic autonomy in the EU has confirmed and shed light on the divide between "old" and "new" Europe that is still in existence. Although examining the crises at the EU's border and outermost regions has encouraged the EU to become more "autonomous", close historical cooperation between internal players, including Latvia, and the United States has played an important role in further strengthening the concept.

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, the credibility of the deterrence and defence posture in the Baltic region is like a complex puzzle – if one piece of this agglomeration is pulled out, the whole structure risks failure. Strengthening deterrence is a permanent task. The opponent continues developing every day. Reducing the speed of adaptation can stimulate the aggressor's appetite to test the Alliance's readiness and responsiveness. The Baltic region borders with an actor who exploits their opponents' weaknesses to utilise their own interests. To deter such an adversary, the Alliance must continue to strengthen its capabilities, ensure an enhanced and integrated Allied force presence, and send signals that any form of aggression will provoke a broad and rapid collective response.

Herewith, it is dangerous to think that the deterrence and defence posture of the Baltic States is "a done deal". Several adopted measures have strengthened the common collective defence of the Baltic States, but these should be perceived as a precondition for a further adaptation process. To have credible deterrence, the Alliance needs to strengthen and demonstrate its ability to use might and power, if that is required. A demonstration of strength, which could be expressed both in large-scale exercises and in the deployment of permanent Allied forces, is the best signal to an aggressor that the defence of each country, and thus of the Alliance as a whole, is seriously planned, tested, and valued. Softening and reducing positions will be perceived as a point of weakness that Russia will utilise for its own interests.

Therefore, measures adopted since 2014, including in the Baltic region, are the (minimum) basis in the current security environment upon which the Alliance's common deterrence and defence policy should be further strengthened. Challenges in air and maritime remain among the most critical gaps of the overall deterrence and defence posture of the Alliance. The opponent still has superiority in these dimensions. If this is not ensured by timely reinforcement, the activities of the A2 / AD scenario implemented by Russia could raise real problems. As a result, co-operation with the Allies, including those deployed in the Baltic States, needs to be further strengthened, forward presence elements ensured and common threat perception fostered.

ENDNOTES

[1] "Ārlietu ministra ikgadējais ziņojums par paveikto un iecerēto darbību valsts ārpolitikā un Eiropas Savienības jautājumos," Ārlietu ministrija, 2016, http://www.mfa.gov.lv/images/ AM_05012016_2.pdf

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MILITARY LOGISTICS AND REINFORCEMENT OF THE BALTIC STATES: DETERRENCE IN-MAKING

MĀRTIŅŠ VĒRDIŅŠ

> *A little neglect may breed mischief... for want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost.*
> Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanac, preface (1758)

While scenarios of mostly hybrid warfare are widely discussed in society, the world's armies are now slowly but steadily preparing for a less popular form of warfare – a large-scale traditional (conventional) war, which may not exclude culminating with the use of weapons of mass destruction. In other words, despite new forms of warfare, countries are still preparing for the type of war we saw in Europe in the 20th century. To date, no convincing arguments have been found that would prove that a classic warfare operation is impossible, or that would call into question its usefulness and effectiveness in achieving defence or attack objectives. On the contrary, civilised nations with non-conventional warfare capabilities (weapons of mass destruction, or others prohibited by international agreements) or with an advanced range of hybrid warfare capabilities continue to emphasise in their military doctrines that conventional warfare techniques and means are a priority; this has long been a good thing and is even a certain legal cliché.

In this context, countries, especially those that do not have unconventional warfare capabilities at all, are preparing for both hybrid and conventional warfare, which, depending on the scenario, is to a greater or lesser degree an element of hybrid warfare scenarios. The Baltic armies are no exception and are forced to reckon with at least two basic war scenarios – 1) a regular ground invasion operation by a neighbouring country, and 2) an operation carried out

by irregular units / organised rebel forces / special operations units with the goal of destabilising the country – both sequentially over time and in parallel. In both scenarios, conventional warfare tactics will also be used, and this will require a symmetrical response. Unfortunately, in the case of the Baltic States, symmetry in the tactical use of weapons is accompanied by an asymmetry of forces and means at their disposal, which is unique to the Baltic States as a whole. This is not to say that the Baltics cannot achieve such a degree of "defence autonomy" in principle, as is exemplified by the Israeli, Singaporean or Finnish defence models, but building such a self-sufficient armed force takes decades and considerable resources, which are growing but always lacking. In such circumstances, the support of allies was and still is critical for the Baltic States. But this is support, not the replacement of national armies on the battlefield, which would be quite naive to hope for. Therefore, questions about when and how support within NATO will be provided to the Baltic States are quite logical, and the answers to them are important for everyone, both the supporters and receivers of support.

MILITARY LOGISTICS – THE CORNERSTONE OF DEFENCE

As the saying goes, amateurs talk about tactics while professionals study logistics.[1] Accordingly, when discussing defence support, the Baltic States should not only keep in mind the content of support (this is also important), but also think about providing it in the right way and at the right time and place – namely, a common system for the supply of NATO troops, which is defined as cooperation and mutual support in the field of logistics through the coordination of policies, plans, procedures, development activities and the common supply and exchange of goods and services arranged on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements with appropriate cost reimbursement provisions.[2] The proven and sustained ability to ensure such cooperation and interaction in the field of military logistics is in itself a deterrent, as the forces and resources of NATO allies, which are undoubtedly sufficient to protect the Baltic region but are scattered around the world during peacetime, are only significant if the adversary believes

that the allied commanders will be able to concentrate them in the crisis area in a timely and intentional manner.

At the strategic level, NATO members without any doubt are able to agree on and harmonise supply plans and key supply principles, concluding bilateral or multilateral agreements where necessary. However, this is not enough – the military supply system is only partially based on long-term plans, and no less important is the ability to adapt quickly to changing security situations so that troops receive the equipment, armaments, services, and goods required for specific circumstances and tasks. Consequently, the supply chain as a whole cannot function unless inter-state agreements in principle provide for a continuous, repetitive and detailed supply planning cycle to balance myriad needs with always-limited capabilities and resources so that there is no shortage of supply positions at lower levels of command.[3] Stumbling blocks await military supply planners and those responsible for implementing these plans at every step, from the requirements for the standardisation of the latest weapons, equipment, facilities and services, to the planning, preparation and conduct of public procurement tenders, the storage, transfer and distribution of purchased goods, and maintenance, which also includes establishing necessary infrastructure and organising the provision of services. It will be clear to anyone who has come into contact with supply chain management that these are tasks that require skills that go beyond an art and are certainly a science, and not just for the military.

The creation of the above-mentioned supply system – one which, moreover, has been proven and tested in operation – is not a banal task in itself, and it may become unfeasible in the conditions of ongoing hostilities. For confirmation of this, it is enough to look at the geographical map of the Baltic region as a potential warzone (a theatre) and imagine, according to each individual degree of optimism, the armaments, and the composition and location of the existing regular (!) armies of the Baltic States. Regardless of how each of us values the morale of the Baltic armies and the common denominator of their fighting forces, the Baltic armies may show considerable resistance to an aggressor without external support, but only for a limited time, until ammunition and fuel supplies run out on the front lines of active combat. The personnel involved will need to be replaced for regrouping, replenishment, rest, and refitting. The number days or weeks that can be endured without

these actions is up for debate, but there is in any case a time limit. However, the fact of resistance is not the only thing that's important to the Baltic nations: our goal is to deter the enemy from attacking, but if that fails, then we must not lose, or we must re-liberate, our territory.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goal and provide the Baltic armies with operational reach, freedom of action and prolonged endurance, the supply system must at least partially comply with the classic principles of military logistics[4]:

1. Integration – to ensure the integration and coordination of the supply system with current operations;
2. Anticipation – to provide forecasting of unforeseen needs, and the planning of logistics resource reserves;
3. Responsiveness – to ensure the ability to respond in a timely manner to planned and new requests that arise during the operation;
4. Simplicity – to ensure simplicity in supply planning, requesting and receiving procedures, which reduces chaos and allows operations to be carried out "as planned";
5. Economy – to ensure a proportionate and reasonable consumption of resources;
6. Survivability – to ensure the stability of the supply system in the conditions of an active reaction;
7. Continuity – to ensure the continuity of the supply system's operation;
8. Improvisation – to ensure the ability of the supply system to adapt and utilise the situation and conditions that have arisen for its own benefit.

Not all of these principles of military logistics carry the same weight, but the most important and at the same time the most difficult to achieve for the Baltic States are the principles of survivability and continuity, especially when it comes to NATO allies supporting external defence operations in conventional warfare.

At the same time, it should be noted that ensuring the principle of logistical responsiveness, when the main supply donors, sources and stocks are located thousands of kilometres outside the Baltic region, is not possible at all in the event of a sudden, unexpected enemy invasion. Unfortunately, our opponents also clearly understand this and place an emphasis on the

transfer of troops under the guise of training, the maintenance of a high level of combat readiness in the day-to-day operations of troops, and aerial mobile (helicopter) operations, which are common training exercises in the Russian Western military region.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

If, however, an attack on the Baltic States does not take place as a special operation, but rather develops as a continuation or culmination of a protracted security crisis in the region, then NATO's support for the Baltic States can be discussed in terms of how to solve practical supply problems. To give an idea of what support we would hope to receive in the Baltics within a few days and what would be necessary, recall the well-known and still relevant study by the RAND think tank which, based on a comprehensive analysis and scientific modelling of variants, stated that "[...]about seven brigades in the area, including three heavy armored brigades, and backed up by airpower and artillery, would be enough to prevent the rapid overrun of the Baltic States [...] ".[5] On the optimistic assumption that the regular armies of the Baltic States together are equivalent to three motorized infantry brigades, the shortage of forces and resources that would need to be covered by allied support is equivalent to the relocation of an additional three or four mechanized infantry battle groups (about 16,000 soldiers) to permanent locations in our region. Without discussing where such forces could come from, this would entail a doubling of the Baltic land forces in terms of personnel, and at least a quadrupling of the number of armaments, vehicles, and weapons systems by rapidly and simultaneously moving thousands of combat units across the ocean or over thousands of kilometres by land. For comparison, in the context of Operation Atlantic Resolve,[6] the United States relocating one US Mechanized Brigade Battle Group (ABCT) to Europe on a rotating basis (roughly 500 tracked vehicles, 1500 wheeled vehicles and 650 trailers, for a total of 2000-3000 vehicles of various sorts) takes several weeks, if not months, from start to finish. We do not have such time reserves.

Looking at the map, it becomes clear that in order to support the Baltics, there are three possible dimensions through which NATO headquarters can plan the main and alternative supply routes following the principles of military logistics that were already mentioned. These dimensions are sea, air and land. For supply planners, none of these dimensions are any more appropriate than the others, and each has serious shortcomings and risks that would shift the focus to one or two of the remaining dimensions, which would then increase their respective loads and consequently increase the likelihood of failure.

LAND

Recently (especially since 2014) the most discussed land route in the circle of experts – and not only in the context of the supply of the Baltic States – is from Western Europe through Poland to Lithuania, crossing a 110–150 kilometre narrow strip that goes between Belarus and the Kaliningrad region of Russia, i.e., the Suwalki (PL)–Marijampole (LT) corridor. Without using this article to attempt to analyse all views on the prospects for protecting the Suwalki–Marijampole corridor, the common denominator is that the area could become an active combat zone, with control contested by both Russia through the Kaliningrad region and NATO forces, in order to secure the only possible ground "bridge" from Western Europe to the Baltic region. With the corridor being in the crossfire of literally every type of weapons systems, the possibility of using it as a reliable link in the supply chain remains only possible in peacetime or on the eve of an armed conflict. With the start of the active phase of a conflict, the Suwalki–Marijampole corridor is unlikely to adhere with the principles of continuity and responsiveness of supply. In a 2016 study, Polish authors L. Elak and Z. Sliwa stated that "[…] It is important to note that, in the case of such aggression, not only the Suwalki Gap would be seized. Moreover, part of the Polish territory towards the west – Warmia and Masuria Voivodeship – some 100 kilometres deep, would probably be occupied for freedom of manoeuvre and for pushing NATO's long range weapon systems out to deny endangering Kaliningrad and military units' assembly areas"[…].[7] Whether or not this assumption is too pessimistic will be revealed by Poland's

efforts to organise the defence of the area, but there is certainly reason to believe that, in the event of a conflict, the Suwalki–Marijampole corridor will not be the safest route for large-scale military cargo and machinery logistics. Even if a safe environment is ensured in the Suwalki–Marijampole corridor, military mobility will be strongly affected by the condition of the transport infrastructure and its availability in general (including roads, access roads, railways, track gauges, unloading ramps, railway platforms, bridges, transmission, etc.). The state of infrastructure development and the limited freight capacity in the South–North direction generally do not meet economic requirements of today and will not meet the military needs of tomorrow; this requires infrastructure modernisation and reinforcement today (assuming all political, legal and bureaucratic obstacles have been removed, but this is not the case). In any case, it should be emphasised that there is no alternative land route connecting NATO's Western European allies with the Baltic allies, and this fact *a priori* makes military logistics along the Suwalki–Marijampole corridor a high-risk operation that will force planners to focus more on sea and air routes.

AIR

The use of transport aviation to strengthen troops in the Baltic States is probably the most optimal option; this complies with the military logistics principles of responsiveness, continuity, and improvisation. It is believed that NATO fighter jets will be able to provide air superiority, allowing for the planning and conduct of complex transportation operations, as evidenced by the unprecedented air evacuation operation in Afghanistan. Despite all its side effects, the Kabul Airport air bridge can be considered a great success – but it is also known how much effort this took. In international airspace, several variants of transport corridor routes and combinations thereof are possible, which allows logistics planners to improvise and react quickly to changes while maintaining the required pace of the supply operation. However, when talking about a "strategic airlift" to the Baltic States, at least one significant shortcoming must be taken into account – the disparity of strategic military

aviation between NATO member states. If, for example, there were 222 C-17A aircraft active in the United States in 2021,[8] the other NATO member states, which have only 13 aircraft of this type (in Great Britain and Canada), cannot compensate for the lack of this capability. For its part, the disproportionate level of tactical fixed-wing aviation (such as the C-130 or similar aircraft) is smaller, but it still exists, with about half of the entire NATO tactical transport fleet owned by the United States. In addition, only a few airports in the Baltic States can boast long enough runways (> 3,000 metres) to safely accommodate C-17A aircraft in all weather conditions – Riga Airport in Latvia, Tallinn and Pärnu Airports in Estonia, and Siauliai, Vilnius, and Kaunas Airports in Lithuania. This means that the Baltic Strategic Air Bridge would be created mainly by tactical-level transport aviation, which means more flights over shorter distances and greater restrictions on cargo parameters, such as heavy armoured vehicles that are not designed for air transport. In general, an air bridge is possible, but it will certainly be a costly solution that distorts the principle of economy within the military supply system.

Another aspect that needs to be taken into account when judging aviation transport logistics is its compliance with the principle of survivability, as supply operations will not be carried out in non-peaceful conditions. Russia has for a long time purposefully built up its Anti-Access Area Denial (A2/AD) system in the Kaliningrad region and off the coast of the Gulf of Finland; this includes multi-generational anti-aircraft missile complexes with overlapping hemispheres covering almost all the airspace over the Baltic Sea. Thus, without solving the problem of the Russian A2/AD system based in Kaliningrad (and now possibly also in Belarus[9]), it is no exaggeration to say that strategic airlifts to the Baltic States are subject to a high risk of failing the retaliatory test. At the same time, it should be remembered that the air defence systems of the warships of the Russian Baltic Fleet further complement the coverage density of the onshore A2/AD elements.

SEA

Finally, the military supply challenges of the Baltic States can be addressed through shipping routes in the Baltic Sea. In terms of cargo turnover, economy, and convenience, this would be the optimal solution for the supply of the Baltic States, taking into account the year-round availability of ports, their relatively well-developed infrastructure, and the generally short shipping distances to loading ports in Western Europe. Russia's Baltic Sea fleet is also relatively weaker than its Northern, Pacific or even Black Sea fleets. The tasks of the warships of the Baltic Fleet, judging by their type and number, are mainly related to protecting the territory of the Kaliningrad region and not to projecting force outside the region. Without underestimating the ability of the Baltic Fleet to jeopardise NATO's supply routes in the Baltic Sea (for example, by setting up minefields and carrying out combat air strikes on transport ships), the main threat to this dimension lies on shore.

In a 2016 interview, NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow noted that "[…]The things that worry us the most are their anti-access/area-denial [A2/AD] capacity — the Bastion defense system capability that they are building up in […] Kaliningrad […] — as potentially impeding and complicating NATO reinforcements and other NATO operations". We have both the strategies and the means to counter that, but it may require additional investment on NATO's part. Those are among the things we will be assessing as we design our future force posture[…][10] . The Deputy Secretary General rightly pointed out that Russia's A2/AD air defence elements in the Baltic Sea are reinforced by the Bal and Bastion-P mobile coastal defence complexes, which are anti-ship missiles that, depending on the type and height of the trajectory, can attack targets within a radius of 200–300 kilometres – and not only at sea. Taking into account the political geography of the Baltic Sea, including Sweden's officially neutral status, Russia is preparing and is already able to effectively threaten NATO military transit through the Danish Straits, which is a strategic point that controls access to the Baltic Sea. In order to influence public opinion in Scandinavia, Russia openly, officially, threatened Denmark with a nuclear strike if it did not follow the "red lines" drawn by Russia.[11] All this, of course, does not completely rule out a maritime option for

tackling the Baltic Sea supply problem, but makes it dependent on the status of the coastal defence systems in the Kaliningrad region, minesweepers, and combat aviation capabilities, as well as Sweden's position in the NATO–Russia armed conflict.

MAKING IT A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

Summarising the military supply route options of the Baltic States in times of war or conflict, it can be concluded that Russia has long (starting much earlier than NATO) carried out risk analysis and planning processes, and it persists in making significant transfers of NATO forces and assets to the Baltic States, if not impossible, then at least an inefficient and wasteful measure. For this purpose, it has:

1. militarized the Kaliningrad region, in particular by deploying various types and types of missiles (A2 / AD);
2. included Belarus in its military plans through the deployment of Russian-controlled S-400 missile systems and combat aircraft on its territory and, in the future, the establishment of a military base on the ground;
3. influenced society in Sweden and Finland in order to prevent the tradition of neutrality from being abandoned and their joining NATO;
4. applied pressure in the international arena to prevent the deployment of non-regional NATO troops in the Baltic States;
5. used the Suwalki–Marijampole corridor and the Danish Straits as a "supply bottleneck" for NATO supply planning, as demonstrated by the exercises carried out.

Russia's ability to counter the deployment of enhanced Forward Presence contingents in the Baltics for the time being is just as well-justified as the establishment of a NATO reaction force and a Very High Joint Readiness Task Force, although the size and capabilities are insufficient to conduct effective defence operations in the context of the entire Baltic region. Consequently, the rapid and safe transfer of NATO troops to the Baltic region during a conflict could still be considered an unresolved issue.

In order to find a solution to this problem, a non-linear and asymmetric approach can be applied, at least in part by not trying to counter every one of the opponent's abilities with another ability that's additionally located outside the region, because the threat will then have to be neutralised proactively. The best way to avoid the need for risky supply routes for the Baltic States during a war is to achieve the necessary quantity and quality of armaments and equipment (see the considerations of the required forces and resources calculated by RAND) by locating and stockpiling them within the region in advance of the first signs of an imminent conflict. The Baltic States themselves, given their financial and budgetary resources, will not achieve sufficient armaments and other stockpiles for an adequate period of time, if it is at all possible. This means that other NATO allies should agree now to jointly financially support the establishment and deployment of the stockpiles of ammunition, armaments and equipment necessary for the defence of the Baltic States through any financial instrument available – fundraising, leasing, long-term loans, donations, etc. – to form a jointly developed plan to ensure adequate compliance with what is needed. Of course, stockpiling (conservation) would in itself be pointless and even counterproductive if:

a. they are not adequately protected against sabotage, as well as against aviation or cruise missile attacks – protection should be provided by the Baltic armies themselves;
b. the armed forces of the Baltic States and the personnel in their mobilization reserve are not sufficiently prepared and trained to operate these armaments and equipment if the arrival of foreign personnel was delayed or made impossible.

