



# ARMING FOR DETERRENCE

**How Poland and NATO Should  
Counter a Resurgent Russia**

Gen. Sir Richard Shirreff and Maciej Olex-Szczytowski

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ISBN: 978-1-61977-474-2

Cover photo credit: 1GNC Munster/Flickr. Soldiers from NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) in Zagan, Poland, on June 18, 2015.

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July 2016

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## INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

The Warsaw Summit is a watershed moment for the NATO Alliance. The twenty-eight member states have a unique opportunity to demonstrate NATO's enduring relevance and ability to defend Europe and the transatlantic area by laying down a marker to build strong and effective conventional and nuclear deterrence. Poland, in particular, should play an important role in this.

This report examines the threat posed by a resurgent Russia before considering NATO's strategy and posture, focusing particularly on its Northeast region: Poland and the Baltic states. It then considers the implications for Poland and recommends how Polish defense should be reformed to take account of the new reality: That NATO now faces a greater threat of war in its eastern regions than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

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## THE THREAT FROM RUSSIA

Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime does not disguise its hostility toward the West and its main institutions—NATO and the European Union (EU). Western values such as democracy, pluralism, transparency, human rights, freedoms, and the rule of law are antithetical to a kleptocratic, authoritarian regime. The Kremlin has, therefore, viewed with undisguised alarm both recent “color revolutions” in its neighborhood and the uprisings of the Arab Spring.

Fearing that this is what is in store for Russia, the Kremlin has accused the West of instigating or even “weaponizing” those upheavals. Putin has set out to aggressively delegitimize, discredit, and undermine Western policies and institutions as well as the entire post-Cold War norms-based security order. For all intents and purposes, Moscow has declared the West its chief enemy, as explicitly stated in Russia's revised National Security Strategy signed late last year by President Vladimir Putin.

Russia's strategic aim is to restore its status as a great power, allowing it to dominate what it sees

as its sphere of privileged interest. Military strength and a willingness to use force is instrumental to the achievement of this ambition. Furthermore, military adventures abroad also serve to deflect attention from Russia's ongoing economic meltdown and the regime's growing repressiveness, and to raise its domestic popularity.

Transatlantic institutions and the entire European security architecture stand in the way of fulfilling Russia's main strategic aim, so Moscow is determined to undermine and render them irrelevant. Russia has thus become the most serious geopolitical and military threat to NATO. Paradoxically, Moscow accuses the Alliance of encircling Russia and preparing for a military aggression against it, even though NATO's military footprint in the areas covered by the NATO/Russia Founding Act has been extremely modest, particularly in comparison with the military assets Russia has directed toward Europe.

The Kremlin has demonstrated its penchant for risk-taking, keeping the West off balance by continuously scanning for and exploiting its weaknesses. Moscow is aggressively opportunistic when advancing its interests, and its modus operandi is to seize the initiative and achieve a fait accompli that the West would be unwilling or unable to challenge. It is weakness rather than a show of strength that provokes Russia into action, just as it was in the case of Crimea, where the Ukrainian state, weakened by domestic turmoil, was unable to mobilize itself to defend part of its territory.

However, the regime respects a show of strength and tends to back down to avoid a direct collision with determined and resourceful opponents. A case in point is the swift and determined US response to Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008, when Russian troops stopped their march toward Tbilisi after the United States deployed its warships to the Black Sea, while also promising substantial logistical support to the Georgian armed forces.

There is no doubt that Russia is prepared and willing to threaten or even use military force to exploit weaknesses in the West, as demonstrated in Georgia in 2008, in Ukraine from 2014 onward and, more recently, in Syria. This also involves provocative military behavior to test the responses of the Alliance and individual allies, as in the case of the dangerous overflights of the missile destroyer *USS Donald Cook* in the Baltic Sea in April 2016.

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When it comes to the use of force, Moscow's decision-making circle has shrunk to just President Putin and no more than two or three of the most trusted members of his regime. When making decisions, President Putin is not constrained by constitutional checks and balances or the rule of law. He has the military and security apparatus ready to execute his will and has their requisite capabilities available any time.

Furthermore, the tools at the regime's disposal are well-integrated, spanning the military, diplomacy, intelligence, propaganda, civilian emergencies management, military, cyber, and economic realms. This provides Moscow with great strategic flexibility and agility, as well as the ability to act and achieve effects across multiple domains.

Russia's use of this wide range of instruments in its recent conflicts has generated much discussion within NATO concerning the numerous implications, not least on how best to deter future aggression. "Hybrid warfare" epitomizes Russia's approach in the West. Russia would likely not dare to attack a NATO member by means of a direct and overt act of military aggression but would rather choose an indirect approach as described by its Chief of the General Staff,<sup>1</sup> or "hybrid warfare" tactics, to challenge the Alliance and its collective defense guarantees.

However, without credible hard power options at its disposal, Russia's other tools of state power alone could not conceivably pose an existential or grave threat to a NATO ally. Russia's doctrine invariably envisages the use of conventional military force, without which none of the gains obtained through the use of covert, indirect, and unconventional means can be consolidated.

Furthermore, in the wake of Crimea's annexation, NATO has been sufficiently alerted to Russia's hybrid warfare approach. Significant effort is being put into bolstering resilience and ability to respond to and deal with the scenarios of covert

aggression among NATO's eastern member states. By initiating a conflict on NATO's territory through hybrid warfare tactics, Russia would lose its key advantages of speed and surprise in creating a quick fait accompli. Any signs of such a conflict—instigated on the basis of false pretexts as is usual for Russia—would serve as early warnings for NATO.

While Moscow recognizes that it cannot match NATO's military capabilities in general terms, it has sufficient combat capabilities to create a regional military balance favoring Russia along NATO's northeastern frontier, which, in combination with the factors of speed, surprise, and lack of strategic depth, *could* allow it to achieve a quick fait accompli. Hence the importance of Russia's military power as the hard currency, which underwrites its ability to pose a serious or even existential threat to the Baltic states and Poland.

In this regard, five elements stand out: Russia's military modernization and build-up (particularly in the Western Military District), anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, nuclear strategy, continuous exercises, and the uncertainty surrounding the Kremlin's intent.

### Military Modernization and Build-up

Russia pursues its most ambitious military modernization program in recent history and has earmarked a total budget of around 19.3 trillion rubles to rearm its Armed Forces by 2020. Its priorities are on modernizing nuclear weapons, introducing new hardware and weapons systems into the Aerospace Forces, the Navy, and Ground Forces, in that order.

This push for military modernization, rearmament, and build-up under President Putin is underpinned by significant investments into developing, producing, and fielding new weapon systems, or upgrading legacy systems, which are steadily giving a new qualitative edge to Russia's Armed Forces. Given that rearmament spending has been "ring-fenced" against cuts in spite of Russia's significant economic difficulties—and despite massive corruption, embezzlement, and the impact of Western sanctions on the defense industrial sector of Russia—those investments are yielding significant results.

Although economic struggle might force Russia to reassess some of its choices, cuts in military spending would be considered as a last resort, and their effect on the rearmament program would only come after years of recession. Western sanctions

<sup>1</sup> "The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures—applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special-operations forces. The open use of forces—often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation—is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict." Valery Gerasimov, "Tsennost nauki v predvidenii" ("The value of science in prediction"), *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'er*, 2013, No. 8, p. 476.