Limited NATO contingents in the Baltics will still be needed, but their composition and structure should be changed from mechanized infantry units to companies that service the latest generation of long-range and high-precision weapons systems, including weapons themselves if they cannot be sold or otherwise transferred to the Baltic States' armies (for example, because they do not have trained crews). This would allow the Baltic States to start implementing a so-called Active Defence[12] doctrine without waiting for the arrival of additional forces; this was relevant in the middle of the last century and has now probably lost its relevance, but only in relation to the great powers. The implementation of the Active Defence doctrine would save

time and, if successful, force the adversary to abandon a further attack, but it requires heavy weapon systems and the latest military technology, which the Baltic States have neither the time nor the means to develop.

The benefits of reinforcing the Baltic States with weapons systems are obvious. First, the deployment of prepositioned military assets in the Baltics would sharpen the initial, uncertain phase of any conflict, when it is not yet clear how far the parties are ready to go; otherwise NATO would have to decide the fate of the Kaliningrad region first, risking Russia using tactical nuclear weapons. Secondly, there is not and cannot be a legal argument or an international norm that prevents any independent state from arming itself by any means by creating their own (!) army, conventional warfare techniques and stockpiles of weapons and ammunition. Third, if necessary, simply transferring personnel from other NATO countries to the Baltic region is less of a challenge than moving three or four full brigade battle groups with all the necessary ammunition, supplies, personnel, and equipment. Fourth, the existence and availability of valuable stocks and reserves will force the Baltic States to pay more attention to real, kinetic air defence through the procurement of medium-range anti-aircraft missile kits to protect NATO storage bases, also stimulating the need to develop large-scale personnel mobilization reserves who are capable of putting these armaments to use if necessary.

The idea of prepositioning combat equipment and ammunition is not new – it has had to be heard both directly and indirectly[13], but there have never been convincing arguments against it that try to prove that activating the supply system and transferring forces after (!) the conflict has started is the most optimal solution. This means that the final decision on the protection or renunciation of the Baltic States has not yet been taken in the allied capitals.

CONCLUSIONS

If we believe in the classical theory of deterrence, then the asymmetry of military forces makes the weaker country to succumb to blackmail or encourages the stronger state to invade it. This idea was introduced by the classic Latvian military general Pēteris Radziņš: “Every nation and country

spreads in those directions in which they face the least opposition",[14] written at the beginning of the last century. In planning their defence, it would accordingly be important for NATO nations to address and gradually eliminate existing disparities in the deployment of allied forces and assets by achieving an optimal deployment that would serve for an effective defence. It is easier to do this before a crisis comes to the fore and requires immediate, emergency solutions due to circumstances where the adversary is actively retaliating.

Given the vulnerability of NATO's supply routes in the event of the need for post-factum military assistance for the Baltic States in the context of an armed conflict or war, it must be clear to everyone that the A2/AD system already being constructed in Russia's Kaliningrad region cannot be resolved politically (by abandoning planned aid to allies in vital need), but addressing Russia's A2/AD by military means rapidly increases the risk of nuclear escalation, which no one in Europe wants. An alternative to these bad and even worse solutions could be to deter aggression by eliminating the asymmetry of military resources in the Baltic region in a timely manner, during peacetime deploying and handing over to the Baltic army (for storage and training purposes) the operational tactical combat systems and armaments required for modern defence (MRLS, ADA, SPA, APC, IFV, AT manpads) in sufficient numbers (sets, accordingly with unit`s Table of Organisation and Equipment), taking into consideration 1) the maximum number of trained personnel that the Baltic States could provide in the event of mobilization and 2) the period of time during which the Baltic armed forces must retain control over part of their territory that necessary to protect for the subsequent liberation operation. Consequently, the Baltic States should also perform their "homework" in terms of preparing mobilization reserves in the required quantity and at the required quality, as well as ensuring the deployment and protection of its stockpiles. Of course, the Baltic States would continue to budget as much as possible for the replacement of their allied armaments with their own procurements at the expected level, but this process will undoubtedly take decades, even though the need for supplies may arise, without exaggeration, tomorrow.

The lending of weapons stockpiles to the Baltic States does not diminish the importance of NATO's current deterrence efforts – deploying high-precision and long-range weapons systems in Central Europe, optimising

military mobility capabilities, deploying multinational contingents (tripwires) in the Baltics, and controlling Baltic airspace. It would be optimal to develop synergies between all these deterrence solutions without increasing presence of the allied personnel in the peace time, but by eliminating the disproportionate conventional weapons disparity in the Baltic region, thereby increasing the cost of an invasion and reducing the effectiveness of Russia's A2/AD system as a barrier for NATO's supply routes.

ENDNOTES

[1] *"Amateurs talk about tactics, but professionals study logistics."* Gen. Robert H. Barrow, USMC (Commandant of the Marine Corps) noted in 1980.

[2] "*Cooperation and mutual support in the field of logistics through the coordination of policies, plans, procedures, development activities and the common supply and exchange of goods and services arranged on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements with appropriate cost reimbursement provisions*." In: AAP-06. NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions.

[3] See the proverb from the beginning of this article, "for want of a nail", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/For_Want_of_a_Nail

[4] Department of the Army Washington. 2014. *Nr. 4-95 Logistic Operations*. US Army Field Manual.; 1–3

[5] Shlapak, D., A., Johnson, M., W. 2016. *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank. Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics*. Rand Corporations.

[6] U.S. Army Europe and Africa. 2021. *Fact Sheet: U.S. Army Europe and Africa Support to Atlantic Resolve.* https://www.europeafrica.army.mil/Portals/19/documents/Fact%20Sheets/AtlanticResolveFactSheet_07062021.pdf

[7] Sliwa, Z., Elak, L. 2016. *The Suwalki Gap – NATO's fragile hot spot*. In: Zeszyty Naukowe. AON nr. 2 (103). ISSN 0867–2245.

[8] Flight Global. 2021. *World Air Forces*. https://www.flightglobal.com/download?ac=75345

[9] Tass, Russian News Agency. 2021. *Russia sees no obstacles to providing S-400 systems to Belarus, official says*. https://tass.com/defense/1333499

[10] Bodner, M., 2016. *NATO Deputy SecGen: Russia's Anti-Access/Area-Denial Build-Up Is Biggest Worry*. Defence News. https://www.defensenews.com/interviews/2016/02/14/nato-deputy-secgen-russia-s-anti-access-area-denial-build-up-is-biggest-worry/

[11] Ibid.

[12] The US Department of Defense defines active defense as: "*The employment of limited offensive action and counterattacks to deny a contested area or position to the enemy.*"

[13] The Jamestown Foundation. 2019. *Prepositioning ammunition and supplies in Tallinn and Riga for the reinforcing US airborne brigades, as well as annual exercises, will be necessary*"

In: Hooker, R., D., Jr. 10. 2019. *How to defend The Baltic States*. Washington. DC. https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/How-to-Defend-the-Baltic-States-full-web4.pdf

[14] Visions cannot be neglected. Compilation of general Pēteris Radziņš writings" page 285. BALTDEFCOL, 2020. https://www.baltdefcol.org/files/files/publications/Radzins-Book.pdf

LATVIA – FROM TARGET TO PARTNER IN NATO'S NUCLEAR POLICY

IMANTS LIEĢIS

Latvia has been on the frontline of a possible nuclear war for some 60 years. In the 1960s, during the Soviet occupation, when Latvia had no independent say over what happens on its territory, Moscow placed nuclear missile bases in Latvia[1]. They were probably on NATO's radar as targets. Certainly, the Soviet's radar base in Skrunda, was a target. Constructed during the Cold War to help intercept US nuclear weapons and destroyed on 4th May 1995, it seems that in 1994 Latvia received US assurances that the facility at Skrunda would no longer be a target by the Americans[2]. More recently, war games scenarios involving Russia's threat of the use of nuclear weapons following Russia's military attacks on Latvia have appeared in both book form[3] and on BBC TV[4]. The scenarios highlighted how Russia plays the nuclear card as a "political" weapon to consolidate the gains made during a surprise conventional attack.

Given Latvia's historical experience and geographic location, there is an obvious need to keep a close track of nuclear issues, including deterrence. This paper will therefore contextualise NATO's nuclear deterrence, examine the policy's effectiveness and adaptation, and consider recommendations in light of the NATO 2030 agenda and the updated Strategic Concept due to be adopted in 2022. Fortunately, as a fully-fledged member of NATO, Latvia, unlike during the Cold War, has moved from being a potential target of NATO's nuclear weapons, to an engaged and protected partner in the nuclear debate.

CONTEXT

Since joining NATO in 2004, Latvia has benefited from all defence and deterrence measures offered by the Alliance. NATO's nuclear deterrence is based on the assumption that the Alliance will retain its nuclear posture as long as nuclear weapons exist. Simply put, the aim of NATO's nuclear capability is "to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression". This means that if the fundamental security of Latvia were to be threatened, NATO has the capabilities and resolve to defend Latvia – including with nuclear weapons[5].

The deterrence role nuclear weapons have played has been retaliatory. This involves an ability to destroy the silos of enemy missiles or their armies, or by threatening the destruction of cities and their inhabitants. Such measures could only be taken if the use of a retaliatory strike could be assured because the weapons would not be destroyed by an initial enemy attack. Needless to say, the deterrence went hand in hand with the political will to make use of these weapons and an awareness of the risk of "mutually assured destruction". The nature of threats involving the use of nuclear weapons has changed since the heyday of nuclear disarmament when US president Ronald Raegan and the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhael Gorbachev agreed to the principle in November 1985 that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought"[6], even though this principle is being re-affirmed by current US and Russian leaders[7]. Whilst the closing stages of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union saw substantial reductions in the number of nuclear weapons held by the US and the Soviet Union, the unravelling of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty since 2014 and its demise in 2019 mean that nuclear risks and threats to Euro Atlantic security have grown. These threats are being increased by the speedy development of new technology which presents a more toxic mix when combined with nuclear weapons.

Given that Latvia neighbours one of the world's most prominent nuclear powers, NATO's deterrence policy vis a vis Russia is of paramount interest to Latvia's security. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military intervention in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 prompted NATO to adapt. As the war with Ukraine rumbles on after 7 years and Russia's military interests in another mutual neighbour, Belarus, increase, Latvia's vital interest in NATO's defence and deterrence policy will not diminish.

Nuclear deterrence is inevitably tied to the actions of NATO's most important member, the United States. Reference to NATO's nuclear deterrence policy essentially refers to American strategic nuclear weapons with their links to the defence of Europe through the policy of nuclear sharing arrangements with European members of the Alliance. NATO's other two nuclear powers – the United Kingdom (UK) and France- will therefore figure less prominently in Latvia's considerations, even though they contribute to the strengthening of the overall nuclear deterrence policy of the Alliance. The UK relies solely on its submarines as the single means of delivering nuclear weapons by keeping a submarine at sea at all times through their practice known as "continuous-at-sea-deterrent". In March 2021 the UK Review of Foreign and Defence Policy recommended raising the number of operationally available warheads from 225 to 260[8]. Meanwhile, France does not participate in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group, the main discussion forum on nuclear issues, but instead does "contribute to political-level discussions aiming to strengthen the Alliance's nuclear culture[9]." President Macron has also proposed entering into a strategic dialogue with European partners "on the role played by France's nuclear deterrence in our collective security[10]".

If there was a US administration that again reverted to distancing itself from multilateralism, including NATO, and including the prospect of a lesser US nuclear engagement in Europe, both European nuclear powers could have a decisive impact on nuclear deterrence in Europe.

Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether a Franco-American rift over the potential supply of submarines to Australia will have a lasting impact on relations between NATO's three nuclear powers. France expressed outrage when the USA, UK and Australia revealed on 15th September their agreement – referred to by the acronym "Aukus" - to cooperate on nuclear powered submarines, and key emerging and disruptive technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, cyber and quantum. The deal undercut the 2016 agreement France had reached with Australia to build 12 Barracuda submarines for Australian use, even though some analysists indicate that France was well aware of Australia's concerns about the 2016 contract[11]. France's Foreign Minister Yves Le Drian called the deal a "stab in the back" by their Australian partners and referred to the "unacceptable behaviour" of allies and partners[12]. France took the rare step of recalling the French Ambassadors

from Washington and Canberra for consultations in Paris, but a quick reconciliation took place following the telephone conversation between US and France's Presidents and a joint statement noting that the US "recognises the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence, that…is complementary to NATO[13]".

The Aukus agreement came about primarily because of China's regional and global muscle flexing over the past few years and is a reflection of Washington's increasing focus on the Asia – Pacific region, which is recognised in European capitals. But the spat could undermine Transatlantic unity and further convince France about the US being an unreliable Transatlantic partner, irrespective of who is sitting in the White House. There are echoes of the rift between the USA and France with other European allies at the time of the war with Iraq. Moreover, given the circumstances surrounding the US forces' withdrawal from Afghanistan a few months before the Aukus deal, it seems clear that France will use both incidents to advance its ideas about European "strategic autonomy". The agreement between America, the UK and Australia, even though with a nuclear component, is more about conventional deterrence and geopolitical rivalry with China in the Asia Pacific region. It would be no surprise if the nuclear powers China and Russia exploit the emerging French–US rift to their advantage, as it could well draw them closer together.

EFFECTIVENESS AND ADAPTATION

In order to examine whether NATO's nuclear deterrence policy is effective today, it should be borne in mind that nuclear deterrence is just one part of the overall deterrence policy and should not be considered in isolation. It needs to be assessed in the wider context of deterrence, consisting of the inseparable components of both conventional forces and NATO's missile defence policy. As will be argued later, there are intrinsic problems relating to gaps between nuclear and conventional deterrence. These gaps need to be plugged.

The question of missile defence being an integral part of NATO's deterrence strategy was addressed most recently by the June 2021 NATO

summit communique at paragraphs 27-29 dealing with NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD)[14] and will not be addressed in further detail. Given that 1991 saw the demise of the Soviet Union, NATO's main "enemy", the overall deterrence policy can be said to have succeeded. Potential attacks against NATO from the Soviet Union had been deterred between 1949 and 1991. NATO had prevailed, led by the supremacy of America's military might and an expressed willingness to use this for the defence of Europe.

NATO's deterrence policy has developed and adapted. During the Cold War era, it was moulded towards the threats posed primarily by the Soviet Union. The US and the Soviet Union entered an arms race producing increasing numbers of nuclear weapons. But with the signing of the INF treaty in 1987, agreement was reached on the destruction of almost 2,700 Soviet and US ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometres. Subsequent treaties (the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) 1991; New START 2010) limited post-Soviet Russia and the US to the same number of deployed long-range nuclear weapon delivery systems to 700 and warheads to 1,550.

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of weapons available to NATO in Europe has been reduced by approximately 90%. It goes without saying that these numbers are regarded as being sufficient to uphold NATO's nuclear deterrence policy. Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 marked a turning point in security in the Euro-Atlantic area. It prompted NATO to once again turn its focus on collective defence. As part of that process, the nuclear deterrence policy also came under review, not only because of the military intervention in Ukraine, but also as a result of Russian breaches of the US–Russian INF Treaty. Russia began to develop and deploy the SSC-8/9M729 intermediate range ground-launched cruise missile. This gave Moscow military and political benefits, being more capable of avoiding launch detection and tracking during flight, thus striking their distant targets with little or no warning[15]. The missile is capable of reaching almost all European capitals and NATO critical infrastructure required in the event of reinforcement capabilities deploying to Europe from North America. These advantages clearly impacted deterrence policy.

NATO reacted to this development at its members states' leaders meeting in Brussels in July 2018, when the following declaration was adopted: – "Allies

have identified a Russian missile system, the 9M729, which raises serious concerns. After years of denials and obfuscation, and despite Allies repeatedly raising their concerns, the Russian Federation only recently acknowledged the existence of the missile system without providing the necessary transparency or explanation. A pattern of behaviour and information over many years has led to widespread doubts about Russian compliance (with the INF Treaty). Allies believe that, in the absence of any credible answer from Russia on this new missile, the most plausible assessment would be that Russia is in violation of the Treaty. NATO urges Russia to address these concerns in a substantial and transparent way, and actively engage in a technical dialogue with the United States."[16]

The assessment of violation of the INF by Russia and seeming lack of interest in addressing NATO's concerns led the other treaty party, the US, to renounce the treaty in 2019. Combined with other developments, the arms control regime unfurled. However, one element has been salvaged, namely START. Due to expire in February 2021, one of the first measures taken by the new Biden Administration was to agree to an extension of New START for a further 5-year term. These bilateral (US–Russia) treaties indicate that Russia still remains the primary concern, even though China's nuclear expansion is increasingly attracting the attention of America and NATO.

With NATO now being an alliance of 30 countries, the geographical area embraced by the deterrence policy has also changed since the Cold War and the re-emergence of a re-liberated Europe. NATO now includes countries previously within the Warsaw Pact, and, as in the case of Latvia and its Baltic neighbours, illegally occupied Soviet countries. Given the nature of the nuclear deterrence policy, any assessment of its effectiveness is hampered by issues of confidentiality. The most recent open-source NATO documents alluding to nuclear and other forms of deterrence, the Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (2012) and the Strategic Concept (2010), are clearly outdated. The former document does however state that "The supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States"[17]. In this context, the term "strategic" is taken from New START to mean nuclear delivery systems with ranges greater than 5,500 kilometres. The latter document is to be updated by a new Strategic Concept, scheduled to be adopted at next year's NATO summit.

NATO's 2019 Military Strategy, a confidential document, identifies Russia as one of two basic threats according to NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, General Tod D. Wolters[18]. But the Military Strategy has been criticised for failing "to adequately close two critical and dangerous deterrence gaps: the gap between…conventional and nuclear deterrents and the gap between… forward deployed forces and the bulk of the national forces the Alliance would need to call upon in an emergency"[19]. This latter point indeed hints at the need for the "timely reinforcement" of troops in an emergency scenario.

Another confidential policy document, the Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro–Atlantic area (also referred to as the Deterrence and Defence Concept – DDC) links in with the Military Strategy. but seemingly focusses more on conventional threats. There were references to the DDC in the June 2021 Summit Communique[20] with an acknowledgement of military plans being developed "to improve our ability to respond to any contingencies and ensure timely reinforcement". Such plans will of course be crucial in addressing deterrence gaps.

There exists a large regional disbalance between NATO conventional forces and Russian conventional forces in the Baltic region. Recent estimates (as of 2018) indicate that NATO ground forces are outnumbered by a ratio of as much as five to one[21], which necessitates an enhancement of NATO forces ready to engage in conflict. This highlights Europe's "deterrence gap", namely the disparity between its conventional and nuclear forces which could in turn be exploited by Russia by using the threat of nuclear weapons to bolster gains made by conventional forces in a conflict scenario. As already noted, the dangers posed by this deterrence gap, the development of new technologies together with Russia's endeavours to upgrade its missile arsenal are explained in more detail in the book "Future War and the Defence of Europe".

In addition, with Russia developing dual-capable weapons – missiles that can carry either conventional or nuclear warheads – and lowering its nuclear threshold, the prospects are growing that it could use nuclear weapons earlier in a conflict. Likewise, in such a scenario where NATO conventional forces fail to deter an attack by Russian conventional forces, NATO could have to consider the prospect of using nuclear weapons or else surrendering following such an attack. Such a scenario raises questions relating to the effectiveness of NATO's nuclear deterrence policy. It demands more of a merging of NATO's

conventional and nuclear deterrence policies – a fact at least acknowledged by the June 2021 NATO Summit communique.[22]

Meanwhile, NATO remains vigilant to developments in Russia. At its last Summit, the communique language was explicit, with new language being used about nuclear issues. It pointed out that Russia is deploying nuclear short- and intermediate-range missile systems that are intended to coerce NATO; that Russia's novel nuclear and dual-capable systems are destabilising; that aggressive and irresponsible nuclear rhetoric is being used by Russia and; that by modernising, diversifying and increasing its non-strategic nuclear arsenal, Russia poses a more aggressive posture of strategic intimidation[23]. It may well be that this language was crafted with America's new National Defence Strategy in mind, given that this document, likely to be revealed shortly, will no doubt address nuclear issues in the broader context of national security.

CONCLUSIONS

The NATO 2030 agenda and revised Strategic Concept have to address a rapidly changing geopolitical environment in which NATO's nuclear deterrence continues to play a fundamental role. The divergence of today's threats also needs to be taken into account in NATO's nuclear deterrence policy. Hybrid warfare is increasingly being recognised by NATO as coming under article 5 of the Washington Treaty[24]. The June Summit referred to deploying NATO Counter Hybrid Support Team. Only a few months later, such a team was in fact sent to Lithuania's border with Belarus[25] following Belarusian actions in escorting inhabitants of Iraq (via direct flights to Minsk) to the Belarusian–Lithuanian border, encouraging them to cross into Lithuanian territory and refusing them the chance to turn back. Similar actions followed on the Belarus border with Latvia and Poland. Described not only as part of hybrid warfare, these actions were also mentioned as a possible reason for seeking article 4 consultations in the North Atlantic Council, especially in the context of the Russian – Belarusian military exercise Zapad 2021[26]. These considerations bred uncertainty about possible escalatory measures and were viewed in the

context of NATO's June 2021 Summit, which acknowledged Russia's "military integration with Belarus[27]".

Scenarios relating to blatant information warfare, cyber-attacks or the manipulation of migrant flows could, in theory, encompass an article 5 situation. Russian tactics in Ukraine in 2014 also offer examples of how military actions are bolstered by non-military steps. Given these tensions, Latvia, together with regional neighbours, will need to remain vigilant in encouraging Alliance partners, especially America, to remain focussed on such events so as to avoid a worst-case escalation to a nuclear scenario. To a certain extent, this focus is already being maintained as illustrated by the statements of the June 2021 Summit communique.

Retaining US focus on Europe will certainly also have to be prioritised by Latvia. This is because of the geographical pull towards the Indo-Pacific region and growing global pressures on the US military. As the 98 year old George Kennan pointed out at the time that President Bush was rallying for the post 9/11 war against Iraq, even a sole superpower could not "confront all the dangerous situations that exist in this world". It was "beyond our capabilities"[28]. The controversial events surrounding the demise of NATO's Afghanistan operation and the focus on the American withdrawal and sudden Taliban return was, during August 2021, seen as a moment of potential danger and vulnerability in Latvia. With American attention overwhelmed with events in Afghanistan, some agile and speedy actions by Russia during the Zapad 2021 exercises could have created unpleasant surprises. Such situations could in turn prompt coordinated Russian and Chinese actions to clip the America's wings.

China is increasingly appearing on NATO's radar screen, including in the nuclear sphere with its arsenal of weapons rapidly expanding and the appearance of thousands of missile silos that could increase its nuclear capability[29]. Latvia will need to keep a close watch on such developments, especially to the extent that they deflect US interests away from Europe. Latvia needs to speak out strongly in favour of increasing the capabilities and capacities of European allies within NATO. Increased mobility of conventional capabilities to support the allies' enhanced forward presence in the event of a crisis in our region would help plug the deterrence gap. Fruitless discussion about European strategic autonomy should not be allowed to detract from issues of capabilities' shortfall and mobility.

By addressing the importance of conventional capability increases, Latvia needs to stress that our territory should avoid becoming the scene of a nuclear exchange by big power rivals. There is an ongoing awareness of the dangers of such an exchange in our region. Avoiding it must figure as a priority, which in turn links in to the whole issue of trying to retain some semblance of dialogue between NATO and Russia without departing from parallel defence and deterrence measures on the NATO side. At the same time, Latvia needs to balance the concerns about a nuclear scenario with our full support for NATO's nuclear deterrence policy.

A priori, Latvia's interests in NATO's nuclear deterrence policy will currently not in any way need to diverge from the posture taken by our US ally. Latvia will want to retain the US dual nuclear presence in Europe. It will remain as an important element tying the US to Europe and keeping European allies engaged with our US partner. It would be preferable that debates about the hosting of US nuclear assets within European member countries do not raise their ugly heads, even though every democracy concerned has the right to debate such issues. There has been little public debate about this in Latvia, unlike in Poland, which offered to step up in response to certain negative indications about future hosting in Germany[30]. In addition, all Allies will want to look closely at other developments between the US and Russia during the period leading up to 2024 – the year that the extended New START expires and the year that President Putin's extended term is also likely to be up for renewal.

Latvia should express clearly to America any particular concerns that we may have about US nuclear deterrence within NATO. We would need reassurances and explanations from America about any changes to their nuclear posture. Sudden changes in policy could also lead to misunderstandings not only amongst allies, but also with rivals, when miscalculations could then ensue. Speed of decision making, opportunism and agility have become the hallmarks of Russia's leadership during the last decades. Latvia needs to watch closely how NATO is able to underpin the credibility of nuclear deterrence in Europe. A more robust and comprehensive concept of nuclear exercises is needed, integrating full scale European theatre-wide integrated air and missile defence, and also integrating conventional and nuclear forces across the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear spectrum. NATO also needs to

factor in the role of new technologies into this deterrence equation and to take on board emerging hybrid possibilities[31].

The history of NATO has shown that allies have been able to adapt and show resilience in times of change. These are traits that continue to be vital. The question of how NATO's nuclear deterrence policy can continue to be effective is already being addressed. The Reflection Group report in the context of NATO 2030 has made clear recommendations, which are worth mentioning in their entirety as follows: – "In light of the deterioration of the Cold War-era arms control framework, it is critical to sustain nuclear deterrence and conventional defence capabilities in the 21st century as the bedrock of our security. NATO should further adapt its defence and deterrence posture in the post-INF setting to take into account the threat posed by Russia's existing and new military capabilities. NATO should continue and revitalise the nuclear-sharing arrangements that constitute a critical element of NATO's deterrence policy, coupled with effective conventional defence and the independent arsenals of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. Nuclear sharing, which is in compliance with the NPT, ensures political cohesion of all states, offering security guarantees and preventing an increase in the number of independent nuclear arsenals. The political value of this commitment is as important as the military value it brings. NATO should better communicate on the key role of its nuclear deterrence policy in ensuring the security of Allies and their populations, sharing its values and principles, so as to effectively counter hostile efforts to undermine this vital policy. It should systematically reach out to, and seek to inform, the expert community and civil society, including on the content of Russia's nuclear doctrine and its capabilities."[32]

As well as referring to issues already mentioned in this paper, including Russia, (described elsewhere in the report as posing "a serious threat to NATO Allies"), the recommendations clearly refer to the need for communication of the nuclear deterrence policy to the general public. The need for civil society being informed is also important in Latvia, especially regarding the need to dispel any myths and misunderstanding about nuclear deterrence. The Reflection Group recommendations will undoubtedly be on the table of NATO member states in Brussels when discussions about the next NATO Strategic Concept take place. None of them are in contradiction to Latvia's

interests. At the same time, Latvia needs to consider very carefully how to promote "political cohesion" within the Alliance in the light of recent events surrounding both the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan and the fallout from the emerging Franco–American rift following Australia's rejection of France's submarine sale's contract.

NO SITTING DUCK

Latvia is on the front line of any potential escalation of Russian aggression morphing from a conventional to a nuclear scenario. Concerns about missiles landing on our territory are existential. Deterrence and the avoidance of such a scenario are therefore of primary importance to Latvia and our surrounding region, which forms part of NATO's eastern flank. Fortunately, Latvian territory is no longer a "sitting duck" for potential nuclear attacks, as was the case in the last century when Moscow's decisions meant NATO's nuclear weapons were targeted on Latvia. With a seat at the NATO table, Latvia's voice can and should be heard on vital questions about nuclear deterrence.

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NATO'S CYBER DEFENCE POLICY: ITS SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

LAURA DONE

Hostile and disruptive cyber activities carried out by state-sponsored actors against another state can destabilise international relations. A significant cyber-attack can even cause a conflict. In response to the changing security environment and growing cyber threats, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has significantly stepped up its cyber defence policy. Since the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002, when for the first-time the Alliance recognised the need for strengthening protection against cyber-attacks, NATO's cyber defence policy has gradually evolved. Crucial decisions have been taken at almost every following summit, especially in Wales (2014), Warsaw (2016) and Brussels (2018).[1]

While international organisations like the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) have their own unique roles in carrying out cyber diplomacy and advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, the primary task of NATO is to protect its information and communication technologies (ICTs), networks, and systems, including in its missions and operations. NATO also needs to respond to a significant cyber-attack where its allies have become victims. In light of the evolving cyber threat landscape and the rapid development of new technologies and the application thereof, including in the military, cyberspace is a domain of operations where NATO must constantly adapt. Taking into account the fact that cyberspace serves as an environment where states can demonstrate aggression and project their power, and that cyber-attacks can be used as an instrument of hybrid warfare, an effective cyber defence policy is essential for the Alliance to fulfil its core tasks, especially in collective defence and crisis management.[2] Resilience and high-level cyber defence of modern weapons, missile defence, and command

and control systems are key factors for overall deterrence and defence, as well as for the effective functioning of NATO capabilities in other domains of operations.

This chapter will look at the adaptation of NATO's cyber defence policy and analyse what role allies can play individually, particularly Latvia, to boost NATO's cyber deterrence posture. The chapter also gives a brief explanation of cyber deterrence to better understand the application of deterrence by denial[3] and deterrence by punishment[4] in the cyber domain. It will also discuss the unusual nature of cyber capabilities, attribution challenges and the future perspective of cyber defence policy in the context of Brussels Summit (2021) decisions and the NATO 2030 agenda, including the next Strategic Concept. The chapter concludes with recommendations for policy makers.

CYBER DETERRENCE: DENIAL VS. PUNISHMENT

The concept of cyber deterrence is broad and complex, as it points to the deterrence of this entire area of activity. This is unlike the other operational domains, as neither land nor sea or air deterrence exists.[5] There are at least two deterrence approaches in cyberspace: deterrence by denial (the resilience and protection of ICT systems) and deterrence by punishment (the threat of retaliation as a deterrent to cyber-attacks).

In NATO's case, deterrence by denial is based on the ability of the Alliance to protect its ICT systems so effectively that it is impossible for an opponent to carry out a successful cyber-attack and achieve its objectives. Well-protected and resilient systems consume the attacker's time and resources, thereby affecting their cost/benefit calculation and their motivation to carry out cyber-attacks.[6] According to NATO's defensive mandate, deterrence by denial could be the most appropriate approach in cyberspace, although no system or network can be absolutely secure against cyber-attacks.[7]

Deterrence by punishment means that there is a credible threat of retaliation against potential aggressors. This approach means that a cyber-attack, depending on its severity, would receive a proportional response, such as a diplomatic response, an economic response (sanctions, for example),

a cyber response, the use of conventional force, or even a response with the use of nuclear weapons.[8] The implementation of a response (in the context of deterrence by punishment) has a gradation: if a country (or NATO) cannot be clearly sure of an opponent's involvement in carrying out a cyber-attack, the response can therefore be softer, so that it is appropriate to the level of credibility of the evidence. Deterrence by punishment in cyberspace is an effective approach if the opponent's perception is affected and they fear that there is a credible threat of a response and that the deterrent (NATO) can implement it.

In general, deterrence by denial in cyberspace is essential because it does not require the identification of the perpetrator (attribution), unlike deterrence by punishment. The rapid development of new technologies can lead to more effective ways of identifying perpetrators, thereby strengthening the role of deterrence by punishment.

The exact application of Cold War deterrence strategies to cyberspace is challenging because the consequences of a nuclear and cyber-attack are different – for example, a cyber-attack might not cause physical damage or deaths, and a cyber-attack is instantaneous (there is no warning or short warning), so the deterrence effect is different than that of nuclear deterrence.[9]

THE EVOLVING CYBER THREAT LANDSCAPE: THE ADAPTATION OF NATO'S CYBER DEFENCE POLICY

In line with the three core tasks of NATO that were launched by the Strategic Concept of NATO in 2010, cyber defence is an integral element in the implementation of these, particularly in collective defence. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has repeatedly said that: "Cyber-attacks are becoming more frequent, more complex and more destructive. From low-level attempts to technologically sophisticated attacks. They come from states, and non-state actors".[10] Decision makers' understandings of the potentially destructive impact of significant cyber-attacks have resulted in four NATO's cyber defence policies, which have been adopted between 2008 and 2021. These policies and additional decisions and adopted documents ensure a constant adaptation to

the evolving cyber threat landscape. It is possible to analyse decisions taken by NATO regarding cyber defence policy through the lens of deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment to understand the chosen approach by the Alliance to reducing offensive attacks on its ICT systems and allies.[11]

In the 2002–2007 period, after the Prague and Riga Summits, NATO's approach can be described as a technical approach, acknowledging that the Alliance is facing cyber threats and that there is a need for strengthening its own ICT networks and systems. However, in response to the massive cyber-attacks against Estonia orchestrated by Russia, NATO adopted the first Cyber Defence Policy at the Bucharest Summit in 2008. At this Summit, NATO did not yet acknowledge that cyber-attacks can be carried out not only by individual hackers or hacker groups, but also by state actors. In the 2002–2008 period, NATO implemented deterrence by denial by developing and strengthening its cyber defences and the resilience of ICT systems. In 2007 and 2008, the lack of attribution experience and an insufficient understanding of the applicability of international law to cyberspace may have hindered the Alliance from choosing a deterrence by punishment approach for cyberspace.[12] In the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit (2009), NATO recognised that cyber-attacks can also be state sponsored. This would have been an appropriate moment for NATO to already combine its deterrence by denial approach with deterrence by punishment to deter state actors who have the potential to carry out more technically sophisticated cyber-attacks.

Even such a fundamental document as the Alliance's Strategic Concept (2010) emphasises that NATO is aware of the presence of cyber threats over the next decades and that cyber-attacks can threaten Euro-Atlantic security, but the concept does not provide strategic guidance on how to mitigate growing cyber threats. At the Lisbon Summit in 2010, NATO decided to develop a second cyber defence policy based on a review of the first policy.

At the Wales Summit in 2014, NATO made decisive decisions to strengthen its collective defence capabilities and to enable the Alliance to better address current and future threats. At the Wales Summit, allies endorsed an enhanced NATO Cyber Defence Policy and announced that a significant cyber-attack may trigger the invocation of Article 5. With this decision, NATO's cyber defence posture has transformed from deterrence by denial to deterrence by denial in combination with deterrence by punishment.[13]

The Wales declaration also stresses the primary responsibility of the allies to protect their own ICT systems and networks. By 2014, an understanding of the applicability of international law to cyberspace was developed, which contributed to the decision to implement cyber deterrence by punishment.[14]

At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO recognised cyberspace as an area of operations in which it must defend itself as effectively as in any other area of operations, thus indirectly indicating the potential use of offensive cyber capabilities when necessary. This decision strengthens deterrence by punishment, as it provides a space where offensive operations can potentially be carried out. The decision to recognise cyberspace as a domain of operations is an important step for the Alliance's future cyber activities, as NATO is expected to perform activities in cyberspace that are similar to those in any other domain of operations. It follows from the Communiqué that the decision to recognise cyberspace as an area of operations stems from the Wales decision to include cyber defence as part of NATO's collective defence.[15]

An important outcome of the Warsaw Summit was the Cyber Defence Pledge document, a commitment by the allies to improve the cyber defence of their national networks and infrastructures. The allies are committed to strengthening their cyber defences on an individual basis, thus strengthening the overall cyber defence of the Alliance.

At the Brussels Summit in 2018, NATO decided to integrate the allies' cyber capabilities into NATO missions and operations. This decision strengthens the deterrence by punishment approach. The availability of offensive cyber capabilities (offered by allies on a voluntary basis) enables NATO to threaten an adversary with a cyber-attack as a response.[16] The Brussels Summit declaration also announced the establishment of the NATO Cyberspace Operations Centre, signalling that the Alliance is developing the capacity to deploy cyber operations more effectively and with high credibility.[17]

In 2021, the allies again gathered in Brussels for a summit. As a clear indication of NATO's continuous adaptation, the allies endorsed a new Comprehensive Cyber Defence Policy. The allies also affirmed that the Cyberspace Operations Centre has achieved its initial operational capability, which is an important achievement for adequately operating in cyberspace. Nearly 20 years have passed since the Summit in Prague (2002), when NATO recognised cyber threats to the Alliance's ICT networks and systems. NATO's

strategic "cyber" thinking has changed significantly in order to adapt to new and emerging security threats and to reduce the asymmetric advantage of potential opponents in the cyber domain.

NATO'S RESPONSE TO CYBER THREATS: ATTRIBUTION, CAPABILITIES, AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS

The decision to extend Article 5 to cover a significant cyber-attack poses new challenges for NATO. To respond to a significant cyber-attack, including through the use of offensive capabilities, NATO allies must agree on to whom to attribute the cyber-attack. The sharing of evidence in order to identify the perpetrator may be limited even among allies, given the secrecy of the methods and cyber weapons used to gain such evidence.[18] It may affect the credibility of the invocation of Article 5, as a potential opponent may believe that the Alliance will not be able to reach consensus regarding a collective attribution. Achieving a high-confidence attribution is a complex process. Because of the nature of cyberspace, it is time-consuming and technically challenging to trace the origins of cyber-attacks.[19] Correct attribution is a precondition to knowing where and against whom countermeasures must be addressed.

NATO can use cyber or conventional capabilities and/or public statements to respond to a cyber-attack. The weapons and capabilities used in cyber operations are different from those used in land, sea, or air military operations. It is not possible to see, count or verify an opponent's cyber-weapons. It is not possible to deploy these weapons along a border, to demonstrate them in a military parade or to detect them from satellites. The development and the use of cyber-weapons should be kept secret to maintain the effectiveness of their capabilities. For example, if the US identifies a software vulnerability in the Russian military system, the US can't threaten Russia with it directly.[20] Otherwise, Russia would be informed of this vulnerability (and potentially learn about the US cyber-weapon's characteristics) and would immediately start to patch it. Because states can't be sure of other states' national cyber capabilities, credibility in cyber deterrence can be challenging.[21] How is it possible to convince an opponent that we have effective cyber capabilities

that can do significant damage and that we would use them if necessary? Communication is key for signalling, and signalling is essential for deterrence. NATO must be able to signal its cyber-related intentions accordingly. Without proper signalling, deterrence by punishment is ineffective.[22] There would be risks of escalation and conflict. Whoever deters must clearly express their dissatisfaction to the aggressor and signal it in such a way that the aggressor interprets it correctly, understands and concludes that the potential costs of aggressive action will significantly exceed any benefits.[23] The one who is signalling must have the tools to punish, and the threat must be credible – otherwise, signalling, and deterrence as such, will not be effective.[24]

In terms of cyber capabilities, the allies made a decisive decision in 2018 at the Brussels Summit. Allies: "… agreed how to integrate sovereign cyber effects, provided voluntarily by Allies, into Alliance operations and missions, in the framework of strong political oversight".[25] This is an important step for the Alliance's ability to deter, detect and respond to cyber threats. Unlike allies' other military capabilities, cyber capabilities, when used for NATO needs, will be controlled by the ally that owns them. National cyber capabilities will not be placed under the control of NATO commanders. At least seven NATO allies – the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, and Germany – have publicly announced the integration of their cyber capabilities into NATO missions and operations. These countries are known for their extensive cyber capabilities, and making available those capabilities to NATO serves as a deterrent. More public announcements and clear communication about new cyber capabilities at NATO's disposal would send a strong message to a potential opponent that NATO has a full range of cyber capabilities. Also, in cyber-deterrence, punishment does not necessarily need to be implemented immediately and in-kind (in the cyber domain with cyber weapons). Sanctions, diplomatic pressure, or appropriate conventional attacks can serve as sufficient responses.[26]

Public statements by NATO in response to cyber-attacks (usually also supported by national communications by allies) are additional tools at the allies' disposal for communicating about incidents. In 2021, NATO published statements condemning malicious cyber activities by Russia and China. In April 2021, NATO in its statement referred to the United States and other allies when attributing responsibility for the SolarWinds hack to Russia. Later,

in July, NATO referred to statements by Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States attributing responsibility for the Microsoft Exchange Server compromise to China.[27] Such statements reflect the allies' ability to agree on a collective attribution and is an indication about the Alliance's capabilities to detect and reveal an opponent's malicious cyber activities. The Alliance should be aware that the perpetrator might be analysing the language used in the statements in order to come to conclusions about the allies' ability to agree on a collective attribution.