USTKA, Poland (June 16, 2015) Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel return to the British Royal Navy's HMS Ocean as a Chinook departs the ship. *Photo credit: Commander, US Naval Forces Europe-Africa/Flickr.*

that restrict access to certain technologies certainly act as a factor in slowing down the pace of military modernization, but they are unable to halt it completely.

Russia's ability to apply lessons learnt from past operations, such as the war against Georgia in 2008, or more recent campaigns in Ukraine and Syria, is also noteworthy. As a result, Russia has made steady advances in improving command and control, increasing Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, integrating services, making various units and formations more cohesive and effective in warfighting, and improving logistics. Militarily, Russia is certainly no longer a decaying post-Cold War power with obsolete or vanishing capabilities.

Qualitative improvements are accompanied by significant quantitative increases. The Ground Forces formed eight new brigades in 2015, and in January 2016 Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced plans to form three new divisions in the Western Military District adjacent to the Baltic states. These changes signal a move back to a Cold War-like military posture central to which was preparation for high-intensity, large-scale combined arms warfare. Although at the Munich

Security Conference Russia's Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev accused the West of taking us back to the Cold War era, it is Russia itself that continues to move in that direction in terms of ongoing changes in its military posture.

Some of the most capable formations in Russia's Armed Forces are located in the Western Military District, and in any actions involving the Baltic states and Poland they could quickly bring considerable force to bear. In addition to the existing maneuver brigades and the announced formation of new divisions, a number of niche force developments are especially relevant regarding the Baltic region.

These include greater focus on the potential use of Special Forces; lightly armed but more rapidly deployable airborne forces; naval infantry and other specialist units combined with support from battalion tactical groups; reformed Aerospace Forces; and the ongoing development of C4ISR.<sup>2</sup> This increases the speed, agility, and flexibility of the forces that can be employed against NATO.

<sup>2</sup> C4ISR refers to capabilities in command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

Many of these units and capabilities are positioned in the immediate vicinity of the Baltic states, rendering highly visible mobilization, long-distance power projection, and force assembly in the area unnecessary should the Kremlin decide to launch a short or no-notice attack on one or all three of the Baltic states. Even if a larger concentration of forces is deemed necessary for an overwhelming attack, Russia's military campaigns (i.e., Syria, Ukraine, and Georgia) and exercises have amply demonstrated its ability to move substantial forces across vast distances at speed and to sustain them for prolonged periods of time. Its forces in the Western Military District can therefore be quickly and substantially reinforced by units and formations from other parts of Russia—under the cover of planned or snap military drills.

### Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) in NATO's Northeast

Russia has harnessed an array of stand-off weapons systems, including multi-layered air defense, mobile coastal defense, land- and sea-based as well as air-launched cruise missiles and tactical ballistic missile platforms that give it an ability to implement the so-called “anti-access/area denial” (A2/AD) approach. With the help of such systems, in conjunction with its naval surface and submarine forces, electronic and cyber warfare, and other capabilities, Russia can turn areas falling within range of these weapons into strategically and operationally isolated “bubbles.”

The “A2” element is a strategic and game-changing problem as it means that those bubbles are very difficult to penetrate—by land, sea, or air—to deliver reinforcements. The “AD” part is the operational side of the problem as it makes it more difficult to operate forces inside such a bubble. Countering A2/AD is fraught with a high risk of escalation as well as with significant loss of time and capabilities.

The Baltic states, parts of Poland and Finland, and large swathes of the Baltic Sea constitute one such area under A2/AD threat due to Russia's capabilities in the Kaliningrad enclave and near Russia's border with Estonia and Latvia, as well as Russia's alliance with Belarus. Russia's advanced air defense

systems, S-300/S-400,<sup>3</sup> which are deployed in the Kaliningrad enclave and near St. Petersburg in Russia, and the integration of these systems with the corresponding air defense systems in Belarus, create an overlapping air defense engagement area over the Baltic states and eastern Poland capable of putting at risk most, if not all, aircraft flying in their airspace.

Their mobility means that it is very hard to target and destroy the launchers without the presence of ground troops inside Russian territory. Given the importance of air superiority in any conventional conflict scenario, this is a very serious impediment to reinforcing and defending NATO's eastern allies. In addition, Russia's Baltic Fleet (based in St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad) is capable of contesting, if not fully closing, maritime lines of communication between the Baltic states or Poland and the rest of NATO.

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Russia's short-range ballistic missiles, “Iskander” (SS-26 Stone), if positioned permanently in Kaliningrad,<sup>4</sup> are capable of targeting infrastructure, bases, and troop concentrations in Poland, Lithuania, and southern Latvia. In conjunction with the same type of systems based on the western fringes of the Western Military District, this capability extends to targets in Estonia and the rest of Latvia. Such systems can destroy critical

nodes (ports, airports) and infrastructure required for the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) of the allied forces deployed through Poland and into the Baltic states, thus further complicating NATO's rapid deployment operations.

Taking into account the air- and sea-launched cruise missile capability, Russia also possesses the capacity to seriously impede, if not completely halt, and significantly raise the costs to reinforce eastern Poland and the Baltic states; these capabilities

3 NATO codenames: for S-300 family—SA-10 “Grumble,” SA-12 “Giant/Gladiator,” SA-20 “Gargoyle”; for S-400—SA-21 “Growler.”

4 “Iskander” missiles come in three variants (E, M, and K), including one which can be nuclear-tipped. NATO sources believe that currently there are no permanently stationed “Iskander” systems in the Kaliningrad enclave, although they are occasionally brought in for exercises.

could further interrupt the free operation of forces already in the region.

Last, but not least, in the event of conflict, Russian land forces operating from the Kaliningrad enclave and Belarus could attempt to close the so-called “Suwalki gap”—a narrow land corridor from Poland to Lithuania. While sharing about 1,000 km of land border with Russia and Belarus, the Baltic states are linked to the rest of the Alliance by just a 65 km-wide gap between the Kaliningrad enclave and Belarus, which has only two roads and one railway line passing through it from Poland to Lithuania. Establishing control over this gap would cut the Baltic states off from the rest of the Alliance and turn their reinforcement by land route into an extremely difficult undertaking.

In the context of A2/AD, it is also worth pointing out that Russia would be capable of not just sealing off the Baltic states in the “bubble” that covers air, naval, and land dimensions, but it also would be capable of fiercely contesting other spaces of critical importance to military operations—in the electromagnetic spectrum, cyber space, and even outer space (by using anti-satellite capabilities).

Geographically, and farther afield, Russia could use its capabilities to cut the flow of reinforcements from the United States to Europe by targeting them in the Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) gap, where NATO’s presence and posture have declined over the years. This would be combined with a massive information warfare campaign and psychological operations to degrade the morale of the forces and populations sealed off in the A2/AD “bubble” inside the Baltic states and northeast Poland, as well as to undermine the will of the governments and populations in the rest of the Alliance.

### The Nuclear Dimension

Moscow continues to place great stock in its nuclear deterrent with long-term plans in full swing to modernize its nuclear triad. In 2015, six regiments of RS-24 “Yars” (SS-27) Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) went into service, and the share of modern weapons in the Strategic Rocket Forces reached 51 percent. In support of the nuclear triad, two Tu-160, three Tu-95MS, and five Tu-22M3 strategic bombers were modernized, while the fleet of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines achieved a modernization rate of 56 percent. In total, the Russian nuclear triad is now 55 percent modernized.<sup>5</sup>

5 Stepan Kravchenko, “Putin Tells Defense Chiefs to Strengthen

On a declaratory level, Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons when it perceives that the existence of the state is threatened, including when the opposing side is using only conventional forces. It seems, however, that Moscow’s thinking about the utility of nuclear weapons extends well beyond such extreme circumstances.