LATVIA'S CYBER SECURITY POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATO'S CYBER DEFENCE POLICY

Security and the resilience of relevant communication systems and networks within NATO and allied institutions are of the utmost importance for NATO's cyber deterrence posture. As is emphasised in the NATO Cyber Defence Pledge document: "Our interconnectedness means that we are only as strong as our weakest link."[28] The Cyber Defence Pledge document is a valuable instrument for strengthening NATO's cyber posture through contributions and activities at the national level. In the context of Article 3 of The North Atlantic Treaty, it lays out allied responsibility for cyber security at national level and their contribution to the overall NATO cyber defence policy. The allies are responsible for strengthening their own national networks and infrastructures against disruptions, intrusions, and sabotage. By adopting the Cyber Defence Pledge document, the allies agreed to develop the fullest range of capabilities; to allocate adequate resources for cyber defence; to reinforce cooperation among relevant stakeholders; to enhance skills and the awareness of cyber hygiene; and to foster cyber education and training.[29]

On the one hand, small states such as Latvia are particularly vulnerable to cyber-attacks. As cyber-attacks have no borders, Latvia may suffer from a cyber-attack that has been carried out from a geographically remote location. Limited financial and human resources devoted to national cyber defence can be the main reason for a weak cyber defence. On the other hand, if the state's decision makers are fully aware of and understand cyber threats and have

found adequate resources for a national cyber defence policy, a small state can even become a global cyber power.

At the national level, cyber security/defence strategies are usually the most common documents that determine the course of national cyber policies. For Latvia, cyber security is part of a comprehensive national defence framework. Latvia has well-developed national cyber security *architecture*. Relevant national legislation is in place, and it has established national cyber defence authorities: the Information Technology Security Incident Response Institution (CERT.LV), the Military Information Technology Security Incident Response Team (MilCERT), and the National Armed Force Cyber Defence Unit. There is also the National Information Technology Security Council, which, among other things, serves as the key platform for government-private sector dialogue and cooperation on digital security. Latvia has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cyber Defence with NATO for the exchange of information and assistance to improve its resilience and response capabilities.[30] In its current cyber security strategy (2019–2022), Latvia states that the strategy has been drafted in accordance with several national strategies as well as NATO cyber security plans and guidelines, meaning that the strategy has been drafted in accordance with the NATO Cyber Defence Pledge.

In terms of resilience, Latvia acknowledges that cyber security at the national level is a strategic priority, which is also due to participation in organisations like NATO. Enhanced resilience is one of the main objectives of the national cyber security strategy. CERT.LV is actively engaged in cyber hygiene and other cyber-related educational activities for the society and civil servants. The team participates in international trainings, cooperation projects, and major exercises (Locked Shields, Cyber Coalition) to strengthen its capabilities and skills. At the same time, in March 2021 the head of CERT.LV, Baiba Kaškina pointed to the lack of human resources and funding, stating that currently CERT.LV has 30 experts, which is not sufficient, and there is a limited budget, which is posing challenges to the institution's future growth.[31] Kaškina also stated that CERT.LV cannot adequately pay experts and that this is a well-known problem which has not been addressed by decision makers.

Latvia has not publicly announced the fact that the country is ready to integrate its cyber caabilities into NATO operations and missions. At the

same time, the strategy states that Latvia participates in joint cyber defence capability development and training efforts. The current national cyber security strategy has a focus on the development of defensive cyber capabilities (although there are indications that it may also require the development or upgrading of offensive capabilities). This can indicate that resilience is a matter of priority, but there may also be ongoing processes related to the development of offensive capabilities. Latvia implements deterrence by denial in cyberspace by strengthening the resilience of its national ICT systems and networks.

It is in Latvia's interests that the Alliance provides support to its allies in case of a significant cyber-attack to help to recover and to respond. For Latvia, it is also important that NATO implements a credible deterrence by punishment approach in cyberspace, because individually Latvia has not clearly stated whether it has developed offensive cyber capabilities and is ready to use them if necessary. There are no clear punishment threats from a national perspective. Regarding deterrence by punishment in cyberspace, Latvia relies on NATO. Until now, Latvia has not experienced massive cyber-attacks by state actors, which can be either an indication of an effective cyber defence or that Latvia is not a target for more sophisticated threat actors.

To sum up, the vison and goals reflected in Latvia's cyber security strategy are in line with NATO's Cyber Defence Pledge document. At the same time, an adequate budget for the Information Technology Security Incident Response Institution remains a challenge, with a potentially negative impact on national cyber capacities.

CYBER AS AN INTEGRAL DIMENSION OF WARFARE

Some states are willing to use offensive cyber capabilities to achieve their strategic goals. Russia's aggression against Georgia and Ukraine have led NATO to rethink its vision of how an opponent can use cyber capabilities in a conventional conflict.[32] In 2008, Russia simultaneously carried out cyber-attacks and conventional attacks against Georgia.

Considering the growing presence of the cyber dimension in conflicts and hybrid warfare, in the next decade an effective cyber defence policy will

be a key element for NATO's overall deterrence and defence. At the Brussels Summit in 2021, the allies agreed on the NATO 2030 agenda. The necessary improvements to the cyber defence policy fit into the NATO 2030 agenda. NATO's cyber posture will gain tremendously from improving resilience and deepening political consultation and coordination. Close coordination and information-sharing regarding cyber issues are important preconditions for a successful cyber defence policy. Strong resilience at the national level reduces the likelihood of an ally suffering from a cyber-attack. Thus, it also reduces the likelihood of an invocation of Article 5.

At the Brussels Summit, the allies also agreed to develop NATO's next Strategic Concept. In the next Strategic Concept, cyber aspects must be well-reflected. The use of cyberspace and cyber tools has fundamentally changed in the past decade, and this poses threats to Euro-Atlantic security. The next Strategic Concept must provide a clear direction for future adaptation, including in the sphere of cyber threats.

CONCLUSIONS

NATO's cyber defence policy has significantly evolved, and a lot has been done since 2002, when NATO for the first time recognised the importance of cyber threats. Since then, the allies have agreed that a significant cyber-attack may trigger the invocation of Article 5, cyberspace has become a domain of operations, and cyber defence has become an integral part of NATO's core task of collective defence. NATO's cyber defence policy has experienced gradual strategic and operational progress.

NATO's ability to defend its allies in cyberspace depends on a collective awareness of cyber threats, situational awareness surrounding a specific cyber-attack, and the cyber capabilities at NATO's and the allies' disposal. A well-developed cyber security policy and cyber defence measures taken at a national level are of paramount importance. How are NATO allies individually adapting to security challenges posed by cyber-attacks? How does the interaction of the different interests and capabilities of NATO allies affect the credibility of the Alliance's cyber deterrence posture? How to define

an ally's subjective perception of cyber threats and what impact can this have on the decision-making process within the Alliance? The root of these challenging questions may be found in the different maturity levels of national cyber defences. A common understanding of cyber threats and the cascading effects of cyber-attacks ensures the necessary linkage between NATO's cyber defence policy and an ally's national cyber security/defence policy.

For NATO, in order to implement countermeasures, there must be a collective understanding of the origin of a cyber-attack. Failure to agree on a collective attribution is the main challenge for credible cyber-deterrence by punishment. The sharing of sensitive information and evidence is limited even among allies. A lack of cyber capabilities and information, as well as an intelligence gap, can affect a state's decision to collectively attribute a cyber-attack to a specific threat actor. Political consultations, close coordination and trust among the allies are the key aspects for better situational awareness and facilitating decision-making.

According to Latvia's cyber security strategy (2019–2022), the state demonstrates an awareness of cyber threats and understands the necessity for strong resilience and for the cyber defence of its national ICT systems and networks. At the same time, its key national cyber security authority, the Information Technology Security Incident Response Institution has a lack of human resources and finances, which can create a negative impact on the state's overall cyber capabilities and capacities. A lack of adequate resources for cyber security can also hinder Latvia's potential to become a global cyber power.

At the moment, Latvia's priority is the development of defensive cyber capabilities. High-level resilience and cyber defence at the national level reduce the likelihood of an ally suffering from a significant cyber-attack which would lead to the invocation of Article 5. Latvia nationally implements cyber-deterrence by denial and relies on NATO for cyber-deterrence by punishment. Through its national capacity, Latvia can boost NATO's overall deterrence and defence posture by making its cyber capabilities available to the organisation. Currently, Latvia is not among the at least seven NATO allies that have integrated their cyber capabilities into NATO operations and missions and publicly announced it.

Iain Lobban, director of the UK Government Communications Headquarters, has said that cyberspace is contested at all times: every hour,

every minute. The cyber dimension has become an integral part of warfare, including hybrid, and cyber capabilities will continue to shape the nature of future battles. This means that NATO and its allies will continue to be targets for cyber-attacks. NATO will continue to operate in cyberspace, deploying cyber capabilities in its missions and operations. As there has been a rapid development of new and emerging technologies, the Alliance must constantly adapt to the evolving cyber threat landscape. The new Comprehensive Cyber Defence Policy, endorsed at the Brussels Summit in 2021, affirms the Alliance's commitment to continuously adapt.

A number of recommendations can be offered to decision makers to keep pace with the fast-evolving cyber threat landscape. NATO and its allies, including Latvia, should:

- Ensure competitive wages for IT experts within the government and NATO institutions. There is a great need for skilled staff to operate with a full range of cyber capabilities to ensure that the Alliance maintains its ability to deter, defend, respond, and recover from a cyber-attack.
- Continue regular trainings and exercises where a significant cyber-attack is part of the scenario. It is necessary to train not only the technical aspects but also to involve decision makers to improve their understanding of the cascading effects of cyber-attacks.
- Ensure regular cyber hygiene and cyber education seminars for civil servants. Cyber-attacks can also be carried out using a human factor (an employee of the institution).
- Ensure clear communication about the cyber capabilities, including offensive ones, available to NATO. More allies, including Latvia, should integrate their cyber capabilities into NATO and publicly announce it. Cyber capabilities are impossible to detect from satellites, to deploy along borders or to demonstrate in a military parade, and that is why proper communication is essential for better credibility. The Alliance needs to more openly demonstrate its willingness to use capabilities, including cyber, to deter and defend against cyber threats.
- Invest more in cyber defence. The allies must fulfil their commitment to invest 2% of their gross domestic product to defence spending. A portion of this investment should be directed to cyber defence needs within the armed forces and intelligence institutions.

- Improve their strategic communications about cyber-attacks. This is necessary to demonstrate coherence and unity regarding a collective attribution. That would strengthen credibility.
- Ensure the high-level resilience and cyber security of new and emerging technologies. That is a crucial element of the Alliance's efforts to maintain its technological edge.
- Ensure that cyber defence is an integral part of the implementation of the NATO 2030 agenda, including of the development of the next Strategic Concept.

ENDNOTES

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[2] Ibid.

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[10] NATO. 23.05.2019. *Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the Cyber Defence Pledge Conference, London.* https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_166039.htm

[11] The author has done extensive research in 2020, regarding adaptation of NATO's cyber defence policy. In this sub-section the author provides key observations from the research.

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[13] Ibid.; 149.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Done, L. 2020. *Adaption of NATO's cyber defence policy (2014–2018).* Proceedings of the 62nd International Scientific Conference of Daugavpils University; 151. https://dukonference.lv/files/978-9984-14-926-4_62_konf_kraj_B_Soc%20zin.pdf

[16] Ibid., 150.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 151.

[20] Meakins. J. 06.2018. *Living in (Digital) Denial: Russia's Approach to Cyber Deterrence*. The European Leadership Network (Euro-Atlantic security report); 4. https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Living-in-Digital-Denial-Russia%E2%80%99s-Approach-to-Cyber-Deterrence.pdf

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NATO SPACE POLICY – BUILDING A FULL SPECTRUM DETERRENCE?

GINTA BRŪMANE-GROMULA

The space domain has already for decades had a crucial role in the security and defence policy agenda. During the Cold War, competition between the United States and the Soviet Union in the space domain was an element of the strategic balance and shaped the national security policies of both superpowers. Although the space domain has been contested from nearly the beginning of its exploration, none of the kinetic weapons developed by the United States or the Soviet Union were ever used in any conflict. While the threat of attack was ever-present during the Cold War, a stable deterrence posture was developed between the two superpowers, as both the US and Soviet national security space systems were primarily used to support nuclear forces. There was an understanding that an attack on these space systems would be regarded as a prelude to a nuclear attack. Today, national security space systems are not just used to support nuclear forces, and the US military is increasingly dependent on space systems across the full spectrum of military operations.[1] The situation has also changed regarding the players involved in space activities. Global security challenges have become more diverse, involving not only traditional areas of competition, but also expanding into other domains. In the context of security and defence, the space domain has become an area of renewed competition.

The space domain has its opportunities, but also its dangers. Now let's take a step back and look at the space domain from a greater distance. Space itself is ultimately an almost infinite and empty place. However, the useful part of it, which is closest to Earth, is increasingly crowded. Based on the 20 September 2021 Space Environment Statistics report, there are 6,257 satellites in orbit, of which 4,700 are still functioning, and more than 330 million debris objects are

estimated by statistical models to exist, of which only almost 30 thousand are monitored.[2] With a growing societal reliance on space-based infrastructure and systems, debris-related incidents and collisions could have significant negative consequences globally. Geostationary orbits and electromagnetic frequencies are also finite resources.

The impacts of accumulating space debris could be disastrous. If debris density reaches critical levels, it could trigger an irreversible chain reaction of orbital collisions, creating an ever-greater amount of small and dangerous debris. This so-called Kessler Syndrome could ultimately render certain orbits of high socio-economic value unusable and hinder much of humanity's potential for further activity in space. The damage or destruction of crucial observation, navigation and telecommunications satellites on orbits most vulnerable to space debris could disrupt the best – and sometimes only – sources of data and signals for multiple areas of human activities, ranging from weather forecasting and sea navigation to banking and stock markets that use satellite networks to operate securely.[3] To continue with the statistics: over the coming decade, it's estimated by Euroconsult that 990 satellites will be launched every year. This means that by 2028, there could be 15,000 satellites in orbit.[4]

Space activities so far have been some of the most successful examples of international cooperation. The most prominent and widely known is the International Space Station, which is an unprecedented integrated technology and research platform. Despite positive and far-reaching international cooperation examples, there are also parallel trends in the development of the space sector. Based on a fairly recent analysis done by some NGOs and think tanks,[5] the development of various offensive capabilities for use in the space domain has taken a rapidly growing path. Counterspace weapons vary in the types of effects they create, as well as in the level of technological sophistication and resources required to develop and field them. They also differ in how they are employed and how difficult they are to detect and attribute. The effects of these weapons might be permanent or temporary. All these weapons may be divided into four groups – kinetic physical, non-kinetic physical, electronic, and cyber.[6]

The most widely developed and tested capabilities regarding offensive space activities are in the electronic and cyber domains. State actors and non-state actors use these techniques. The most sophisticated and demanding

technology is the kinetic anti-satellite (ASAT) capability. In recent years, the number of countries with kinetic ASAT capabilities has risen to four – the US, Russia, China, and India,[7] with the latter being the newest player in the field. Two of them – Russia and China – are included in NATO's threat and competitors list. The acquisition of offensive and disruptive technologies in the space domain continues to proliferate, especially in regard to Russia's and China's capability development,[8] which facilitates the necessity of having a strategy for defending against and countering these trends.

NATO AND SPACE: CURRENT STATUS

This all leads to the main question of this particular article – what should NATO do about challenges coming from the space domain? And how it should be proceeding?

First, what has NATO done and achieved so far? As the report of the expert group from "NATO 2030" states: "The development of sophisticated new military technologies by Russia and China threaten Allied security in this domain and have made outer space a new theatre for geopolitical competition."[9] It is quite clear that historically all space domain matters have been the sole responsibility of each NATO ally nationally, and this has not changed up to now. Even though developments in the space domain have been a worrisome area for decades, actual discussions on NATO's role and responsibility have started only fairly recently.

The first public announcement on NATO's views of the space domain came in 2018. Heads of state and government officially stated the following: "Recognizing that space is a highly dynamic and rapidly evolving area, which is essential to a coherent Alliance deterrence and defense posture, we have agreed to develop an overarching NATO Space Policy."[10] This was the turning point in the Alliance's thinking about joint engagement in the space domain, and it was the first step in declaring NATO's willingness to focus on a new operational domain in addition to those of land, air, sea, and the fairly recently declared cyber domain. Soon after the June 2019 Defence Ministers' meeting, the NATO Space Policy was adopted.

A clear announcement of NATO's understanding of the space domain came at the 2019 summit in London, stating that "we have declared space an operational domain for NATO, recognizing its importance in keeping us safe and tackling security challenges, while upholding international law."[11]

The following summit, in Brussels last summer, went a bit further. It settled on a new element in NATO's policy of collective defence commitments. Space became part of it. At the 2021 Brussels Summit, NATO leaders stated that "attacks to, from, or within space present a clear challenge to the security of the Alliance, the impact of which could threaten national and Euro-Atlantic prosperity, security, and stability, and could be as harmful to modern societies as a conventional attack. Such attacks could lead to the invocation of Article 5. A decision as to when such attacks would lead to the invocation of Article 5 would be taken by the North Atlantic Council on a case-by-case basis."[12]

According to official NATO statements, "space is critical for the Alliance, including in the following areas:

- positioning, navigation, and timing, which enables precision strikes, tracking of forces or search and rescue missions;
- early warning, which helps to ensure force protection and provides vital information on missile launches;
- environmental monitoring, which enables meteorological forecasting and mission planning;
- secure satellite communications, which are essential for missions to enable consultation, command, and control;
- intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, which are crucial for situational awareness, planning, and decision-making."[13]

This all implies that space is a support domain for operations in more traditional domains, highlighting NATO political statements, which have defined space as only an operational domain. Amid political statements and policy declarations, some practical and visible steps are being followed. On 22 October 2020, a decision was taken to establish the NATO Space Centre at Allied Air Command in Ramstein, which should be the main body for NATO's planning in the space domain. It promises to streamline requests for space products through a single NATO entity, thereby delivering the promise of speed, efficiency, and effectiveness to allied operational and tactical units' decisions.[14] Although there is little open-source information on the NATO

Space Centre, currently the official NATO Space Centre communication describes its staff as comprised of experts from the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, and Germany, with a promise to include additional personnel from other allied countries.[15] The Space Centre states that all allied countries with or without space capabilities can participate with their data, products, and services, and they can eventually share common space domain information.

Some months after the establishment of the NATO Space Centre came an announcement by France that it will establish a Space Centre of Excellence in Toulouse, which also will be contributing to shaping future Alliance policy on space. More detailed information on this initiative is still pending, but it most definitely is an example of combining the national ambitions of France with allied efforts.

Apart from the establishment of new excellence and operational centres, other national initiatives should be mentioned when discussing national contributions to this new NATO policy and capability development. To enhance NATO's space domain awareness, NATO announced plans to develop a Strategic Space Situational Awareness System (3SAS). The goal of 3SAS is to allow the Alliance to better understand the space environment and space events, as well as their effects across all domains. This system might be part of a solution of unified security and development principles for space capabilities and information sharing.[16] This project is co-sponsored by Luxembourg, which is investing 6.7 million EUR.[17] In addition to this, NATO is investing over 1 billion EUR in satellite communications services in the period from 2020 through 2034. This is the Alliance's biggest-ever investment in satellite communications.[18] All the recent political decisions on further NATO responsibilities and investments have highlighted the new ambition and new operational reality in the space domain.

LATVIA AND SPACE: NATIONAL POLICIES, CAPABILITIES, AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

National expertise could be a challenge, as the majority of NATO allies have limited expertise and capabilities in the space domain. In Latvia's case, development in the space domain currently focuses on the civilian sector. Latvia is mostly engaged in European multinational frameworks. In 2009, Latvia established cooperation with the European Space Agency, which mainly focuses on science, research, and industry development. In 2020, Latvia became an associated member state of the European Space Agency. In the light of assuming its new status in the European Space Agency, the Space Strategy of Latvia 2021–2027[19] was adopted. It is built around the understanding that Latvia, as a country of 2 million inhabitants located in the innovative northern part of Europe, sees its potential in finding and filling niches in the new space economy, which is open to innovation, as well as building on the historical heritage of space technologies and competencies initially developed in the second half of the 20th century.[20] The main goal set out in the space strategy is to open new opportunities in science and industry development – ensuring that Latvia becomes part of the wider space technology community both scientifically and economically.

The same approach to ensuring increased opportunities for local industry to find its place in new space-related technology developments and to open up new economic opportunities guided the decision in 2018 to found Latvia's national Space Industry Association. The decision stated that its priority is to ensure a more coordinated approach to Latvia's involvement in ESA activities. So far, these efforts have resulted in engagement in various projects and a demonstration at the international level of the potential that Latvia's industry has in new and innovative solutions for space technologies.

In the broader context of Latvia's national efforts in the space domain, scientific activities also are worth mentioning. As of now, two major state universities have been involved in the development of different space-related technologies. The University of Latvia through its Astronomy Institute has been investing in the area of satellite laser measurements, and it is recognized as the one with the most precise technology. Projects conducted in the Ventspils

University of Applied Sciences (VUAS) are directed in a different area. On 24 July 2017, VUAS, using the services of the Indian rocket PSLV-C38, managed to launch Latvia's first satellite into open space. Under the auspices of VUAS is the Engineering Research Institute Ventspils International Radio Astronomy Centre (ERI VIRAC). The strategic goal of ERI VIRAC is to become a global provider of research services in the field of astronomy and space technology.[21] ERI VIRAC infrastructure is based on the Soviet-built Irbene radio antenna complex, which was originally built as a secret Soviet astronomy and communications centre to spy on communications in the West. Based on ERI VIRAC's expertise and development possibilities in the space domain, just recently, in June 2021, VUAS and the Ministry of Defence of Latvia established formal cooperation which involves financial support to sustain the Irbene radio antenna complex and their involvement in the development of military science and technology in space-related projects.[22] This agreement is in line with Latvia's recent focus on the development of its military industry and additional investments in the development of its national military capabilities. The acknowledgment of the importance of space technologies is also resulting in new projects and grants in this area. But it is clear that, despite all these recent developments and acknowledgments of the importance of space-related capabilities, significant Latvian national capabilities in this domain have a long way to go and may even be impossible to develop solely nationally due to the vast number of resources required. Therefore, policy and investments at the NATO level will be the main local driver in the space domain. Subsequently, for Latvia, it will be highly important that NATO agrees on a joint approach to threats and development priorities in the space domain.

CHALLENGES AND THE WAY AHEAD?

When thinking about the next steps for NATO's policy towards and activities within the space domain, it is worth mentioning the recommendations resulting from the NATO 2030 process. The report on NATO's policy for the next 10 years is very concise regarding space issues. Its main recommendations

are: (1) raising expertise in the space domain, (2) assessing how space-related matters affect resilience building (the security of critical infrastructure – electricity, communications), and (3) using NATO's political instruments in promoting space-related public and private partnerships, R&D, and public access to its strategic thinking, ensuring the further development of a new approach to space policy.[23]

If adhering only to these recommendations, NATO's role in this operational domain can stay very limited and would not have a serious deterrent effect. And those recommendations do not cover the areas with the greatest challenges.

First of all, NATO and its allies with various space capabilities must understand how their national efforts will fit into NATO's overall activities and policy. There is no doubt that only a few NATO members have made considerable investments and are developing space capabilities – the US, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany are heading in that direction. With separate national command structures in the space domain, ambitions to be ready to act in all domains have become a crucial part of national defence planning efforts. Now the task is to link these efforts with NATO.

The successful merging of national and international assets is not the only issue to be solved for NATO to become effective in the space domain. A critical element to be ready to defend NATO interests in space is achieving a joint understating of the particular nature of threats directed at NATO and its allies. This is a critical precondition for a more detailed strategy. It should also be a basis for future capability development. The link between threats and capability development should be applied in all domains as it ensures the Alliance's ability, with the appropriate capabilities, to defend collective interests.

In the case of Latvia, the question remains: how could these processes be viewed from the perspective of allies without material space domain capabilities? At a very basic level, it is crucial that intelligence sharing, overall situational awareness, and operational value are directly translated into joint defence planning processes and that this increases NATO's effectiveness in carrying out its operations, especially collective defence tasks.

An additional layer to the cooperation framework is the need to find common interests, approaches, and complementarity with the European

Union. The EU already has well-established structures dealing with various space domain initiatives. It has its own GPS alternative, Galileo,[24] and it has invested in Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST), now developed by a consortium established by seven EU member states.[25] SST can also significantly contribute to military operations, as it provides information for producing the Recognized Space Picture (RSP), such as the opponent's ISR satellites' overflight forecasts and updated insights about opponents' space capabilities. Last but not least, SST is an enabler for most counter-space capabilities as it provides the position of the target satellites with the accuracy required for such applications.[26] An additional EU project that should be highlighted is its Governmental Satellite Communications (GOVSATCOM) programme,[27] aimed at ensuring support not only for civilian endeavours but also for military operations. And all of the EU member states that are investing in EU initiatives are also NATO allies. From a purely Latvian perspective, the more complementarity both organizations achieve, the more value is gained in overall security policy covering not only space but all other domains as well. Space should become an additional area of cooperation, and not competition, between NATO and the EU.

SPACE AS OPERATIONAL OR WARFIGHTING DOMAIN?

What could the right NATO strategy be regarding threats in the space domain? The current agreement among allies is that it is directed at operational requirements and used as a support to other domains. This is highlighted in NATO Secretary General J. Stoltenberg's statements saying that "it is not about the militarization of space, but about the defense of key capabilities […] Satellites play a key role in communication and defense, they have to be protected."[28] Our approach will remain defensive and fully in line with international law. NATO has no intention to put weapons in space. But we need to ensure our missions and operations have the right support.[29]

This does not mean that there is no need for the evolution of this idea. Challenges in the space domain will continue to grow, and according to different assessments, electronic counterspace weapons will continue to

proliferate at a rapid pace regarding both how they are used and who is using them. Satellite jamming and spoofing devices are becoming part of the everyday arsenal of countries that want to operate in the grey zone. The jamming and spoofing of satellites have become common, and without strong repercussions, these adverse activities could gradually become normalised.[30] Interesting material in this context is the study conducted by CSIS, which also has speculations on the specific scenarios involving threats in space.[31] One of the scenarios is specifically devoted to Russian aggression in the Baltic States, where hybrid activities in more traditional domains and conventional military activities along the Baltic States' borders are combined with ambiguous activities in the space domain.[32] This scenario demonstrates new challenges regarding the use of space capabilities maliciously and offensively, not only affecting operational assets but also causing strategic dilemmas. There is the same nuanced need for solving attribution challenges and creating defensive and offensive strategies with an appropriate mix of capabilities to ensure their implementation as in cyber and also the more traditional domains of land, air, and sea.

This narrative indicates that a more proactive approach and strategy should be used to extend NATO's overall ability to deter, and if necessary, also to defend, in the space domain. In this regard, the next decade should be devoted to transitioning from an approach to space as an operational domain to space as a warfighting domain. Some NATO allies, like the US and UK, in their national strategies have already declared the space domain as a warfighting domain. France in its national strategy speaks of the space domain in terms of the need to develop "active defence",[33] which entails a similar approach to space as the US and the UK. It would be only natural if NATO would follow. Potential adversaries like Russia and China are looking at the space domain as a warfighting domain, and for NATO to live up to its declared political agreement about Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and the space domain, the introduction of a warfighting approach to space would be the next logical step.

FINAL REMARKS

It is clear that with NATO's willingness to invest in its capabilities across the full spectrum of operational domains, its deterrence policy is becoming even more diverse, with additional instruments of power. From Latvia's perspective, this is a crucial development. The statement on the possible declaration of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty as an answer to threats in space is especially important. Although there are many deliberations on what the threshold for action with all possible hostile activities in space might be, including the suitability of Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty regarding the application to space assets,[34] it still enhances the Alliance's ability to act, respond and be ready for new challenges. Uncertainty and ambiguity can be an advantage in the overall deterrence approach, keeping potential adversaries unsure about the possible allied response to hostile actions. But it is also crucial that during the sustainment of uncertainty there is internal planning conducted for a wide spectrum of scenarios. NATO has to be ready to act proactively, and its capabilities in all domains should also create new defence possibilities in an asymmetric manner, thus complicating the adversaries' calculus. The new domain should also open up new thinking towards the conduct of defence planning and political decision-making. The weaponization of space is a reality, and NATO has to be ready to defend and fight for its allies' interests and security in all domains, including space.

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MAINTAINING THE SYMBOLIC VALUE OF NATO: A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGING UNDERSTANDINGS OF THREAT AND DETERRENCE

ELĪNA LANGE-IONATAMIŠVILI

> *"We do not know what other dangers may arise 10, 20, or even 50 years from now. We do know that whatever the future may hold, it will be in our interest to have a vigorous and larger alliance with those European democracies that share our values and our determination to defend them."*[1]
>
> Hon. Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State

This article explores NATO's changing identity in the current security environment from a social constructivist perspective. It explains the idea of strategic communications, which is rooted in social constructivism and symbolic interactionism, and views deterrence as an act of strategic communications. It maintains that NATO's symbolic value as a democratic security community is its greatest strength and deterrent against adversaries. It argues that the ideational links between its member states need to be strengthened internally and expanded outward for NATO to have an advantage over its geopolitical competitors and hostile actors. The case of Latvia's accession to NATO illustrates how ideational factors and value-driven policies can overcome realist-driven scepticism and strengthen the Alliance.

Strategic communications can be understood as the use of persuasion and coercion to achieve strategic goals.[2] Deterrence therefore is an act of strategic communications: a coercive strategy involving the purposive use

of force to influence another's strategic choices.[3] The concept of deterrence, exercised through the principle of collective defence, remains central for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). It sits at the heart of NATO's communications with its members, partners, and also adversaries. Historically, nuclear deterrence has been the core concern for NATO, an organisation defined by the Cold War. Today, it remains essential to NATO's collective defence. But over the course of 70 years, NATO's understanding of threats and of deterrence has evolved. As the most powerful military alliance in history, NATO is less concerned about a conventional or nuclear attack than it is with hybrid threats: the possibility of NATO countries falling under non-kinetic attacks, often across multiple domains, without a declaration of war.[4] Externally driven manipulation of public opinion in NATO countries (often in tandem with or exploiting internally generated dissent) has been highlighted as one such threat.[5] For the deterrence of a conventional military or nuclear attack to succeed (NATO member territories have not been invaded or suffered a nuclear attack since its formation), then deterrence in the context of hybrid threats becomes strategically complicated.

CHANGING THREATS, CHANGING IDENTITY

Deterrence is the use of threat to prevent an adversary from considering inflicting harm.[6] Put simply, it is a cost-benefit calculation. If the adversary sees that launching an attack will accrue insufficient benefits for the cost, the adversary is more likely to refrain from carrying out an attack. For deterrence to succeed, capacities to inflict harm on an adversary may be periodically applied, particularly in response to any kind of attempts to cross any imposed red lines. The intent to defend or retaliate should be clearly communicated; it is not sufficient simply to declare that one has the capability to do so. However, how that communication is expressed is open to vigorous debate.[7] Any capability has to be used against the adversary to dissuade or to punish.[8] Such an approach is difficult to implement when facing hybrid threats; hybridity can be understood as engaging all the assets of a state (diplomatic, military, information, and economic) against an enemy while operating at a level of

conflict below that of declared war.[9] Hybrid threats aim to avoid accountability and maintain some degree of plausible deniability. NATO as a defensive alliance that strives to maintain peace is keen not to become the party which initiates or escalates a conflict – where escalation is an accepted consequence of a great deal of deterrence thinking.[10] In the case of hybrid threats, not only is attribution a challenge, but second-guessing the intentions and planning of the enemy is determined by one's own historical perceptions. Consequently, determining when and how best to respond is even more complex. It is one thing to have defensive or offensive capabilities of sufficient order to signal a future action aimed at the adversary. It is another to apply these capabilities when attribution of an attack remains uncertain and when gauging the nature of an appropriate response or punishment to the particular nature of an attack is complicated. This presents NATO with a dilemma when it weighs its options for exercising coercion.

Russia's attack on Ukraine in 2014 illustrates the complex nature of hybrid threats and the possibilities to respond and deter. Having prepared the informational background through targeted disinformation,[11] Russia engaged in gradual escalation across multiple domains, denying the target country and its allies the ability to attribute and evaluate the threat. Thus, it slowed decision-making about when and how to respond.[12] Eventually, the decision was taken by the democratic West to respond by imposing a variety of sanctions on Russia, and the Alliance suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation with Moscow. NATO then took practical steps by stationing international forces in Poland and the Baltic countries – the enhanced Forward Presence.[13] That was a powerful act of strategic communications. However, the West has failed to stop Russia from continuing to challenge it. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the rhetoric of Russian politicians and state-controlled media (*RT, Sputnik* and *Perviy Kanal*, among others) has escalated, accompanied by demonstrations of military power, intelligence and offensive cyber capabilities.[14] Since 2014, Russia has launched several hybrid attacks on NATO countries, including in 2016 and 2020 through interference in the US presidential elections.[15] There are further reports of planned interference in the 2022 congressional and senatorial elections.[16] Although neither attack brought immediate damage to the Alliance or escalated into a conflict, this demonstrates how

a hostile country can use information technologies to exploit existing rifts in a society. It also shows the diversity and potential of hybrid threats to affect the relationship between political and military actions in the security space. It may be argued that although Russia may have been deterred from further bold coercive actions against NATO partners, economic and military measures have not changed its long-term offensive posture.[17]

This raises the question of what lasting effects, if any, hybrid attacks leave on public opinion in NATO countries. Do they undermine NATO's credibility as a security provider? Do publics in Western democracies associate foreign disruption with a failure on NATO's part more than with their own governments' weaknesses? Russia has worked hard in recent years to subvert NATO's image and frame it as weak and obsolete, or even as an aggressor.[18] It has tried to confuse or co-opt target groups in NATO countries by questioning empirical evidence,[19] rewriting historical frameworks,[20] and reminding audiences that "truth" is a subjective construct.[21] The aim is to make NATO's response to hybrid threats appear slow and cumbersome. Not only is a speedy response required, but also an underlying resilient society where the public supports its government's and ultimately the Alliance's decisions. In today's complex and dynamic information environment, increasing effort is required for NATO to effectively communicate its intent to deter and defend. In the competition of two ideas – "do not provoke Russia" coming from Moscow and "we will take decisive action to defend against Russia" emanating from NATO – one must prevail.

The nature of hybrid threats has increased the importance attached by NATO and its member states to strategic communications as a way to coordinate policies, words, and actions across multiple domains to achieve strategic goals, including maintaining national security through deterrence.[22] The strategic communications mind-set prioritises long-term strategic narratives and goals over election cycles and the management of immediate crises. It focuses on long-term shifts in discourses that result in specific behaviours and attitudes in intended audiences. All of that requires considerable investment in capability-building and the alignment of processes to allow for a thorough understanding of, and effective interventions in, the information environment – a dynamic and competitive setting that shapes the attitudes and behaviours of audiences during peacetime and war.[23]

The rapid development of information and communication technologies has given unprecedented power to state and non-state actors to reach, if not influence, audiences at home and abroad. This strengthens the understanding that strategic communications is not something to call upon only when a crisis strikes or a conflict breaks out. The fragmentation of societies, construction of new identities, and questioning of established ways of life, power and wealth distribution, have contributed to a growing sense of uncertainty.[24] The Alliance is no exception, reflecting the changes prevalent in their member states. Strategic communications, apart from achieving cognitive effects on adversaries during military operations through the employment of non-kinetic and kinetic means, should drive the projection of the core political identity of NATO and its members through a whole-of-government and whole-of-Alliance approach. In 1949, when NATO was established, the organisation had a stable sense of self in the bipolar world of confrontation between the US and USSR. In today's multipolar world, and faced with a multitude of threats originating simultaneously from a variety of state, sub-state, and inter-state actors, NATO finds itself in the political marketplace of ideas, where identities and narratives compete, both at home and abroad. The Alliance, as affirmed in the 2030 report, holds differing views on the severity of a range of threats and how those could be tackled. National concerns and interests affect the formation of a joint narrative and its projection not only outward, but also within the member countries. In turn, NATO is required to revisit its core political identity and reassess its approach to security, as well as how these are communicated. Similarly, deterrence – particularly directed against hybrid threats – requires a new understanding. Deterrence can no longer be approached in silos of military, political and economic domains. This calls for NATO to re-evaluate and re-position its strategic communications that so far have projected the image of the most powerful political-military alliance in history.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

More than a decade has passed since "strategic communications" entered the international political lexicon.[25] Notwithstanding this, the term remains elusive: there is no single shared definition of strategic communications.[26] Conversations around strategic communications are heavily influenced by practitioners from politics, the military, or business. Which perhaps suggests the reason that definitions tend to focus on what strategic communications *does* rather than what it *is*. An instrumentalist rather than ontological understanding of strategic communications has emerged. The author James Farwell is frequently quoted and defines strategic communications as "the use of words, actions, images, or symbols to influence the attitudes and opinions of target audiences to shape their behaviour in order to advance interests or policies, or to achieve objectives".[27] Similar definitions, instrumental in nature, are adopted by policy makers and military doctrine writers in Western government institutions and NATO.[28]

The essence of strategic communications is inevitably complicated, and its role is limited. No answer is offered to the question of *who* strategic communicators are and *why* and *by which* criteria they qualify: is it a staff function in a bureaucracy, or the prerogative of being a part of political leadership? Is strategic communications pertinent only to democracies, or is it a process that any state or organisation can perform? And if so, how can democracies compete with their adversaries – authoritarian regimes or violent extremist organisations – who do not need to follow the rule of law or account with transparency to their voters and media guardians?