First and foremost, Russia’s nuclear arsenal is instrumental in its strategy of dissuading its opponents from directly intervening in the conflicts where Russia has important interests at stake (e.g., in Ukraine), or from pursuing policies seen as detrimental to Russia’s geopolitical interests (e.g., targeting states hosting US missile defense system elements or cooperating closely with NATO). Frequent public references to nuclear weapons by various Moscow officials and simulated nuclear strikes on such targets as Warsaw, Stockholm, and the Bornholm island of Denmark demonstrates how Russia’s penchant for using nuclear weapons for “nuclear blackmail.”<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Moscow claims the political and strategic value of first use of nuclear weapons as a “demonstration strike” during an escalating conflict, in order to “de-escalate.” Holding out a threat of further escalation, such signaling would be intended, for instance, to dissuade NATO allies from getting involved or further attempting to reinforce and defend the Baltic states. The Alliance would be confronted with a dilemma of either honoring its collective defense commitments and thus possibly entering an escalating nuclear war, or stepping back and negotiating a settlement under terms dictated by Moscow and thus dissolving the existing European security architecture.

This posture is backed by planning and training measures as well as capabilities. Russia has maintained its arsenal of lower yield sub-strategic nuclear warheads and their delivery means, which creates for Moscow a range of options well below the level of full-scale strategic nuclear exchange. There are also abundant indications that Russia integrates nuclear weapons into its overall military planning and routinely exercises their possible use. Large-scale military exercises featuring offensive

Russian Nuclear Forces,” Bloomberg, December 11, 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-12-11/putin-tells-defense-chiefs-to-strengthen-russian-nuclear-forces>.

6 President Putin explicitly referred to Russia’s nuclear potential during the Crimea annexation, in order to keep foreign powers in check. See, for example, Neil MacFarquhar, “Putins Says He Weighed Nuclear Alert Over Crimea,” *New York Times*, March 15, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/16/world/europe/putin-says-he-weighed-nuclear-alert-over-crimea.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/16/world/europe/putin-says-he-weighed-nuclear-alert-over-crimea.html?_r=0).





NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Andrzej Duda, President of Poland. *Photo credit: NATO/Flickr.*

scenarios usually involve practicing for a nuclear strike and for prevailing in a conflict that has turned nuclear.

### Exercises

Russia's political-military leadership actively uses military exercises for launching operations and intimidating its neighbors. These exercises represent a convenient way of camouflaging intent should Moscow decide to launch a surprise attack. Turning one of these exercises into an operation against one or several of the Baltic states would give very little or no early warning time for NATO.

The exercise tempo of the Russian military, even though it peaked in 2014 and has plateaued since then, shows that they are continuously readying themselves for conflicts of varying scale and intensity. The scale of some of those exercises is ever greater and demonstrates Russia's improving abilities to move forces over large distances, assemble them quickly in areas of operations, and sustain them for longer periods of time. A striking feature is that many of the military exercises conducted by Russia are organized on the basis of offensive scenarios, including the invasion of the Baltic states and Poland, and targeting the Nordic countries. A lot of attention is being paid to

improving interoperability with the armed forces of Belarus.

The large "Zapad" (West) 2013 exercise demonstrates Russia's focus on developing synergy between the various forces under the power ministries, rehearsing joint actions, using modern technologies including C4ISR, with emphasis on the experimental use of automated command and control, and combining civilian agencies and the military in a mobilized format. The exercise was staged jointly with Belarus and followed an established pattern by rehearsing offensive operations in a western direction, including against the Baltic states.

Above all, Northern Fleet submarine activity timed to coincide with Zapad 2013, in conjunction with the nuclear forces exercise President Putin ordered in its aftermath, demonstrate that Moscow includes first use of nuclear weapons as a "demonstration strike" to induce an enemy power to negotiate—in other words, the operational use of tactical or other nuclear weapon types to "de-escalate" a conflict.

Russia's strategic exercises, including Zapad 2013, confirm serious planning attention to improving strategic mobility. This featured prominently during the "Tsentri" (Center) 2015 exercise, including

rehearsal and active preparations for the air lines of communication (ALOCs) developed to support Russian operations in Syria that shortly ensued. The extent to which force integration and cooperation with civilian agencies has become a feature of such strategic exercises demonstrates very serious efforts to enhance civil-military cooperation in the context of regional conflicts in ways that have no parallels in Western countries.

### Intent

Even if Moscow currently has no immediate intent to challenge NATO directly, this may unexpectedly change overnight and can be implemented with great speed, following already prepared plans. The capability to do so is, to a large extent, in place.

It is hard to predict what may trigger Russian action. This might come at a time NATO and the EU are distracted by another crisis, or it might relate to some particular high profile event, the outcomes of which Moscow wants to shape. It might relate to political cycles in key NATO countries or to Russia's own internal pressures. It might also result from a misperception of NATO's activities and a miscalculation of the Alliance's resolve. Or it might come as retribution for the actions of the United States in some other part of the world.

Whatever confluence of circumstances might trigger the action, Moscow could artificially generate any pretext that suits its propaganda narrative—from “defending the oppressed Russian-speaking population” to “pre-empting a NATO military attack” or “defending access to Kaliningrad.” It is clear though that Russia is capable of surprising the West as happened with its interventions in Ukraine and Syria, and a rapid military action to create advantageous facts on the ground in the Baltic states could easily become one such surprise—with potentially devastating implications for eastern Poland and fatal consequences to the Alliance.

However, Russia's intent would not materialize in the face of a convincing show of strength, cohesion, and solidarity of NATO. Credible deterrence is thus key, with the critical question being whether NATO's deterrence posture is fit for the purpose.

## NATO'S STRATEGY AND POSTURE

After the demise of the Soviet Union, the allies assumed that Russia was interested in a partnership with NATO and therefore sought a dialogue. However, despite the progress made since 2014, NATO currently lacks a cohesive strategy and suitable deterrence and defense posture to deal with a resurgent Russia. In particular, the Alliance must address four fundamental challenges.

### Strategy

NATO's current Strategic Concept adopted in 2010 (“Active Engagement, Modern Defense”), while not perfect, is adequate in the current environment. Furthermore, allies have made it abundantly clear that NATO's main focus is on collective defense, further reducing the need to open this document to time-consuming discussions. NATO's strategy towards Russia, however, needs revising.

The Alliance is returning to the dual-track approach of deterrence and dialogue from the Cold War.<sup>7</sup> While the notion of combining dialogue and deterrence is still valid, the circumstances we face today differ to a significant

degree. Both deterrence and dialogue need to be reconfigured to take into account contemporary circumstances.

In the 1960s, the biggest threat to NATO was the Soviet Union overrunning the entire European continent. The biggest threat for NATO today is a miscalculation by Russia that it could outmaneuver the Alliance by creating a quick fait accompli inside NATO's borders that might avoid triggering an

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<sup>7</sup> This was first introduced by the Harmel report of 1967. As explained on the NATO website: “The 1967 ‘Report of the Council on the Future Tasks of the Alliance,’ also known as the Harmel Report, was a seminal document in NATO's history. It reasserted NATO's basic principles and effectively introduced the notion of deterrence and dialogue, setting the scene for NATO's first steps toward a more cooperative approach to security issues that would emerge in 1991.” For more information, please see [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_67927.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67927.htm).