NATO is taking steps in its policies and doctrines to introduce a fresh understanding of strategic communications. The narrow perception of strategic communications as creating and delivering compelling messaging to support policy decisions is already changing. Strategic communications drives policies and uses a variety of avenues and tools to carry out and communicate them. It shapes relationships and long-lasting, shared understandings in societies aimed at deterring future conflict. Theories of symbolic interactionism are deeply rooted in the field of strategic communications.[29] Their relevance is apparent: strategic communications is driven by the process

of interaction, the creation of meaning, and interpretation-framing. NATO's ability to deter a threat is directly linked not only to its nuclear or conventional military capabilities, but also to how NATO projects its identity globally to increase the range of countries that share its values. That is a matter of well-crafted communication through narration and action designed to convey a desired meaning among both allies and adversaries. Maintaining the symbolic value of NATO is vital for the Alliance, as the Russian Federation, China, and other non-democratic actors increasingly assert their influence in geopolitics.

NATO'S PERSPECTIVE ON STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Since NATO adopted the term "strategic communications" in 2007, the organisation has faced difficulties defining it in such a way that it might be used to its full potential. The term entered NATO's official discourse in 2007 in response to a recognised failure to tell NATO's story adequately regarding the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.[30] Approval for NATO's policy on strategic communications followed in 2009, with a focus on the coordinated application of all communication means to support the Alliance's political and military goals.[31] In this policy document, still valid today, NATO states that the aims of strategic communications are to contribute to the successful implementation of NATO's operations and other activities and to build public awareness and support for NATO's policies and operations.[32] It does not, however, place strategic communications in the driving seat of policy; rather, it offers it a supporting role. Although NATO's Military Policy on Strategic Communications takes "a major step forward"[33] by moving strategic communications from an advisory and coordinating function to that of a commander's delegated authority, a break-through in guidance at the political level is still awaited.

NATO's 2030 report frames the conversation on strategic communications as part of an ongoing and overarching narrative, aligned internally with allies and externally with partners.[34] In the report, the narrative is seen as critical to the credibility of NATO's deterrence.[35] But there is no comprehensive discussion on strategic communications as the main driver of this narrative.

Although strategic communications is referred to as "a critical tool for deterrence and defence",[36] the subsequent conversation is narrowly focused on information consumption and challenges related to disinformation, manipulation, and deception. The Brussels NATO Summit Communiqué of 2021, which aims to define NATO's future role, refers to strategic communications as an essential element to support NATO's core tasks.[37] Still, no clear recognition of what strategic communications means is apparent. This might be better understood as "a holistic approach to communication based on values and interests that encompasses everything an actor does to achieve objectives in a contested environment".[38] By injecting the concept of holism, there is an expectation that strategic communications becomes an *a priori* project.

STRENGTHENING THE POLITICAL IDENTITY OF THE ALLIANCE

NATO's 2030 report will serve as the basis for the new NATO Strategic Concept. The report's threat-focus[39] frames NATO's identity and subsequent modes of interaction. While NATO's military strength is not questioned, a sense of imminent threat pervades the report, which looks in various directions to suggest solutions. The report points out that "in order to maintain unity and strengthen collective action moving forward, Allies constantly have to reassert and demonstrate, by actions as well as words, their commitment to the political identity and strategic goals of the Alliance".[40] Evolving threats will always require future-oriented military solutions and the rapid adaptation of NATO's forces and doctrines. But in a security environment where an array of threats cannot be tackled by conventional military force as a first response, NATO may need to consider ways that ideas and norms can override material factors and interests in shaping international politics and ensuring security. In other words, NATO's political identity as a defensive alliance for peace should serve as the core driver for its strategic communications.

How can NATO consistently communicate the indivisibility of the security of the Euro-Atlantic area and demonstrate its ability to provide protection as an effective actor? When launching #NATO2030, Secretary General Stoltenberg

highlighted that military strength is only part of the answer to ensuring the Alliance's security; NATO should be as effective politically as it is militarily.[41] Following a constructivist approach to international politics, not only are the identities and interests of actors socially constructed, but they must compete with other ideational factors that grow from human capacity and will.[42] At a time when NATO worries about the ideological fragmentation of its members' populations and technologically enhanced foreign information influence by hostile actors, maintaining internal cohesion has become one of its challenges and priorities.[43] It is NATO's internal strength and outward confidence that will serve as a powerful deterrent against threats. NATO's greatest strength lies in its unity and shared worldview, provided these continue to be shared not only by military servicemen but also by the politicians who lead their countries and the societies who provide for them. Hence, the symbolic political value of NATO matters more than ever.

As declared in its Founding Treaty, NATO strives to secure lasting peace in Europe based on common values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.[44] This suggests that in international relations, ideas and norms should be the principal drivers of NATO's engagement in international politics. NATO's outlook on how peace can be secured implies that human consciousness holds an important place in this. The idea that those critical ties that bind individuals within social collectives are ideational resonates with NATO's central stance on accepting new members into the Alliance. NATO does not simply allow anyone entry who could strengthen it militarily; countries are expected to share certain understandings derived from democratic ideals. Looking at NATO purely from the perspective of its military force overshadows its ideational dimension, its identity, and its substance.[45] Such a perspective also limits the range for relationship- and identity-building for NATO through persuasion, since military force ultimately serves conflict and coercion. Rather, NATO's essence should be viewed from the premise of shared understandings of meaning within a given international relations context.[46]

World politics can be seen as a social construct of inclusion and exclusion, enforced through interactive practices.[47] NATO has always defined itself spatially and politically against the outsider. And it remains a unique value-based security community that like-minded countries strive to join. Being

part of a community leads to the adaptation of associated identity and its shared values, norms, and morals.[48] It is NATO's identity that has to be projected boldly at home and abroad: it is its most powerful deterrent. NATO's adversaries and competitors look for any sign of weakness, any opportunity to shake the Alliance's unity and cause doubt in our populations regarding the core values and principles of NATO. This is highlighted too in NATO's 2030 report. Only when united internally with a strong identity can NATO respond to any outside threat. From a social constructivist perspective, the shared democratic norms and identities of NATO members underpin the endurance of the Alliance.[49] In this context, NATO's enlargements have been vivid affirmations of the Alliance's purpose and strength.

THE OPEN-DOOR POLICY AS A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ACT

The open-door policy is affirmed in NATO's founding treaty as a core principle of the Alliance.[50] Article 10 says that "the Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty". *NATO's enlargement agenda is, therefore, primarily driven by the idea of* democratisation and expanding transparent, cooperative relationships to contribute to international peace and security. At the same time, enlargements have met with opposition and criticism by some of NATO's members; witness the cases of Georgia, Ukraine, and Macedonia recently.[51] Hence while NATO's 2030 report recognises that "the enduring attractiveness of membership to non-member countries testifies to NATO's success as an alliance",[52] at the same time NATO's open-door policy receives low visibility.

Not so long ago a heated debate raged within the United States around whether the Baltic States should be accepted into NATO.[53] In 1997, President Clinton's administration faced tough questions from Senate members. Most of the criticism of extending membership to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania centred on America's major European allies recognising the challenge from Moscow with different degrees of threat perception. At the hearings before the

Committee on Foreign Relations of the US Senate,[54] Michael Mandelbaum of Johns Hopkins University observed: "Ironically, NATO expansion is at best a distraction from and at worst a hindrance to dealing with the real security threats", by which he meant the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in which Russia was seen to be a key partner.

Russia, as affirmed by others at the 1997 Senate hearings, was not perceived as posing a threat to the US or NATO. But NATO's eastward expansion, it was argued, could harden Russia's resistance to disarmament. Contemplating Russia's future hostile resurrection and potential aggression towards the Alliance was certainly not worth the rush of bringing Balts into the Alliance and the risk of souring the relationship. As Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State at the time, explained: "we want the peace to last. We want freedom to endure, and we believe there are still potential threats to our security emanating from European soil. [...] virtually every European nation treated virtually every other nation as a military threat. That pattern was broken only when NATO was born and only in the half of Europe NATO covered. With NATO, each member's security came to depend on cooperation with others, not competition. That is one reason why NATO remains essential. It is also one reason why we need a larger NATO which extends its positive influence to Europe's other half."[55]

She then went on to describe the present landscape, whereby tyrants in Europe exploited weakened states and ethnic hatreds to start conflict and war – a picture regrettably still familiar in 2021. Lastly, Albright considered the possibility that Russia could return to the patterns of its past. But engaging Russia and enlarging NATO will "give Russia every incentive to deepen its commitment to peaceful relations with neighbors, while closing the avenue to more destructive alternatives."[56]

Albright saw the importance of the political function of NATO and the strength of the Alliance as emanating not from careful calculation of military threat but from uniting like-minded, reliable allies under one collective identity umbrella. Had NATO failed to enlarge, by now it might have ceased to exist. But as of 2021 it has increased from the original 12 to 30 member countries, more than doubling its size. Can this projection of strength deter, and can a collective commitment to the value of peace endure? Opening the doors to new members from the former Soviet bloc has not only helped these countries

integrate with the West, but it has also changed the power dynamic on the European continent. With an increasingly nationalistic and revanchist Russia redrawing Europe's borders, it is unlikely that life in the Baltic countries would have been as peaceful as it is now had they not been accepted into NATO.

LATVIA'S PERSPECTIVE

Latvia joining NATO in 2004 was at the core of country's strategic communications, following on from the restoration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It was a decisive act of symbolic signalling to separate Latvia from its oppressive past and to restore it to the West, while communicating a sense of security to the nation. As President Clinton put it in his letter to Senator Hutchison, who questioned the benefits of NATO enlargement: "enlargement will help secure the historic gains of democracy in Europe and erase Stalin's artificial dividing line".[57]

And for the Baltic countries, it did exactly that. NATO membership gave Latvia the identity it desired: independent, democratic, and secure. The accession of the Baltic countries to the Alliance was a paradigm of how ideas and norms can override material factors and interests in shaping international politics – a lesson in how to apply symbolic interactionism to international relations theory.[58] One may argue that NATO had very pragmatic military reasons for establishing a presence in the Baltics. But there were many drawbacks which caused a heated debate amongst realists on the need for enlargement.[59]

On the road to NATO membership, the Baltic States were perceived as potential risks and a future challenge to NATO's security. Now, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are reliable and committed allies who have strengthened the Alliance and actively support its operations. Active work to gain NATO's trust led to reforms which have made these countries resistant to destabilisation attempts. All three countries host NATO Centres of Excellence to help the Alliance advance its capabilities in areas that are crucial for tackling hybrid threats: strategic communications (Latvia), cyber security (Estonia), and energy security (Lithuania). Latvia's joint effort with the centre's member states in advancing the Alliance's strategic communications has contributed to

new doctrine development, an understanding of the information environment and challenges brought to it by rapid technological evolution, as well as operational awareness. More importantly, the centre continues to advocate for a holistic approach to strategic communications, whereby communication is not something to be considered once a strategy has been developed and requires a communication plan to support it. The communicative aspects of potential courses of action should be factored in from the start.[60] Some actions will not be taken with the explicit intent of communicating but will still impact the information environment and have a cognitive effect.[61]

Although an imbalance remains between conventional forces along NATO's eastern border, from Latvia's perspective there is no immediate conventional military threat emanating from Russia. But Latvia, along with the other Baltic countries, is concerned about the potential of hybrid attacks which may escalate to a conventional conflict.[62] One area of particular concern has been the legacy of the Soviet Union seen in Russia's covert russification policy, which left Latvia and Estonia with changed ethnic and linguistic demographics. That has allowed Russia to exert information influence on parts of these populations. Nevertheless, the benefits of NATO membership over the course of more than 15 years – namely, the consolidation of liberal values, increased stability, and economic development – have resulted in a change in public opinion, especially among young Russian-speakers.[63] The long-term policy of becoming a NATO and EU member state has shifted the discourse and brought cognitive effects.

CONCLUSIONS

Latvia, along with its Baltic neighbours, has consistently been a staunch supporter of NATO enlargement. Latvia actively supported Montenegro's accession in 2017, just as it continues to support the membership aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine. Enlargement, from Latvia's perspective, can serve as an outgrowth of NATO's identity as a democratic security community. The decision of the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit to withhold membership from Georgia and Ukraine was accompanied by discussions similar to those during

the accession efforts of the Baltic countries: again, how might Russia react. One may speculate on the scenarios that could have emerged had NATO opened its doors at the time. But today's reality is that Russia read it as a signal of NATO's weakness and so continues to pursue more aggressive policies in its neighbourhood. Since 2008, there has been no major political breakthrough on this question.

Projections on evolving security, as described in NATO's 2030 report, will go hand-in-hand with NATO's identity construction and how it is projected not only in its rhetoric but also in its actions. Attaching greater importance not only to partnerships but also to NATO's open-door policy in the new Strategic Concept could increase NATO's political influence and serve as a military and material expression of a civilisation built on values. Although currently the open-door policy is not part of the deterrence discourse, when approached from strategic communications perspective the open-door policy could significantly contribute to it. NATO is an organisation where new members are understood as societies which naturally belong to NATO by dint of their political structure and cultural values.[64] The idea that a growing NATO can project an important symbolic value to those who aspire to join the Alliance and equally to those who are already part of the Alliance can send a powerful message to its adversaries.

In conclusion, it can be said that NATO has made major steps in evolving its understanding of strategic communications, particularly in the military domain, where the upcoming Allied Joint Doctrine for Strategic Communications emphasises that all NATO activities should be conceived, planned and executed with consideration for their desired outcome in the cognitive dimension of the information environment.[65] Strategic communications is no longer viewed as an instrument or a tool to support a given policy decision, but as a mindset for operations in a setting of constant competition with alternate ideologies.[66] The challenges that are posed to NATO – hostile (dis-)information activities aimed to undermine the Alliance's cohesion, legitimacy, stability and readiness – are seen as equally important to the conventional military or hybrid threats which NATO should also overcome during peace time.

NATO's common political identity and its related values are the core of what NATO stands for and what it protects. For Latvia, which does not

have a large military force or nuclear weapon systems, this is of particular importance. Firstly, strategic communications on a national level become key for internal societal cohesion and resilience. This should not be understood narrowly as securing the national information space from foreign hostile information activities. Strategic communications means conducting statecraft through the projection of values-based narratives and implementing policies through aligned words and actions to ensure the consolidation of democracy, cohesion and the welfare of the whole of society. This means shaping shared discourses, whereby political identity is strengthened and an understanding of the core democratic values is robust. Secondly, on an international level, sharing a political identity with NATO as an alliance which stands for peace and democracy serves as a powerful deterrent against adversaries.

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RESILIENCE: LATVIA AND NATO AT 85

SANDIS ŠRĀDERS

In his well-known book *The Art of War,* general and strategist, Sun Tzu mentioned the distinction between the art of conquest over the art of war. He said that supremacy derives from the subjugation without fighting and stressed the excellence of victorious warriors who had won before a battle even started opposed to those failures who first went to war, attempting to win thereafter. Thus, power derives from the skill to break the enemy's resistance without firing a single shot. These lessons seem to be especially painful for powerful actors, such as the United States or NATO, but the art of resilience is the opportunity for the small. There are multiple examples to study, but here are a few.

The successful conclusion of the war in Iraq or Afghanistan does not mean the eventual winning of war. These military victories over radical militant groups only created a momentum and opportunity for a broader societal dialogue, but the stabilization and settlement has turned out to be more difficult or impossible in foreign affairs even for the preponderant powers like the United States and the strongest military alliance in world history, NATO. Conversely, there have been small states and powers that have exceeded expectations socially, economically, and militarily.

The Scandinavian nations such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland have each, separately and together, strengthened global codes of appropriate behavior referred to as "norms."[1] Small states with profound human capital and strong economic models like Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Hong Kong compensated for their limited sizes by developing niche economies and integrating into international markets.[2] Moreover, Singapore has managed to develop a governance model that is applicable for both other small and large states.[3] Alternatively, Japan with its potential to become a nuclear military power like Germany one day, supports the surge

of democracies in remote and proximate areas as a soft power.[4] Thus, these states can offer their lessons to larger powers in their neighborhoods and internationally.

International relations is power-centered discipline. Nevertheless, there are aspects and areas that are and must be attributed to the use and derivatives of power. While realists still see 'national security'/existential threats and responses largely in military and materialist terms, liberalism has become more influential as an approach to international security studies. As globalization has intensified, non-military agendas of international security began to appear, including such subfields like economic security, environmental security, societal (or identity) security, and more recently cyber-security.[5]

Turning points such as Russia's aggression against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine from 2014 onward underlines the fact the realist security paradigm is nowhere gone from contemporary international affairs. Nevertheless, there is a need to pay more serious attention to the liberal (neoliberal) aspects of power and interdependence. Such aspects of security will transform from the external changes in international or regional environment into specific areas of sensitivity and vulnerability for particular actors.[6] As a result, resilience against external changes plays a profound role to mitigate sensitivities and vulnerabilities. Therefore, the art and aspects of resilience becomes the best response against the non-military challenges for conquering as suggested by the strategist, Sun Tzu. Thus, all actors must individually rate the reciprocity between possible external adjustments and internal vulnerabilities and sensitivities as well as their broader consequences.

Latvia as an international actor is one of the 30 members of NATO and a part of rather fragile region around the Baltic Sea. Even though in multiple areas diverse trends relating to Latvia do not relate to the transatlantic alliance in any way direcly, resilience in particular cases is of the utmost interest for NATO. Latvia can enhance or undermine the resilience of NATO. First, this state can become a target of diverse hybrid operations in a comprehensive sense. Therefore, Latvia can contribute to a domino effect of instability across the alliance especially in the Baltic region. The interdependence among the three Baltic states acts as a vivid example of this source of vulnerability and sensitivity. Second, there are areas in which Latvia can become a subject of targeted selection and active influence campaigns. Again, separate from

military intervention pressures on specific (market) areas, it is a possibility to affect the decision-making processes of small states like Latvia and inside of such profound alliance as NATO.[7]

This paper aims to clarify several underlying areas that underline the lack of resilience (and vigilance) in the event of external pressure or abrupt end of commercial relationship with Latvia. One such known area is energy security with possible implications for the other Baltic states. Another area with multiple known unknowns is the financial sector. This area also bears within itself state and non-states actors and interest groups (which all know exist), but their intentions are seldom known. This is the possibility to destabilize one or all of the Baltic states. The third area is the reciprocal interdependence of the three Baltic states. This sensitivity and vulnerability cuts across borders and can depend on unknown challenges to any of the Baltic states. These mostly economic areas are some of the instances that signify the substantial risks to the efficient resilience through vigilance. Apart from outright military challenges, these are the weakest points for Latvia, its neighbors, and the broader transatlantic alliance.

KNOWN-KNOWNS: THE ENERGY SECURITY

The Baltic challenge in terms of their shared energy security, economic, and integration interests has been a juxtaposition of how interests were perceived in the Baltic capitals or in Moscow. The factor strongly unifying all three Baltic States has been their commonly shared discord with Russia. If their security interests had been and are active membership in NATO, the opposite is true in Moscow. If Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania share common interest in closer political, economic, or social integration, the interest from Russia is to keep all three disunited. To maintain control over the energy resources and politics, it has been the profound interest for all three Baltic states to keep their energy companies in the possession of local or Western capital. To gain more advantage over Baltic States through energy, there has been strong interest from Russia to gain control over such assets.[8] In the end, interests groups in all of the Baltic States are levers for political controls and meddling into other

areas. In the end, the presence of such interests groups in Latvia or the other Baltic states would undermine their resilience.

The center for the fossil fuel sales in terms of natural gas for the Baltic States has been Latvia primarily due to its possession of two profound gas storage-distribution facilities in Inčukalns but also in less utilized for natural gas from Russia storage and distribution, Dobele. The Russian energy interest and presence in Latvia therefore becomes salient even after the liberalization of natural gas market after 2017 – due to infrastructural constraints, Latvia will be among the few to depend on gas imports from Russia completely.[9] In the Latvian case, this is less because the economic returns but rather because of political-economic influence that such economic presence would develop. As a result, Russia's presence in the energy structure of Latvia through interest groups has become an economic-political weapon for influencing domestic politics and regional cooperation.

Even though EU market liberalization requires a separation of distribution from retailers, Latvia will remain dependent on Russia even with EU policies in place. For example, if Lithuania has built its own LNG gas terminal, the outdated infrastructure in Latvia would connect gas storage facilities with sources in Russia. Using those storage facilities, Latvia could become a strong supplier of this resource to the north (Estonia and Finland) as well as to the south (Lithuania). Such agreements and memorandums are in place, possibly creating an interesting market with more competition. Nevertheless, there is resistance from the newly created gas distributors, such as Baltic Connexus Grid, who overtly state, "The prices will go up because we'll have to add the cost of transit and storage to any gas not coming from Russia."[10]

Higher price has always been a punishment from interests groups representing Russia gas imports against Baltic market liberalization efforts or attempts to maintain control over their gas distribution assets. Even the European Commission has experienced strong Gazprom opposition against the European energy market liberalization prospects over the Russia preferred bilateral relations with separate EU member states.[11] This market prospect becomes a platform for political influence since the end of the Cold War; Gazprom and the Russian Foreign Ministry have signed the cooperation agreement, calling it the efficiency partnership.[12] Both structures would promote their reciprocal interest internationally, but Russia would assume

the objective proposed by then liberal member of Putin's cabinet, Anatoly Chubais. In 2003, he introduced the idea of a "liberal empire". In this empire, Russian energy pipelines, electricity transmission lines, and major corporate purchases of major foreign economic assets would replace the Red Army as Russia's means of moving back into Europe, consolidating its ties with its old neighborhood and establishing communities of new political support.[13]

Inside the Baltic states, these objectives were achieved but not without resistance. In Estonia, Gazprom acquired Eesti Gaas shares during its first years of sovereignty from 1990 until 1995. In Latvia, Latvijas Gāze was privatized by Gazprom in the second stage of state building from 1995 to 2004. Lithuania resisted Gazprom until it became an EU and NATO member state in 2004. As a result, by 2010, gas prices in Lithuania were three times higher than those paid by Latvian and Estonian consumers.[14] No matter how sophisticated or well pressured politically campaigns Gazprom used in each of the Baltic states, all resisted to some degree. For example, utilized derivatives and interests groups such as Itera Latvija to gain control over such companies as *Eesti Gas* or *Latvijas Gāze*.[15] In some cases, these companies negotiated together with Gazprom on privatization agreements directly with the Baltic governments.

These interest groups frequently consisted of former KGB elites, with strong network ties across the former Soviet territories. Even if the overall sales to consumers such as Latvia would be below one percent per annum, the political influence that such groups could abuse is vast. Furthermore, even if the gas price set by Gazprom for Latvia is the lowest among the Baltic states and Estonia and Lithuania receive natural gas from Latvia with additional transit expenses, consumers have in the end been paying the highest economic price among the three Baltics states to finance operations and activities of such KGB-run interest groups in Latvia.[16]

Ultimately, as the weaker against Russia's possible pressures in the field of energy, Latvia must always consider political consequences. Long-term substantial pressure can lead to political costs and forced decisions. By increasing costs on the population and making its day-to-day existence more difficult, some countries can alter their attitude to their alliances, governments, policies, or all of the aforementioned.[17] This source of sensitivity and eventual vulnerability becomes a caveat for resilience for a NATO member state.

COPING WITH THE KNOWN-UNKNOWNS: THE FINANCIAL SECTOR

The Baltic states enjoy substantial advantages in developing themselves as financial services centers in Europe as well for the clients from the former Soviet space to the East. The three Baltic states are not only more stable, predictable, and rule-obeying actors especially since the EU enlargement in 2004, but they also speak multiple languages and can equally serve Russia and English speaking clients from the West and to the East.[18]

Already at the beginning of 1990s, multiple banks were using such prospects in their public campaigns to attract clients from the East. For example, one indigenous Latvian financial sector bank, Parex Bank, which went bankrupt during the 2008–2009 financial crises and as a result was overtaken by the Latvian government overtly stated, "We are closer to you than Switzerland!"[19] This aspect became particularly attractive as the Baltic States understood the Soviet mentality, languages, and they were geographically proximate destinations for travel. Thus, the Baltic States become a safe and attractive destination for banking and financial services for multiple investors (especially from states with corrupt and weak law enforcement structures to the East). Moreover, multiple clients could utilize their native language (Russian) or comfortably use Russian language as the primary means of communication in their banking.

All these conditions have naturally resulted in substantial share of investments (deposits) by non-residents. For example, the share of total deposits in banks registered in Latvia amounted to 40 to 50 percent by 2016.[20] Such a presence of foreign capital poses not only vast financial opportunities. Assuming all investors are with clear and transparent business practices, this financial presence would still bear multiple risks since Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian financial sectors would depend on the financial inflows and outflows by these non-residents. Moreover, many of these non-residents can represent organized crime, politically influential actors from the East, or those who simply want to disguise their illicit activities through Baltic financial institutions. While all Baltic residents would acknowledge the importance and benefits of such financial services, very few are paying any attention to the risks for security and resilience such financial transactions might cause.

These financial services bear the risks of becoming criminal transactions with profound risks for security to any of the Baltic states. Up until now, all three have had experiences in such services acting as schemes for money laundering to legalize stolen funds from elsewhere or as a source for financial transactions for criminal activities or political objectives. Additionally, these financial transactions can become sources for informational campaigns in all three Baltic States. With similar financial patterns everywhere after the 2014 Russian aggression against Ukraine, there were attempts to finance and establish new outlets in the Baltic States, such as *Baltnews*. Research and investigation by Re-Baltica and Estonian daily *Postimees* unveiled the ways in which Moscow strives to control and covertly sponsor multiple news outlets.

These news and content factories overtly aim at creating societal fault lines. Through malign and fake content, it is possible to promote dissent or overt confrontation inside each of the Baltic states that would serve well to seed distrust against governments and institutions. Second, these news outlets can promote the disunity of the Baltic states. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are stronger and better when each of them acts as a Baltic states. Conversely, these new agencies and outlets can promote unfriendly images, rivalries, or unhealthy competition as a way to divide. Third, these new outlets divide and promote the distrust of the EU and NATO.[21] Messages such as European dissatisfaction with US dominance or European division over their common partnerships within the EU or NATO are forwarded and are detrimental for the overall social trust in these security and economic communities. As a result, there is a project of establishing negative public opinion and distrust in the cornerstone multilateral structures to which the Baltic states belong. The result of such sensitivities and vulnerabilities are financial services and transactions made possible in the Baltic States (through multiple derivatives to hide the real source of financing).

Furthermore, such financial transactions can place the Baltic states on the radar of international financial controllers and other banks. US banks eyed these processes with suspicion and thereafter unveiled to US financial regulators "transactions totaling at least $7.6 billion wired through Latvian banks between 2006 and 2017."[22] The importance of these financial transactions are profound since "some of the records were gathered as part of the US Congressional committee investigations into Russian interference

in the 2016 US presidential election." Thus, Latvia has served as a financial node to interests groups willing to undermine the democratic procedures by meddling into foreign election of the leading NATO member state, the United States. Again, mostly for informational campaigns affecting the 2016 election results, these financial transactions are known now, but the instant tracking of such money flows in relation to their intent is hardly possible, especially for such small states as Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania; all have suffered profound banking crises.

Such financial transactions are known to banks and financial regulators (especially substantial outliers). Nevertheless, the purpose of the transferred money is hardly always known. Funding can travel inside Latvia from the East or the West, but the real interests or groups behind these financial inflows and outflows can be hardly known. Thus, this is one area that leaves all three or every one of the Baltic states sensitive and vulnerable and therefore undermines their shared or individual resilience.

RECIPROCAL INTERDEPENDENCE: THE UNKNOWN-UNKNOWNS

The three Baltic States are increasingly interdependent. In terms of trade, 14 percent of Lithuania's two-way exports and imports goes to Russia. At the same time by 2018, the 17 percent of Latvia's imports and exports go to Lithuania. For Estonia, the aggregate volume of experts to Latvia and Russia is 18 percent while the aggregate volume of imports from Lithuania and Russia is 16 percent.[23] As a result, each of the Baltic States are increasingly sensitive and possibly vulnerable to trading adjustments between not only each of them but also from the overarching adjustments in Russia's market and commercial relationships. Any unpredictable change and or unforeseen change can cause repercussions for any of the Baltic States and all of them together due to substantial interdependence.

Such adjustments have been evident in the past, but among the utmost risks and fear is the economic and socioeconomic downturn and collapse of the Russian Federation. US and EU sanctions are just among the minor and few triggers that are causing economic and financial difficulties for the Eastern

Europe and eventually the Baltic States. A stronger Russia, should it emerge considering economic difficulties, will be a stronger challenger in other areas, but a weaker, and particularly failing Russia, can become even more formidable challenge to deal with.[24]

Few such experiences are evident in a near hindsight. With higher economic dependence on Russia, the Baltic States have experienced multiple shocks. In 1994, a focal point known as the Black Tuesday heralded the collapse of Russian ruble by one third against the US dollar. As a result, trading relations and savings in rubles between the Baltic states and Russia suffered. Furthermore, the 1998 financial and economic crisis caused by the collapse of the Russian ruble again affected the Baltic States negatively. One aspect was the decline of the savings in rubles, but the other side was a chain of bankruptcies of enterprises that overtly depended on exports to Russia. These crises in Russia were not caused by intrinsic economic imperfections only but also international commerce and crisis elsewhere.

For example, the 1997 Asian financial crisis severed Russian foreign exchange reserves and caused economic downturn. The support and presence of International Monetary Fund and World Bank caused even further austerity and economic deceleration in Russia. Since especially at the beginning of 1990s the Baltic states still heavily depended on Russian markets, these repercussions caused a negative impact on the social preferences to maintain higher trading levels with Russia.

Such past and present crises affect current social perceptions. The most recent is the US–EU synchronized sanctions have influenced commerce between the Russian Federation and the Baltic States. The regularity of economic shocks inside of Russia has caused disappointment with the rupturing of commercial ties for multiple companies strongly depending on Russia or Russia only. Thus, trade with Russia has always been viewed as a long-term opportunity by the so-called commercial pragmatists, whatever the security repercussions or conditions such as the invasion and war against Ukraine since 2014 might imply.

Moreover, notwithstanding the deliberate abuse of the market for political gains, the economic interdependence and instability of Russia is hard to predict for any of the Baltic states. Their national or shared diplomatic networks are too small and too insignificant to anticipate any social, economic, or political

crises in or around Russia.[25] Therefore, no Baltic state will ever be capable to predict, explain, and implement actions against the coming risks especially if unpopular domestic political decisions will be at stake. This becomes a source for vulnerability and sensitivity for one as well as for all of the Baltic States. They depend too much on each other and on other major trading partners (such as the historically and presently salient Russia, among others). However, the coming change and adjustments in multiple areas will be unknown, but can result in social discontent and distrust against their governments due to unpopular or painful reforms at home.

CONCLUSIONS

Latvia's resilience depends on its national capacity to enhance the resistance and mechanisms against known and unknown sensitivities and vulnerabilities. While there are multiple tangible areas where Latvian intrinsic sensitivities are well known, there are reciprocities and interdependencies that make all equally (un)resilient as one depends on the others. Such instances are especially evident for Latvia alone and the three Baltic states taken altogether. As a result, these sensitivities and vulnerabilities undermine the resilience of NATO as an alliance within the Baltic region.

First, there are energy sector interest groups and their cooperation up until now – pragmatic, mutually beneficial cooperation without interruptions. Nevertheless, this sector bears political and security consequences for the Baltic states. Less currently but more in the past, interest groups responsible for distribution and sales of natural gas are strongly embedded in Latvia political, economic, and social life. As a result, they are bearers of influence over decisions and policies or Latvia: nationally, regionally with the Baltic states, or as a member of other international structures (for example, NATO). Russian policy makers and thinkers have overtly described such energy cooperation as a tool for wielding necessary influence abroad.

Second, financial sector cooperation and control is very fissile, dynamic, and overt but at the same covert. Thus, it becomes hard to control. Even if the

source of funding is known, the objectives of transactions might be unknown and vice versa. Through financial transactions, interests groups can wield influences on political and social scale that would undermine resilience against local, regional, or international challenges due to disunity. For example, the reciprocity between financial transactions from interests groups and malicious informational campaigns in all three Baltic states does not only undermine the social consensus of Latvia. It drives wedges among the Baltic states and NATO allies.

Finally yet importantly, the resilience of Latvia depends on the strength and resilience of its neighbors – Estonia to the north or Lithuania to the south, for example. For instance, potential trade-caused instabilities in this network of commonly shared interdependence could lead to domino effects. There can be more unknown regional trends and processes which can affect each and all Baltic states and eventually create fault lines in the transatlantic alliance. The failure of one state in such areas as international financial for Latvia at a similar degree to the 2008–2009 financial crises meltdown will cause same repercussions for its neighbors. On the other hand, Russia can always abuse its market shares, or by its decline, it can become a source for multifaceted instability for all three Baltic States, either deliberate or unintentional. The history of cooperation with Russia also teaches the Baltic states a lesson.[26] Thus, vigilance and resilience is important, but the array of challenges can be an endless abyss. Considering these precarious conditions, the transatlantic alliance is the best remedy for such potential sensitivities and vulnerabilities. By working closer together and sharing knowledge across allies, it is possible to enhance the coherence and operation ability of each and all NATO members and partners by 2030 and beyond.

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INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF LATVIA ARTIS PABRIKS

INTERVIEWER: MĀRTIŅŠ VARGULIS (M.V.)
QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED BY: ARTIS PABRIKS (A.P.)

M. V. What do you think is the key to successful deterrence? What are the primary positions that need to be expanded and evolved?

A. P. I think there are different deterrence techniques or methods depending on the hypothetical opponent to be deterred. In this case, we are thinking of Russia and Belarus, which are our border countries. We can base our assumptions on our historical experience – what has deterred, and what has not. It seems to me that the most important thing is to try to say: "dear friend", your hypothetical aggression will cost you more than what you could get for that amount. If we go to the market and want to buy something and its price is totally unacceptable, we will think three times about whether we need this particular item. Maybe we'd go to another market or store. You have to give the impression that the price is very high. This can be created, first of all, by making a real contribution to all the aspects that can deter. Second is apparentness. This cannot be separated out. Due to this, we need to try to give the impression that we are working very hard on defence; we need to be very innovative, which means that since we live in an asymmetric environment, we need to invest a lot where the differences are bigger. The differences are smaller between our forces if used properly. Let's say there is a narrow path in a mountain pass – you don't need a lot of people to hold back a big crowd. Therefore, the methods are, first of all, addressing various cyber security issues, which is why we are developing a 5G test site. There is the question of the different types of weapons that can counteract this superiority – for example, it is cheaper to produce cheap attacking drones than to produce many tanks. There are questions about modern technologies and artificial

intelligence. That's what makes our abilities asymmetrically greater against the opponent. The second thing is the conventional weapons that are needed. In this case, we are working to get more fire-power; this matters, and distance also matters. It's no secret that we are currently looking at rocket artillery – medium-range air defence missiles, which also change the opponent's tactics. Of course, we need to prepare society, because human resources are needed. We have limited resources to enrol in professional services or the National Guard. Therefore, a small nation must be prepared for a wider range of different types of crises in order to gain a margin. Of course, it is important for us to deter, first of all, as a united society. One [aspect] is the military sphere, the other is that we are a united society. Second, our allies cannot be in any way afraid to help us immediately. These are the main factors that should be met. Then the price would seem quite high. Then it would be possible not to get into a conflict at all.

M. V. Why, if we look at it in a historical context, has no one tried to challenge our deterrence policy? What has been the key to the success of NATO's deterrence policy so far?

A. P. I think the success of NATO's deterrence has been based on the same thing as the nuclear threat in the Cold War. In the end, the best deterrence policy was in the Cold War, when both sides sat at the table with nuclear weapons, everyone understood that it would end badly and did not want to do anything. In that case, there are nuclear weapons. NATO has superiority in the face of a total confrontation, which is why we are seeing our adversary begin to use more and more of this under-the-radar activity, which is something that prevents the launching of paragraphs 4 or 5, which causes problems. If we are unable to respond in the "grey area", then there is always the opportunity to move on to the next level. In Western thinking, the biggest problem here is that the ancient Greeks and Romans have taught us a universal approach to human rights and solutions, but today's fragmented world can no longer distinguish the real from the false. We need to move more to a case-to-case approach where we say that if something is a real threat, we must also react immediately if it is a "grey threat", just as strong as we would on traditional threats. The adversary may not know exactly where our radar line that detects [threats] starts. They need to understand that we can change that too. We can't say what stage we are on, we think that we can't be challenged. This demands a

change of mindset in the Western world. As for the refugee crisis, the EC and the EU are not ready to change their approach – they are ready to give money to the refugee camp, which is a total mistake. They react incorrectly to specific threats.

M. V. How is our opponent evolving? What are the future challenges that might arise?

A. P. It's hard to speculate. I assume that we can build on the previous analysis of how the opponent has reacted – how predictable are their actions? We remember Kosovo, Libya, and Syria. We need to take into account all the innovative approaches, particularly in the grey area and everywhere else, that Russia is using. We need to be able to uncover models that we cannot imagine. No future war would be like a previous one. I think this will be due to modern technology that has not been created – biological weapons, diseases, everything imaginable. We are not ready for that. I can provide an example: look at our Covid crisis.

M. V. How can we anticipate the unexpected? How can the unknown of the future be deterred? Is there a cure for it?

A. P. It is easy to talk, but not to react. This is what Eastern fighting called the third eye. We can call it empathy. What would we do in this or that situation? We need to look from the edge and what our weaknesses are. We might have a similar mindset to Russia, because we see an asymmetric threat. Russia is much bigger and stronger than we are, but the Russians similarly think that the West is stronger. So they have to find those weak points. We rest on our laurels and think we are strong, that nothing can be done to us. You have to think you are weak.

M. V. What do you think are the areas that are currently lagging behind? Both nationally and in the context of the Alliance. Where are the weak points?

A. P. It is easier for us to think from the national point of view. We know that we need to develop classical armaments and society needs to be prepared. I think we are working close to optimally. Industrial capacity is lagging behind. We need to start producing more and innovating in terms of modern technologies. That's why we put a 5G test site in Ādaži; we need drones. But it takes resources, industry involvement, and time. In the West there are similar problems. The Alliance needs to change its mindset. European countries still

do not provide the protection that they should. You have to rearrange the thinking of your society, which is very difficult, because changing a society is not easy. From a purely military technology point of view, I think we are lagging behind in terms of artificial intelligence. But this is a double-edged sword. By developing artificial intelligence in the military, we are creating more challenges for our societies. We cannot lag behind in modern technology, whether nuclear or electronic, vis-à-vis China or Russia. The Alliance must be up to the task. Europe is losing its role here. With its allies [such as] Ukraine, Europe must be able to give more support to countries that are not in the Alliance but are our allies.

M. V. Could enlargement contribute to deterrence?

A. P. I think only a much more serious preparation for enlargement can. We cannot compete by grace alone. More aggressive policies are needed. A curb. We must answer every step.

M. V. There is much debate about the fact that any response, especially after 2014, has been land-based. What about the sea and the air? What are our plans for the future?

A. P. I think that the air force is not sufficiently developed in Europe. We need more dominance here. There are no longer such strong forces in Latvia, but it is necessary to recognize drone aviation, and we really can do that.

INTERVIEW WITH THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE OF NATIONAL ARMED FORCES OF LATVIA LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEONĪDS KALNIŅŠ

INTERVIEWER: MĀRTIŅŠ VARGULIS (M.V.)
QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED BY: LEONIDS KALNIŅŠ (L.K.)