Article 5 response or would render such response ineffective. This is based on the Russian assumption that it has a significant time advantage over NATO and that the allies could, through intimidation, uncertainty, and disinformation be influenced not to escalate a limited conflict into a full-fledged one.

The focus of NATO needs to be on deterrence by denial: Russia's military aim is no longer to overrun the entire continent, so today's defense-in-depth/deterrence-by-punishment approach has to be adjusted. Due to Russia's more limited military aims compared to the Cold War period, deterrence by denial is also more feasible today than it was then. NATO's Russia strategy (as well as the associated posture and messaging) must address these issues, leaving no room for doubt that an aggression against a NATO ally could ever be a limited conflict with quick gains. The centerpiece of NATO's strategy vis-à-vis Russia must be to ensure that the Alliance is both committed and able to prevent this.

A dialogue with Russia is necessary to communicate the Alliance's unequivocal resolve to defend all its members. Strengthening deterrence does not automatically require expanding dialogue. The dialogue must be strictly conditions-based, i.e. dependent on the behavior of Russia. Dialogue cannot expand from its current form (ambassador-level discussions in the NATO-Russia Council and military hotlines) and evolve into cooperation as long as Russia does not return to fulfilling its obligations under the treaties of the existing European security architecture.

There are fears that strengthening deterrence would increase the likelihood of escalation, while history tells us a different story: weakness emboldens Russia and strength deters. Russia exploits this misperception in its attempts to deter the West. It employs an aggressive anti-Western narrative and accuses NATO of escalating the situation and encircling Russia—a claim that is unfounded but sometimes effective in influencing some NATO allies.

The bottom line is that Russia continues to portray NATO as its main enemy, which means that tensions will remain high regardless of what actions the Alliance takes. The safest course for NATO is to demonstrate, both in word and deed, its resolve and ability to defend every ally against every form of aggression while remaining open for dialogue.

### Strategic Anticipation

Worryingly, the Alliance often appears to be surprised by Russia's actions, from its 2008 invasion of Georgia to its ongoing role in the Ukraine crisis. This is partly due to the difficulties of interpreting the immediate intentions and plans of the Kremlin regime. But Russia rarely disguises its true intentions. On the contrary, it has proclaimed them very publicly on various occasions, but, in general, the West has chosen not to believe Russia's declarations and disregards its willingness to carry them out.

The West misunderstands Russia, assuming that it will obey the rules even if we are not willing to enforce them. NATO essentially projects onto Russia its own way of thinking about international relations and security. However, Moscow's logic is that, when given a chance to further its interests, it will use the opportunity to carry out its plans without hesitation. Such an approach is, to Russian decision-makers, entirely rational behavior as long as it can assume that the West will opt for cooperation rather than confrontation. The effectiveness of deterrence depends on the accuracy of allies' assumptions. In this context, wishful thinking is dangerous thinking.

The Alliance's shift in priorities away from trying to understand Russia magnifies the danger of miscalculation. It has become plainly evident—for instance, from the number of Russian-speaking analysts in the Western intelligence community—that insufficient resources have been allocated to intelligence collection and analysis in order fully to understand Russia's strategic thinking and intentions and to anticipate its actions.

### NATO's Hollowed Deterrence and Defense Posture

As it stands, NATO's defense posture is not strong enough to deter Russia. In part, this is because the Alliance's decision-making will always be slower than Russia's. NATO should compensate for this with a larger forward presence, better automated military movements that do not require prior North Atlantic Council approval, and adequate delegated authority to the military commanders, which so far has not been carried out at the level required.<sup>8</sup>

NATO also lacks coherent levels of deterrence; NATO has tied its own hands by declaring that it would not use all tools available to it, such as

<sup>8</sup> While the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) has the right to stage and prepare forces, authority to deploy and commit those forces has not been granted.

refraining from using offensive cyber operations. Holding back from offensive cyber operations is tantamount to removing kinetic options from a battlefield commander.

The prevailing assumption that Europe was safe from war, has resulted in reduction or loss of significant capabilities for high-end combat operations, both nuclear and conventional. As a result, the Alliance's range of options has shrunk and its ability to tailor its approach to respond to Russia has decreased.

NATO's recent operations in Afghanistan and Libya, where Alliance air superiority was a given, have resulted in reduced capabilities as Alliance air power has been allowed to atrophy relative to Russia's air power and air defense. Only limited numbers of air defense systems remain in the inventories of NATO military forces. While NATO has no general shortage of tactical fighter aircraft, skilled personnel, and basing infrastructure, the number of fighter aircraft available for missions at any particular time is just a fraction of the total pool.

The Alliance is also hamstrung by critical shortages of aircraft for strategic and tactical airlift, air-to-air refueling, ISR, maritime patrol, electronic warfare, suppression of enemy air defense (SEAD), and anti-submarine warfare missions, all of which are essential for its ability to project its military power to crisis regions and operate there successfully.

The decrease in allied Land Forces has been particularly significant. Combat forces with sufficient firepower have been replaced with light capabilities better suited to expeditionary crisis response and counter-insurgency operations. NATO has limited capacity to conduct a combined arms battle at brigade level, let alone divisional or corps level.

NATO's maritime efforts have been refocused to the southern flank, while all commands dealing with the northern part of NATO have been abolished. NATO's maritime component is routinely undermanned and also lacks capabilities that would be needed to counter Russia's A2/AD strategy.

Alliance nuclear deterrence suffers from a capabilities deficit; B-61 gravity bombs delivered by increasingly aging dual-capable aircraft (DCA) and strategic nuclear missiles limit NATO's options

in response to the potential use of nuclear weapons by Russia. Given that the DCAs would be unable to penetrate an A2/AD zone, the only response option for NATO to Russia's limited nuclear "de-escalation strike" would be to use strategic nuclear forces. This lacks the credibility needed to serve as a deterrent to Russia's nuclear blackmail. In addition, nuclear deterrence is undermined by some European nations insisting on the complete removal of US tactical nuclear weapons from Europe.

NATO members are not spending enough on defense to rebuild the range of capabilities necessary to deter a resurgent and aggressive Russia. Consequently, there is a tendency in some parts of NATO to make the threat fit the Alliance's existing posture and capabilities. This is a dangerous path. NATO must look at the adversary as objectively as possible and make its posture fit the threat, not the other way around.

While the tasks of the NATO Command Structure have proliferated since the end of Cold War, its size has shrunk drastically. It once comprised around sixty-five headquarters, but today has only two strategic and two operational level headquarters, with component commands that only in exceptional cases run combined and joint operations.

Given a resurgent Russia and various asymmetrical threats, the Command Structure is not large, sustainable, or responsive enough to conduct exercises and face challenges from both the south and the east. It is not sufficiently manned even for peacetime tasks and would certainly be unable to cope with the tasks associated with a large-scale war. Furthermore, it is too top-heavy, and questions remain about its deployability.

NATO exercises are focused more on assuring nervous allies, rather than on deterring potential adversaries. The forces in the exercises are not adequately integrated and coordinated across various domains and capabilities, and they do not include enough high-end capabilities and large-scale formations employed in non-permissive environments. Furthermore, SACEUR lacks the authority to conduct snap readiness exercises without the approval of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), which reduces the deterrence effect that could be achieved from conducting such exercises.

### Alliance nuclear deterrence suffers from a capabilities deficit.

## ARMING FOR DETERRENCE

Due to the focus on waging counter-insurgency campaigns and conducting crisis response or peacekeeping operations, NATO's ability to wage large-scale, high-intensity conventional war has decreased, as marked by the decline of relevant military capabilities and the lack of appreciation among many in NATO for the threats it faces. Unlike in Russia, there is no evident psychological readiness for war in Europe, however unlikely it may be.

Last but not least, deterrence depends on communication—signals, messages, and information campaigns to continuously reinforce the image of resolve, capability, and credibility. Russia is waging a full-scale information campaign against the West and persistently trying to decrease the legitimacy and credibility of NATO and its actions. Meanwhile, the Alliance's efforts to counter this vicious campaign are modest, with all the attendant consequences to the deterrent value of what NATO is doing or is planning to do on its eastern flank.

### NATO's Posture in the Northeast (Poland and the Baltics)

Combined host-nation and allied forces in the Northeast are currently far inferior in numbers and firepower to Russia's forces in the Western Military District. The region lacks the strategic and operational depth that makes giving up space for time impossible. A limited incursion creating a quick fait accompli in the Baltic states, and therefore directly threatening Poland, could be undertaken by Russia with the forces already stationed in the vicinity of their borders and with extremely limited early warning. This becomes an ever bigger problem during exercises where the real intent (operation or exercise) is not known.

Without a robust and adequately postured forward-based conventional force, NATO is presently unprepared to prevent or counter such an incursion. Indeed, the Alliance's conventional weakness in its Northeast enables Moscow's strategy of using quick military action to create beneficial facts on the ground, then using a nuclear deterrent to protect its position.

NATO's conventional military posture in Poland and the Baltics should be capable of convincing Russia that it is able to delay and bog down an invading

force and inflict unacceptable damage on it. This force is not required to win the war, but it must be able to fight alongside the host-nation forces to buy NATO more time for reinforcement. NATO's presence in the region is currently not large enough to achieve this.

The length of the shared border between Russia and the Baltic states offers Russia the possibility to claim territory without even having to fire a shot at NATO forces, thus rendering the current forward-based forces worthless. Another factor undermining the deterrent value of these forces is the fact that most of them do not constitute a fighting force but are meant, rather, for peacetime activities and training.

Given its current reliance on the reinforcement of the region, Russia's A2/AD capabilities and its ability to block or severely impede these reinforcements is a complete game-changer for NATO. The problem of A2/AD is neither new nor unique to northeast Poland and the Baltics, but nowhere else on NATO's territory is it as acute. NATO currently does not have a strategy to counter this threat. Consequently, the current reinforcement-based strategy is not credible.

Further complicating this problem is the underdeveloped state of quick-reaction forces, prepositioning, and follow-on forces. NATO's quick reaction "spearhead force," the "Very High Readiness Joint Task Force" (VJTF) is not large enough or fast enough, and might be unable to enter or operate effectively in a non-permissive environment. Any plan for its use must be driven by the capability and intentions of the enemy if it is to be credible.

NATO has not paid enough attention to what the Russians might do to pre-empt or forestall the Alliance. The timelines for getting the VJTF to full operating capability take no account of what Russia might do, now or in the immediate future. Both notice-to-move timelines (from forty-eight hours to seven days at brigade level) and notice-to-effect timelines (at least fourteen days, not counting the delay caused by A2/AD) are too long.

Furthermore, it is impossible to pre-position VJTF equipment in the region due to its multinational nature; contributing nations, which may differ in

NATO has not paid enough attention to what the Russians might do to pre-empt or forestall the Alliance.



173rd Paratroopers march in formation with Polish soldiers, April 23, 2014. *Photo credit: US Army/Flickr.*

each force generation cycle, use different types of equipment. The VJTF is not regionally aligned, so if a conflict in NATO’s northeast area erupts at the same time as another crisis requiring a NATO response, the VJTF might be unavailable.

Land forces must also acquire the necessary permits to move between countries on the transit route (although this might be less of a problem during times of crisis) and would likely be slowed down by infrastructure-based constraints. The US Administration’s current plan, whereby equipment for one brigade would be pre-positioned about 1,600 km from the potential front line, is far from ideal as it cannot be quickly deployed to the region.

NATO’s air presence in the region is meant only for a peace-time missions (air policing) and exercises. In the maritime domain, the allies lack a persistent combat-capable presence in the Baltic Sea.

The stance of non-NATO countries in the region—Sweden and Finland—matters, too. The uncertainty surrounding their decisions and actions complicates NATO’s plans and response options in the region. Without these two countries in NATO, the Alliance lacks strategic and operational depth as well as the ability to exercise greater control of maritime and air space in the Baltic Sea. Should Russia be able to compel Stockholm and Helsinki to stay out of

a conflict in the Baltics, NATO’s response options would be limited even further.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLAND

Given the nature of the threat and in line with the need for NATO to build a credible deterrence in the region, there is an urgent need to strengthen Poland’s defense capacity in order to reduce the temptation for Russia to spring a surprise attack. First and foremost, this requires the ability to defend against asymmetric interventions in the Baltics or out of Kaliningrad. In addition, it requires the ability to deter a “full spectrum” surprise conventional attack.

The required moves fall into two categories, those for immediate action, where effects can be expected to materialize over an eighteen-month period, and longer-term measures, principally involving rationalization and acceleration of the major modernization program for the Armed Forces, which was initiated in late 2012.

### For immediate action

There is a need for policy declarations and political action, as well as for specific military preparations to be effected promptly.

### Policy declarations

Poland should make clear policy declarations regarding its behavior in the event of Russian incursions and on targeting within Russia. For example:

- A statement is needed that Poland will immediately and unilaterally come to the **aid of the Baltics (and Romania)**, should they be attacked in any way, pending a NATO-wide decision on Article 5. It should seek analogous declarations for itself, the Baltics, and Romania from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other allies, and reciprocity from Romania, as well.
- Poland should say that it will not give in to nuclear blackmail, and that in response to the Russian doctrine of nuclear “de-escalation,” it reserves the **right to attack Russian targets** conventionally, including in Kaliningrad. Poland should aim to join the tactical nuclear capability scheme within NATO, so enabling its F-16s to be carriers of tactical nuclear ordnance.
- Poland should declare that it reserves the right to make counterattacks deep into Russian territory if Russia ever attacked Poland, notably with the long-range JASSM air-launched cruise missiles it will receive from the United States later this year. This applies also to the Naval Strike Missile (NSM) coastal missiles it possesses (capable of hitting onshore targets), together with the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (GMLRS) it plans to acquire.
- **Poland should publish a potential list of targets**, for example in the Kaliningrad Oblast. Kaliningrad city itself is less than 30 km from Poland, while the Pionerski strategic radar is some 60 km distant.

- Poland should announce that it reserves the right to deploy **offensive cyber operations** (and not necessarily in response just to cyber attacks). The authorities could also suggest potential targets, which could include the Moscow metro, the St. Petersburg power network, and Russian state-run media outlets such as RT.
- Poland should declare that, if attacked, it reserves the right to dispatch **Special Operations Forces (SOF)** into Russian territory such as Kaliningrad, in order to help destroy high-value targets, e.g. the Pantsyr and other missile batteries, which may be difficult to disable by methods such as jamming.

There can be no credible defense, and therefore deterrence, without an effective joint defense plan that unifies military capabilities from across the maritime, land, air, cyber, and space domains.

Poland should demonstrate the ability independently to target weapons and to launch these forces and capabilities. It should also show the ability to move forces into the Baltics and possibly Romania, in the process demonstrating joint action with relevant elements of US and other allied units.