M. V. What do you think is the key to successful deterrence?

L. K. [...] I can say clearly and unequivocally that the most important thing is to demonstrate that we have a very strong and resilient society which is committed to supporting the state we have built, and is ready to fight for its existence to the very end. This means that the society shows its determination and the ability to train and prepare for any challenge, even in peacetime. Under conventional circumstances, the population and key players are to mobilize, organize, and show its ability for resistance. This is fundamental – although we talk about different pre-phases, such as hybrid, society is fundamental in all phases. We can buy the most expensive equipment and weapons, and develop the mainstream and modern capabilities that are associated with high-level technology, especially in the cyber field. Nevertheless, we can quickly lose [a conflict] if we lose the information space. This means that a crucial next step is to develop these capabilities; I am talking specifically about both Latvia and NATO in the field of information.

We see from many examples that we are not prepared. First, we do not yet work pro-actively – we react. If we look at the COVID-19 pandemic, we started slowly, like an old locomotive. Secondly, in the field of information, we follow "stamps" – for example, we know what our potential opponent has done in the past, so we are preparing for it. We are not creative in that sense. You have to be pro-active and innovative, because that is the only way we will dominate the information space. However, I emphasize once again that without public

support, we might as well immediately disband the armed forces and stop spending money on defence. This is a key aspect.

But to answer your question about the conventional side, NATO is first and foremost, a political organization. However, you, as a representative of society, demand protection from us, military personnel, so we need to talk specifically about military factors and capabilities.

What, then, is military capability? It is skilful leadership and if this aspect is not embedded in the national defence strategy, what is the strategy about then? We should balance the political dimension of NATO with military needs. If a political aspect prevails, such as Article 5 of the Washington Treaty it leads to prolonged decision-making. And if we ask countries to participate voluntarily in our defence, then it is definitely out of the scope of the military. The decision must be instantaneous, the reaction must be immediate and the chain of command must be strictly vertical and not horizontal. That is what we are going for. This is not a criticism of the current reorganization within NATO.

M. V. What is the precondition for the fact that since the beginning of NATO's existence until today no one has been able to challenge or even tried to challenge the Alliance?

L. K. Nobody has had that ability – first of all, in my view, from the very outset, despite the existence of the Warsaw Pact, NATO has been able to demonstrate that it is the most powerful organization when it comes to decision-making. In the field of military capabilities, NATO is also the strongest military organization. In any case, the Warsaw Pact was limited – although the USSR tried to attract members from Africa and Asia, no one joined them and they had different political/cultural interests.

NATO was able to expand and to achieve unity in political decision-making. Of course, a crucial factor in this were very high-level military capabilities based on the economic potential of Western Europe and the United States. Economic power also makes it possible to provide long-term operational capability for any operation, which is very important. NATO could quickly conquer the capital of a country, but we would not be able to hold it for a long time, because economically we would have to maintain our capabilities and [support] the society we conquered at all times. As soon as we fail to do that, we would lose in a couple of weeks.

M. V. When watching and analyzing how our adversary develops, what are the strengths and weaknesses we see? What will we have to face in the next decade and beyond?

L. K. The strength of our opponent lies in the fact that he is an opportunist: he uses everything at his disposal, is very flexible and ready to use every opportunity. Due to a vertical power structure, he can make his own decisions quickly and rigorously exploit the opportunities that arise. […] The mentality of our opponent has also been a key factor for him to get public support at home. If we look at it from a World War II perspective, we see that Kremlin uses multiple approaches or dimensions in areas such as motivation. The Russian people are now offended, as they have always viewed themselves as the strongest and have historically defeated everyone, from dragons to Nazi Germany. We need to defend our own people – that is also their state of mind now. By using this approach our adversaries have been successful from their point of view. If we look at polls in Russia, then in principle we see that more than half of the population supports this regime, This must be taken into account. On the other hand the weakest link is the elite who thinks and acts like Russia is still an empire. If we look at this empire historically, it has always been aggressive in expanding its territory. When you start thinking that you need one piece of land, then a second, a third, a fourth, it finally starts to slip out of your hands. Why? Because if you have conquered new territory and enlarged your country, then you have to understand that you have to invest there. Otherwise, if you do not have public support, you will no longer have such a strong military force after the war. If your children are hungry and live in general poverty, you are unlikely to fight for the new rulers of your country.

M. V. How can such an opportunist be stopped? What are the preconditions for stopping it? What should be done?

L. K. The most trivial and simple answer is to deny our adversaries the opportunity to be an opportunist. This requires pro-active creative thinking. We in Latvia, do not have such huge financial or human resources but we do have something else – we have a creative approach, and we have allies. In our planning processes it is essential to defend our opinion, and there is the need for us to look at where the greatest threats and dangers lie within NATO – emphasizing of course, that there are different interests. For example, in the

south today there is a big challenge posed by illegal immigrants and in the west there are more economic issues that need to be addressed. However, we are in the east and the magnitude of the threat to our security is quite significant, a fact which is also gradually being emphasized. Compare 2010 and 2021. The level of threat is much higher nowadays than a decade ago when there were almost songs of praise sung to the Russians.

M. V. From a military perspective, let's start with NATO and move to Latvia. From NATO's point of view, in the next decade, what are the military capabilities that we should develop – what should we focus on?

L. K. In principle NATO needs to continue focusing on what we have already started. This is the centralized, vertical, team management structure. Additionally, we need to have a rapid decision-making process, regardless of different views on when to invoke Article 5 on collective defence. In the military and defence field, we need to set up a system in which we can take these decisions in parallel, because no one will wait to react until a military council or a committee is convened. This is the first: command. Secondly, we must not allow ourselves to fall behind in the production and development of modern weapons and technologies. I am talking in particular about implementation. On the one hand, we can say that Donald's Trump's demand that NATO Allies should spend at least 2% of GDP on defence struck quite a blow for the military defence system. This 2% level, which the Baltic States have been fulfilling for several years, is not planned for at all in the other NATO countries. If we return to armaments, then the introduction of new weapons and military equipment is very important. Third, if we make plans, then all of them need to have adequate resources to start with. We cannot create a plan and reassure ourselves that we have a plan, if subsequently we do not know officially what we need to get things done. It is imperative that NATO members assign the resources to implement their plans.

M. V. What is Latvia currently doing to deter the adversary nationally and to contribute to NATO's common process?

L. K. Latvia does not rely only on Article 5 of North Atlantic Treaty. Latvia knows that there is also Article 3 which obliges each NATO Ally to be fully responsible for its own defence. We have emphasized at many political levels that no one will come to our rescue if we do not build our own defence

system. Latvia is one of the frontrunners when it comes to committing its armed forces to participate in both rapid response teams and all types of missions, especially in international operations. Very few countries have achieved this high standard. This is a huge investment and a burden on our military economy, because we are spending quite a lot of money there. We fulfil our international obligations by more than 100%. Secondly, we are developing a comprehensive national defence system to promote public involvement in the tasks we need. Next, we have a 12-year development plan with priorities. We have determined – and the Minister of Defence has confirmed – the important priorities that need to be addressed; I do not know whether I can reveal these priorities publically but they allow us to solve important problems in a short period of time and to achieve important goals in the three domains of defence – land, air, and maritime– which is necessary to ensure, first of all, deterrence. The most important thing is that this requires a lot of financial resources. I have already said that, if we could increase our annual current military budget by 300 million EUR, we could implement these priorities in 5 years.

M. V. You mentioned one theme, that at the moment NATO's response is mainly on the ground. What about the other two domains – sea and air? How much should NATO do, what is the Alliance doing, and where is it falling short? Who fills in the gaps?

L. K. If we look at Latvia, then the shortcomings that we have, including on land, are compensated for by our allies. Firstly, the US compensates. Through the structures that have been set up in Europe, they fully cover our needs. As for what we are contributing– we have understood what our needs are and I mentioned the 12-year priorities that need to be met. The Ministry of Defence and the Cabinet of Ministers have demonstrated their awareness of this situation through their decisions and we are actively working with NATO countries from whom we could purchase weapons and other military equipment. We have started training and preparing staff and developing infrastructure. All of this is not based on simple ambitions, but on real tactical judgments and needs. If we are successful in this development we will be able to reduce the involvement of our allies in these tasks. However, we will still need them because there are some capabilities that are so expensive that small countries are not able to develop them.

M. V. In terms of the presence of allies, we have the most flags residing here in Latvia. There is a lot of discussion about the US's presence in this corridor. Is there still an ambition for an independent battle group unit in Latvia or Baltics which includes the United States?

L. K. In principle, the United States is already here and so they don't have to be a part of it, it doesn't matter. The United States has never stopped being in Latvia. We have a separate US unit in Lielvārde – it regularly comes to Latvia to train. We have some exercises, one of which will be "DEFENDER" next year, in which a large US unit arrives and performs its tasks. The United States is and will remain our main military partner. Recently, I visited the United States, where this was confirmed.

M. V. Are we going to reach the point where we can live without the US? In general, regarding the size of enhanced Forward Presence, we have the ambition to increase the number of troops – do we have enough with the size and formation of it?

L. K. You see, concerning the eFP battlegroup deployed in Ādaži, this is an initiative adopted in 2016. There are two aspects I need to highlight here. Latvia is interested in the battle group staying here, and that is an important thing for deterrence as such. We did not limit the group size – it is determined by the leading state, in other words the framework nation, and that is Canada. The only aspect we are very involved in is providing the necessary infrastructure. If there is a battle group here, then we must provide food, have barracks available and provide the opportunity to exercise. That is our responsibility. The number of nations participating is a collective decision by Canada and Latvia. If Canada says it is no longer needed or offers capabilities that are already there – for example, we already have two armed companies with tanks, and Canada says we still need them – then we are not involved. This is determined by Canada, but at the same time it must be taken into account that this battle group is a part of The Latvian Mechanized Infantry Brigade. Therefore, developing the battle group mush be synchronized with the needs of the brigade. As the eFP is in principle a copy of NATO, each country voluntarily offers what it wants to contribute.

M. V. Do you think the opponent is taking the eFP into account? Does he see this as a force through which we might have additional reinforcements? How important is this to the adversary?

L. K. Yes, of course. It is clear to everyone that the presence of the eFP battlegroup strengthens deterrence. God forbid that the adversary would offend a German or a Canadian, then there would be the possibility of war right away. The opponent absolutely understands from the military technology point of view that there is a unit on the territory of Latvia that has already prepared a bridgehead through which other units can come freely. This means that everything is ready. Allied troops know the terrain, the manoeuvres, the features of the trails, and what technologies can be used. They know how to cooperate not only with the Latvian Armed Forces, but also with civil society. This is a huge factor that our adversary has to take into account.

M. V. How can processes in Europe help NATO strengthen deterrence through cooperation, rather than the other way around, where the EU's strategic autonomy undermines NATO's strength? What are the risks and opportunities?

L. K. In principle, I would like Europe to have the same united position as NATO. Today, unfortunately, economic interests prevail over common political interests that are focused on EU security. Almost 90% of NATO countries are EU countries. The EU has been very successful in supporting the military's need for mobility through economic instruments, which is exactly the proper role of the EU. However, at the same time, there are attempts to duplicate some military [capabilities] of NATO. The EU is a combination of economies, and that should be taken into account. If we say that we want to set up an EU army, then we must abolish NATO. There can't be two western alliances. We are building an EU military headquarters, military structures that fully replicate our existing military command systems. I don't want to waste our already small amount of human resources to build two structures – this is difficult not only for Latvia, but also for larger countries.

INTERVIEW WITH THE RETIRED CHIEF OF DEFENCE OF LATVIA, LIEUTENANT GENERAL RAIMONDS GRAUBE

INTERVIEWER: MĀRTIŅŠ VARGULIS (M.V.)
QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED BY: RAIMONDS GRAUBE (R.G.)

M. V. What do you think is the key to successful deterrence?

R. G. Deterrence consists of two main parts. First of all, there is political will, the desire to defend oneself, including geostrategic will, such as being in NATO, etc. This is in combination with community readiness. Second is the military component. The military component must be analyzed in three major circles.

First, national self-defense and self-defense capabilities. It is important that the state talks about defense not only within the ministry or the armed forces, but within the framework of comprehensive defense. The public has a wide range of tools at its disposal to strengthen its protection. Their efficiency of use is the basis for the successful defense of the state. This is insufficiently discussed and understood in society. Perhaps we have not explained enough about the importance of defense structures to the society. At the Latvian-Belarusian border, we now see the importance of this coordination. Together, we are efficient enough to carry out our tasks – this is based on cooperation.

Second, cooperation between the Baltic States – defense coordination. This is an important factor that is being developed in NATO's plans and in ours as well. This is an important form of deterrence, because looking at the map of the Baltics as a whole, it is a separate area bordering the sea, and a potential problem area, as an aggressor is nearby. And, of course, there is the famous Suwalki gap. The Suwalki gap, only 80 km long, is like an umbilical

cord connecting our land with NATO. The time factor is also important in this regard.

Third, our allies, both in NATO and beyond. This includes other international bodies, such as the EU and the UN. The basis here is the UN.

The symbiosis of the combination of the military and the will of the people, alongside geopolitical determinations in crisis situations, are the main deterrents that can stop the opponent.

M. V. When thinking about the future, we need to think about past, too. What do you think has led NATO to be an alliance that no one, if we do not count 9/11, has tried to challenge? What has been the basis of this success so far?

R. G. Let us recall the period in which NATO was created – the post-war period – and the features of the Cold War. The desire of that generation and people was their determination to not allow another military conflict. However paradoxical it may sound, the development of military capabilities provided a policy of deterrence. World War III has not started and hopefully will not start, largely due to united determination and military capability. If you want peace, then prepare for war – this [saying] can be attributed to the Cold War and NATO. The next level should be a unified system of values, political determination, and technologies. A big role is played by the development of technology. The Alliance still consists of the world's most advanced and developed countries. This has discouraged the opponent from taking action, because the opponent understands that there will be no victory in such a war. It worked out well for us when we were fighting for independence.

M. V. How is our opponent developing now? Who are the actors that could challenge the Alliance in the future, and how are they evolving? What should we be prepared for?

R. G. I will analyze this from our point of view. What is our winning factor? For a small country with a limited budget, knowing the capabilities of the possible opponent, what is that decisive factor for our victory? The answer is time – our victory comes with time and speed, two important things. If the adversary decided to use its weapon systems or capabilities to launch a conventional, major invasion, a classic war, NATO would certainly notice it in good time, and we would also. There should be preparation.

For us, the worst-case scenario concerning the opponent is a sudden invasion and covert actions. We saw this in Ukraine in the context of the annexation of Crimea. We have to learn from that. Time is utilized. Recently, I met with Ukrainian military representatives, and I talked about this period. The most important aspect was that at first, we did not understand what was happening, we did not appreciate the actions of the opponent and we were not ready to react.

In terms of our self-defense abilities, time is moving in the right direction, enabling us to respond adequately. Our ability to respond politically is important as well. In contrast to Ukraine, we have settled the legislation needed to be ready to respond without political constraints. Our legislation clearly and brightly tells us that military units must respond in the face of an adversary. No one can stop this action by an order. Here we have already taken a large step.

If we are arguing about military capabilities, then I would divide this into several parts. The opponent, of course, is developing the ability to quickly take over territories. This is done by special forces, air and amphibious units, rapid response units [..] our capabilities must be developed in such a way as to prevent these actions. We need modern anti-tank equipment and artillery. Air defense is important. This limits the opponent's chances of transferring troops to our territory. This is a very significant factor. The opponent, of course, is considering that as well. This is mathematics. If mathematics [indicates he] cannot carry out a reliable attack with air systems, planes, where our techniques can face it, he will not start the attack. It is necessary to strictly plan these operations. The same applies to tanks and ground systems.

Modern 21st century weapons must be developed. Today, conventional wars are not possible, and we need to think about a war of points – specific territories that need to be pursued.

Third is mobility platforms, such that weapon systems can be transferred under arms in a protected manner. There is another big challenge for the platform: if a so-called "Green Men" scenario develops, we would be able to isolate them with these weapons and armed mobility platforms. To isolate these places of conflict will be of the utmost importance.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the opponent: he also thinks of the expense of war. The enemy is working very hard on the development

of electronic warfare weapons, which paralyze modern command systems and weapon systems. There is a war today in which one side (the West) develops modern, effective capabilities, and at the same time the opponent is working on influencing and paralyzing this digitized ability. There's a fight going on. I remember the book "Ghost Fleet", where a possible conflict is described in the year 2030, in which the modern abilities of command-management are under attack and are paralyzed.

M. V. What should NATO do? Will the adaptation processes that have begun be enough for the Alliance to continue to be a strong deterrent?

R. G. As a country that is unable to contribute to NATO's capabilities, which are 21st century capabilities, we need to think about what the adversary is doing, what the adversary thinks, and how he is developing in a modern way. Countries tend to exaggerate technological advances. Such a process is taking place.

NATO countries, those that can create a military industry, are not, in my view, acting in a sufficiently coordinated manner. There are national and business interests. There could be more effective coordination and development. We would benefit from that. For example, consider the Kaliningrad region. Various institutions and security structures have analyzed this area and its weapon systems. It should be concluded that this area is also a very vulnerable area. It is a small area – NATO weapons or a NATO anti-aircraft missile system can destroy these capabilities. You should focus on that. That is the message we need to send to the public so that we do not feel vulnerable. The adversary will then not be able to intimidate us with its propaganda machine. As my colleague General Hodges once said, the area is so small – let it remain there. If this were a political determination, we would enter there with a tank brigade and destroy the systems. They are not invulnerable. That is the way we can deter it. These types of signals, determinations, abilities, and plans are the main aspects of deterrence. Kaliningrad on day "X" could also be paralyzed – it is not an invincible island within NATO's space.

M. V. There is a lot of talk about the Allied presence in Latvia. Would an increase in the enhanced Forward Presence, concerning the number of units, significantly strengthen our deterrence? Should we strive for that?

R. G. In my opinion, the main message of eFP is political, and only secondarily military. One or two thousand NATO soldiers would not change much. That would only be a political signal, not a military one. I will not analyze the political side, because everything is clear there. Regarding the military, initially we talked about the time factor, speed, and that plays an important role, it is important. One of their tasks could be to control these borders, to record what is happening at the border. Capture the "Green Men". This is the lesson learned in Ukraine. Let us remember how people were relocated, and equipment as well, on the Russian–Ukrainian border. Nobody controlled anything there, no one was allowed to be there. The supply of human resources takes place at the border. The presence of such a unit at the border is proof of control. If they are attacked, it is an attack on NATO. Propaganda will be very effective in casting doubt on their true purpose. The involvement of such a unit in resolving the conflict is both a signal to Western society and an effective weapon. Strengthening NATO's anti-aircraft system, which stops Russian missiles, is essential. The deployment of such systems within NATO's eastern borders is a key deterrent.

M. V. The focus has been mainly on land – taking into account NATO's response to major challenges in 2014 at sea and in the air, how vulnerable is our deterrence and what are the things that need to be improved?

R. G. I will continue the analysis. When I talk about time, I'm talking about a limited time – the first days and weeks. Air components play a role, but they do not play a major role. I don't see village bombing nowadays, like in World War II. That is why investing in the development of air defense capabilities is less of a priority. Short-range, point-type destruction systems are a priority. As for the sea, from the perspective of war systems the Baltic Sea is a small lake. To send a modern ship here is practically impossible. As long as defense systems exist in Kaliningrad, Russia, this will be the basis for limited fighting. The deployment of additional forces by sea must be planned, but it is a difficult to defend them. A naval battle is hard to imagine in the small area we have, so our great involvement is not necessary. Two things are needed: firstly, if there is an oversupply at sea and it is used as a logistics line, mines are very effective. We must have mine-cleaning capabilities,

and anti-mine systems are necessary. Second, the coast guard, i.e., defense, should focus on similar weapon systems as the air. This means systems to deter landing opportunities and their approach. This is also the case for port security. NATO and Latvia should develop self-defense capabilities in the future.

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