There can be no credible defense, and therefore deterrence, without an effective joint defense plan that unifies military capabilities from across the maritime, land, air, cyber, and space domains. NATO is clearly best placed to conduct and, if necessary, implement such a plan at the operational level under strategic direction from NATO’s military headquarters,

Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). Furthermore, such a plan will require, certainly on land, an army group concept that unifies the forces and capabilities of Poland and the Baltic States, together with such NATO forces as are committed, into a unified whole.

Such a concept, while militarily essential, will have significant implications for national sovereignty, as well as command and control. Political issues aside, Poland is well-placed, by virtue of the size of its armed forces, to act as lead nation for a “Baltic” division under command of NATO’s Multinational Corps Northeast.

### Political action

Poland should be more vocal in the EU on defense and security matters, as well as on economic and social matters that impact defense.

- Poland should undertake firm opposition to any EU plans (such as may be contemplated in the new Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy) envisaging an EU military force. Any weakening of NATO cannot be countenanced, especially at this political juncture, and particularly with a putative British exit from the EU weakening the Union's collective military posture outside of NATO.
- The Polish government should find new incentives for its citizens to remain in Poland rather than emigrate to other EU countries. Over eight million people from Central and Eastern Europe have moved elsewhere in the EU, which has important social, economic, and political ramifications that impact defense. Emigration has reduced Poland's defense capacity by draining people of military age, often with the technical and information technology (IT) skills that Poland's forces require.

### Military preparation

Polish decision-makers such as Pawel Soloch, the head of the National Security Bureau, have stressed the need to **re-expand the Armed Forces to 150,000 (from around 100,000 today)**.<sup>9</sup> Regular forces must be structured and equipped to fight. On land, this means regenerating the structures and capabilities for major combined arms combat operations at brigade and divisional level. This requires action across all lines of development: education of personnel, training, equipment, and sustainability. The same is true for air and maritime forces.

To complement regular forces, the military should rebuild regular reserves (as distinct from a territorial force, addressed below).

These changes should be set in motion promptly, even though they will take years to complete.

As for immediate needs, Poland should improve the overall **command and control** of its forces, plus undertake **a number of urgent acquisitions**

to bolster strategic deterrence and tactical preparations.

- Poland should move forward expeditiously with procurements and not progress these acquisitions at the pace of its Technical Modernization Plan (TMP). Promulgated in 2012, the TMP is a ten-year, \$34 billion road map for re-equipping the armed forces. The TMP is now subject to review and extension. Some US \$26 billion might be added for the 2020s.<sup>10</sup>
- Still, core elements of the original TMP are unlikely to change, and many are suffering chronic delays. Poland should undertake these urgent procurements using radically different methods to overcome the systemic delays in the past.
- Many of the urgent changes are relatively cheap to implement. In aggregate, the cost of these requirements does not appear excessively burdensome (this year's budgeted expenditure on the TMP is US \$2.5 billion).

Further, payments would, in the normal course, be spread over multi-year delivery periods. Some could also be extended over ten to fifteen years or longer via financing from sellers, leasing, or using other financing solutions. With interest rates at current lows, the incremental cost is also very low. Poland's governmental debt is modest by international standards (around 60 percent of GDP), so the macroeconomic consequences are bearable.

### Command and control

The previous government introduced two separate hierarchies, one for peacetime and one for war. The mechanisms for defining a state of war, and for appointing the combat commander, are imprecise; simplification and clarification are required.

- The General Staff was demoted to an advisory body and duplication with Ministry of National Defense departments has led to some confusion in threat assessment, in planning, and in specifying and procuring weapons and other equipment.
- Radical streamlining is needed, with a particular focus on eliminating redundant postings and positions.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Marek Kozubal, "SzeF BBN: Armię trzeba powiększyć," *Rzeczpospolita*, November 29, 2015, <http://www.rp.pl/Sluzby-mundurowe/311299948-Szef-BBN-Armie-trzeba-powiekszyc.html>.

<sup>10</sup> In this paper, the US Dollar has been assumed to be worth PLN 3.8.





Formation of aircraft including US, German, Polish, and Swedish jets over the Baltic Sea, June 9, 2016.  
*Photo credit: US Air Force/Flickr.*

Poland should ensure that all battlefield radios are digital and encrypted. Indeed, it should ensure that all Ministry and Armed Forces communications are secure, as many doubts on this matter persist. This can be done quickly and cheaply by outsourcing: contracting with NATO-member militaries and civilian companies to work in Poland, develop capabilities, and train Polish personnel.

### Urgent strategic measures

Poland's primary strategic deterrent is the American Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) cruise missiles, to be carried by Poland's forty-eight F-16s. Poland only contracted forty AGM-158As (JASSMs with a 370 km maximum range), with delivery starting late in 2016. A follow-on order for twenty-eight more is under way.

- Poland has been contemplating the Extended Range (900 km) JASSM cruise missile. If it places an order, it will be the first US ally to operate the Extended Range variant. Poland should expedite this procurement, mobilizing the support required in the US Congress.
- Poland should address its capacity for independent targeting of key weapons, JASSM missiles, and others. The JASSM missiles will initially be targeted using Italian satellites. By next year, Poland will have improved satellite

ground-station access and later use of NATO's five Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs or drones) based in Sicily.

- Poland should plan and train for the dispersal of the F-16s and weaponry to temporary, random airfields and roads in Poland itself, in the Baltics, and Romania.
- A related challenge is to raise the availability of the F-16s, reported to be at only 50 percent availability at any given time. This is partly Poland's responsibility, both via its Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) resources and also because pilot training is in flux (Leonardo M-346 Trainer aircraft, plus simulators etc., are being brought into service).
- However, the US producer of the F-16, Lockheed Martin, should redouble its support to facilitate adequate MRO resources to sustain Poland's Air Force.

The Naval Strike Missile (NSM) coastal missiles launched from two batteries of onshore mobile launchers serve primarily to interdict surface shipping, but can also have a strategic dimension. With a 185 km range, if properly targeted they can also destroy onshore targets, say in Kaliningrad.

- Poland should rapidly augment its targeting radars for longer distances.
- It should also order more of these NSM missiles and launcher. Its two batteries cost \$132 million in total. Incremental missiles were recently reported to cost somewhat over \$2 million each.

Deterrent, as well as tactical, potential is also offered by mobile Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (GMLRS). Poland has been deliberating a purchase of three GMLRS battalions (with perhaps eighteen launchers each) for over two years, and decisions are urgently needed.

- The Polish government should prioritize any mobile artillery rocket systems that can be procured and deployed quickly.
- A production model is under consideration whereby Poland's governmental defense industrial champion, known by the acronym PGZ, would be lead contractor, with Polish private firms and US providers in sub-contracting roles.

PGZ would lead the production in Poland of the Launcher-loader module, most missile components with assembly, the fire-control system, and the vehicle chassis. If decisions were needed quickly, Poland could supply rocket systems to Romania, Bulgaria, and other users. A package of 7 launchers, 360 GMLRS missiles, and 60 ATACMS, plus vehicles and fire-control systems, was recently reported to cost \$460 million.

- The industrial solution fits the government's plans for development. The PGZ-dominated defense sector is, correctly, highlighted as a major potential driver of growth.
- Financing of equipment and working capital for PGZ (and other Polish and non-Polish firms) could come from the new consolidated State Development Fund (its Polish acronym is PFR) under the Ministry of Economic Development. PFR is empowered to provide both debt and equity capital.

Finally, gaining a strategic cyber capability, both defensive and offensive, can be very cheap. The same applies to an information warfare capability.

- Poland should contract with NATO-member militaries or civilian firms to develop cyber capabilities and train Polish cyber troops, complementing measures already underway.

- Poland should develop an information warfare capability using social media and other channels, to counter Russia's active propaganda campaign, which uses overt methods and its numerous "trolls." Given the IT skills of Poland's population, plus its large number (more than one million) of Russian-speaking immigrants from Ukraine and elsewhere, both goals are achievable in a relatively short period.

### Other urgent procurement

Recent experience from Ukraine and elsewhere indicates that there are a number of areas where Poland and other allies require urgent procurement (or augmentations of currently-envisaged procurement).

- Combat in the Donbas has shown that Poland needs more tandem-warhead **Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGMs)** capable of penetrating reactive armor, and also anti-aircraft (including anti-helicopter) and anti-UAV missiles. The number of launchers and missiles in hand and currently envisaged is insufficient.
- Poland should seek to accelerate licensed production of the 1,000 Spike ATGMs, ordered from PGZ's Mesko plant for delivery in 2017-20. It currently holds 2,675 with 254 launchers, ostensibly 14.5 missiles per launcher.
- Some of its 670 Rosomak wheeled Infantry Fighting Vehicles can transport Spike-equipped troops (and 307 more Rosomaks are on order). If needed, Poland should order rival ATGM systems for faster delivery.

Also needed are more **Man-Portable Anti-aircraft Defense Systems (MANPADS)**, hand-held missiles) for close anti-aircraft and anti-UAV defense.

- Poland should immediately order an adequate number of the new Polish Piorun missiles, to supplement the approximately 2,000 Polish Grom missiles currently held (400 launchers, with only 5 missiles per launcher).
- Orders for missiles could be filled urgently via contract or licensed manufacturing in Poland or abroad. Financing of equipment and working capital could again come from PFR. Alternatively, crash orders for rival systems could be placed abroad.

Another critical requirement is for **attack helicopters** to replace the thirty-one aging Mi-24s.

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Procurement has been in process for more than two years and needs to be accelerated.

- The contract is for thirty-two helicopters and should be increased to approximately fifty-sixty. If making this procurement urgent means paring back ambitions for maximum local production, then other offsets for Polish industry could be negotiated.

Poland must also accelerate its **UAV programs** for reconnaissance and target acquisition.

- While some of the UAV programs appear well advanced, the numbers envisaged may be too low and require revision.
- There are quite satisfactory and economically-priced, domestic light UAV models and emergency production available via the PFR and other sources of finance.

### Urgent procurement: methods

The Ministry of National Defense's self-created internal rules and conservative culture impede decision-making. For critical requirements therefore, Poland should outsource procurement. This encompasses the negotiation of sophisticated contractual arrangements and financing with suppliers, an area of expertise most lacking among Polish officials. See below for further discussion of the need for radical changes in procurement practices.

As Poland has already taken second-hand materiel from the United States and Germany, residual prejudice against the stopgap use of second-hand equipment must be quashed. Second-hand or leased kit may be needed, pending the freeing-up of fully booked production lines, and stocks held by suppliers or allied forces should be tapped where needed and feasible.

Any EU Commission reservations regarding directed purchases (i.e., those that avoid protracted and leaky Europe-wide tenders) should be rejected by reference to Article 346 of the EU Treaty. Article 346 gives Poland full national sovereignty over vital defense matters.

### Territorial forces

Territorial forces are potentially a very useful addition to Poland's deterrence. A 35,000 strong force, consisting of seventeen brigades is initially envisaged.<sup>11</sup> Poland has over 400,000 people in

various paramilitary organizations, and many show an enthusiasm to join. Ultimately, the force could be expanded to 75-90,000, when money, training, and other resources permit.

According to Poland's National Centre for Strategic Studies (NCSS), three operating models are under consideration.

- The first is for **light infantry brigades** raised on the basis of the country's sixteen provinces. The six or eight larger cities could also ultimately raise a unit each. Based somewhat on the Swedish model, the brigades would be tasked with independent reconnaissance, delaying action, and behind-the-lines resistance. They would be equipped and structured as infantry.
- The second variant is closer to the US National Guard system: fully **mechanized forces** capable of reinforcing regular units. The equipment in this case would initially include redundant or obsolete Soviet-era armor and artillery, such as T-72 and derivative main battle tanks (Poland has some 580, of which 360 are in service); BWP Tracked infantry vehicles (Poland has about 1,300, with some 800 capable of use); and Gozdzik 122 mm tracked artillery.
- The third variant is for a **militia-type force**, lightly-armed units that, from the outset, would adopt a guerilla role along the lines planned by Estonia for its militia forces.

Of the three options, the first has the widest support among experts. It is optimal in terms of its low cost and speed of implementation. It adds most in terms of effectiveness, as light infantry are capable of being deployed against hybrid ("Green Men") incursions as well as complementing regular units in the event of full-scale penetration.

As for the second option, much of the obsolete equipment has limited capability in contemporary combat (the BWPs are equivalents of the Soviet Army's armored personnel carriers—BTRs), while training recruits in their use would be costly and time-consuming.

Poland should promptly initiate the raising of a territorial force on the light infantry model, but with a major proviso.

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the Plenipotentiary for the force appointed by the Minister of National Defense. On April 25, the Press chief for the Ministry spoke of seventeen Brigades initially (one province to have two) each between 1,500 to 2,500 strong.

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11 This number was quoted in Parliament on March 11, 2016 by

- A network of **all-weather shelters** should be constructed, with stores of food, fuel, weapons and ammunition, medical kit, and communications gear. Forests and other difficult terrain should be favored: Poland is about 30 percent forest. Wooded areas and post-glacial lakes predominate in the north and east near Kaliningrad, the “Suwalki Gap,” and Belarus.
- This shelter or bunker network, built with significant redundancies, would facilitate the deployment of “stay behind” units. Poland’s military tradition in forest-based guerrilla warfare dates back to the 1830s. More recently, forest units resisted the Germans and Soviets from 1939 to the 1950s.
- To the extent elements of the territorial force would assume a harrying guerrilla role, the operating model would be closer to that of the Estonian militia, itself based on the Forest Brothers legacy of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>12</sup>

To expedite embodiment of the territorial force, Poland should seek training assistance from NATO allies, both in light infantry and “irregular” techniques and to advise the new units and the Regular forces in ways to work together. There will be need for further rapid procurement, to encompass personal weapons, mortars, MANPADS, ATGMs, light UAVs, plus communications and other equipment. Some materiel in-store could be used, too, such as the very significant (ninety thousand) reserves of RPG-76s viable in an anti-armor role.

**Mobilization, logistics**

Poland should plan **mobilization** (including transport to northeastern Poland, the Baltics, and Romania) for both its Regular and Reserve units. Mobilization domestically of the new Territorials should also be on the agenda. All this will assist with deterrence at relatively low cost.

- Poland should **demonstrate readiness** by frequent exercises. Interchangeable and mutually redundant channels should be planned.

Railways, aircraft from the national carrier LOT and other sources, civilian road vehicles, and Polish and non-Polish ferries should all be included, in addition to the military’s own resources.

- Transport for the Territorials should include use of local civilian 4WD and other vehicles. Mobilization and transfers east from the center and west of the country should be planned and publicly rehearsed.

Radical change is needed to the archaic culture regarding MRO, which calls for most of it to be done by Poland’s military. Civilian contractors should be brought in to replace over-stretched or badly run military servicing units. This would free up manpower, reduce costs, and increase front-line availability.

Poland should seek training assistance from NATO allies, both in light infantry and “irregular” techniques and to advise the new units and the Regular forces in ways to work together.

**The Technical Modernization Plan**

The authorities have declared that they will review the Technical Modernization Plan (TMP). As the Deputy Minister of National Defense Tomasz Szatkowski stated earlier this year, “the capability acquisition programs appear to be a loose collection of the agendas of their respective services. The Ministry of National Defense should have a unit . . . capable of providing analytical advice similar to the work done by the Pentagon’s Office of Net Assessment, as well as its Cost Analysis Program Evaluation Office.”<sup>13</sup>

The Ministry appears to be considering significant changes to some of the individual Operational Plans (OPs) for platforms and capabilities, which comprise the TMP. It may be influenced by forecasts suggesting that Poland’s economy will allow for nearer to \$18 billion and not the originally mooted \$34 billion to be available in the period to 2022 (as noted, a further \$26 billion might notionally be allocated if the TMP were extended).

This paper cannot suggest actions in respect to the overall shape of the TMP and the individual OPs. It strongly recommends, however, that structural

<sup>12</sup> This term applies to anti-Communist guerrilla movements in the Baltic states, which resisted Soviet rule well into the 1950s.

<sup>13</sup> Tomasz Szatkowski, “Poland,” in *Alliance at Risk*, Atlantic Council, 2016, <http://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/nato-alliance-at-risk/>.

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matters be resolved as fast as possible, while allowing for future changes as circumstances evolve. It also urges that the totality of the economic picture be evaluated.

- The numbers above encompass neither the additional budgetary outlays nor *the long-term economic benefits*, which result from the policy that Poland's industry be involved in the TMP in a major way. This policy is entirely correct from a developmental perspective, but macroeconomic aspects, most surprisingly, are left out of the equation when Poland undertakes military expenditures.
- The Ministry should seek to evaluate the overall costs and benefits to the country's GDP and budget of the TMP as a whole and, when implementing them, of individual OPs. Given the lack of resources now available to the Ministry, private sector advisers skilled in macroeconomic modelling should be asked to do this.

### Reforms to procurement

In tandem with this review, the country should undertake a drastic overhaul of procurement methods. While some purchases have been made successfully, much of the TMP has become grossly bogged down since its initiation forty-two months ago. Systemic change is needed to move Poland's procurement toward greater efficiency.

This has a number of dimensions. Delays have been exacerbated by recurrent failings, such as: major realignments in the basic expectations of given capabilities, radical shifts in the desired technical parameters, redundant technical dialogues with suppliers, erroneous cost estimates, massive adjustments downwards in numbers of systems envisaged as more accurate cost numbers emerge, lack of or radical alterations in, concepts for Polish industry, and dead letter formal declarations (such as letters of intent) to suppliers and sponsor governments. The common theme, however, has been indecisiveness among all involved.

A key OP that now requires urgent action is **strategic missile defense**, by far the most significant OP by value. More than three years after commencement, there is still no single formal process and no sight of a resolution.

Another program, which has been long delayed, seeks to replace the BWP tracked Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs) with a **Universal Tracked Platform**. This would deliver both IFVs and Support Vehicles

(light 35 ton tanks with 120 mm cannon). The latter would replace the T-72s and derivatives and be capable of fighting alongside Poland's 247 Leopard 2 tanks. The maximum number of vehicles the Polish government would wish to procure is approximately one thousand.

- The obvious course would have been to buy a license from the provider of one of the well-tested extant solutions (such as BAE Systems or General Dynamics). This should be placed back on the agenda. Given the size of Poland's requirement, it could expect to gain the right to adapt and evolve the vehicles it produces and to export sub-systems and complete vehicles to third markets.
- Currently, Poland has set out to develop its own platform from scratch. They have scant experience of developing a tracked chassis and their Research & Development has been grossly underfunded.
- Additionally, the basic concept has periodically been questioned, with calls for the vehicles to operate in water. This requires lighter and thinner armor, which would sacrifice protection for the crews.
- No clear timetables for initial entries into service are therefore available (originally, it was 2018 and later, 2022). Meanwhile, as noted, the army's Soviet-era IFVs have become practically inoperable.

Another major program aims to procure **three submarines**.

- Discussions with potential suppliers began in 2008. Meandering views on key aspects have created successive retardations and no resolution seems imminent.

In particular, the purpose of the program has undergone a fundamental change. A long-range cruise missile capability was added in 2014, giving the vessels a core role as strategic deterrent, shifts in the structure of procurement ensued, with the missiles being added then consigned to a separate process.

A further set of unknowns is the role for Poland's industry. Various potential sources have developed plans for both local production and transitional arrangements.



Nine NATO nations took part in the Noble Jump Exercise in Poland, June 2015. *Photo credit: IGNC Münster/Flickr.*

- The Ministry of National Defense recently admitted that (as with the whole TMP) it has no methodology for gauging and evaluating the different economic impacts of the various industrial options, for the ministry itself and for Poland’s economy in the long term. It is unable, therefore, to build economics into the scoring and process for choosing among rival offers. This is a most concerning matter, given the likely values involved.
- Latterly, yet more uncertainty has been sown by official theorizing about joint procurement with Norway.

The causes of the delays to these and many other OPs start with planning and specifying, where changes of philosophy and perspective are almost pre-programmed. As regards implementation *per se*, there are four main aspects: the rulebook, the culture, manpower, and the political desire for local industrial involvement. The system for procurement must enable agile decision-making, empower individual responsibility, and ensure swift generation of recommendations.

- Poland’s overelaborate procurement procedures, including the unworkable “Offset

Law” passed in 2014, must be re-written wholesale.

- The Ministry’s culture should be ameliorated where possible: it currently militates against individual responsibility, and thus delays the presentation of clear recommendations.
- The Ministry’s teams (about two-hundred strong) are numerically too weak to cope with the complexities of the TMP.
- Ministerial staff should be encouraged to maintain everyday contacts with potential suppliers. At present, technical developments are poorly monitored (leading to those step-changes in desired capabilities).
- Also, initial purchase costs are habitually underestimated and through life costs inadequately assessed. As Deputy Minister Szatkowski put it, “the planning and acquisition processes should be geared more towards whole capability in the full-cycle approach.”<sup>14</sup>

Extra inefficiency and blockages come from that salutary political requirement that Polish firms

<sup>14</sup> Tomasz Szatkowski, “Poland,” in *Alliance at Risk*, Atlantic Council, op. cit.

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should benefit from various forms of cooperation with foreign suppliers: offset, joint production onshore, technology transfer, and so forth.

- The Ministry is hard put to cope with the industrial dimension and (as seen with the submarine program) cannot evaluate the long-term costs and benefits for the military and the Polish economy of alternative business solutions involving local industry.
- The state defense firm, PGZ, itself needs to gain expertise in many dimensions of doing business with global defense corporations.

Even with better rules, the manpower and knowledge needed for modern procurement in Poland must come directly or indirectly from private, civilian entities, capable of recruiting and paying to market standards. One suggestion is for the country to build a procurement agency, but this would also ultimately require outsourcing most detailed and transactional procurement work to the private sector.

In present circumstances only private-sector staff are able to optimize the complex military-technical requirements and the various industrial options. Importantly, too, private sector individuals are needed because they are best skilled and motivated to make prompt and clear recommendations to the political decision-makers.

Ultimately, though, the politicians must have the courage to demand clear recommendations, and then to take the necessary decisions.

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