

ONE FLANK, ONE THREAT, ONE PRESENCE

A Strategy for NATO's Eastern Flank



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Executive Summary

NATO's Eastern Flank stretches from the Arctic to the Caucasus and includes the Baltic Sea and Black Sea littorals. It is the longest and perhaps the most vulnerable sector of the Alliance and is exposed daily to military probing, subversion, disinformation, cyberattacks, and overt diplomatic and economic pressure by the Kremlin. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Alliance prioritized the Baltic Sea region — where several NATO Allies share a border with Russia — and deployed “enhanced Forward Presence” (eFP) Battle Groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland while settling for “tailored Forward Presence” (tFP) in the Black Sea region. This tiered approach to deterrence capabilities created a degree of incoherence along the Eastern Flank, in effect yielding the initiative in the Black Sea region to the Kremlin, putting strains on the cohesion of the Alliance, and exposing NATO to continued aggressive probing from Russia.

Building upon CEPA's previous work, “Securing the Suwałki Corridor: Strategy, Statecraft, Deterrence, and Defense,” this report lays out a comprehensive Eastern Flank strategy to address the threats and challenges in both the Baltic and Black Sea regions. In an era of global competition, and with the United States increasingly turning its attention toward a rising and aggressive China, potential sources of conflict with Russia must be addressed. The Alliance must also contend with the impact of

the coronavirus pandemic on NATO's defense budgets and cohesion, and in its relations with hostile powers. In order to curtail Moscow's revisionist objective to create a neo-imperial sphere of influence, NATO should remove any asymmetries in its current Eastern Flank posture by enhancing its role in the wider Black Sea region in all domains; strengthening deterrence and defense capabilities in the Baltic Sea region; and adopting a common threat assessment to enable the rapid political and military reactions necessary to deter Moscow's probing and outright aggression.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Build Coherence Along NATO's Eastern Flank

- ② **Raise the Priority of the Black Sea Region:** Develop a strategy for the greater Black Sea region that puts the Black Sea in the middle of the geostrategic map.
- ② **Upgrade “Tiered” Forward Presence:** Strengthen deterrence in all domains and declare all capabilities across the Eastern Flank as Forward Presence (FP).
- ② **Publicize Threat Analysis:** Build consensus towards a commonly-acknowledged potential threat to motivate NATO to improve Eastern Flank deterrence.

- ⑤ **Improve Situational Awareness:** Enhance Indications and Warning (I&W) to strengthen deterrence and improve crisis response.
- ⑤ **Improve Cyber Defense and Develop Emerging Technologies:** Enhance deterrence and defense against emergent, diverse dangers by investing in capabilities beyond conventional defenses.

Enhance Deterrence and Defense

- ⑤ **Enable Supreme Allied Commander Europe's (SACEUR) Area of Responsibility (AOR):** Harmonize the operational space and rear area with greater investment in transcontinental infrastructure, more frequent exercising, and improved military mobility.
- ⑤ **Enhance and Integrate Air and Missile Defenses (AMD):** AMD capabilities should be fully integrated into permanent Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) with exercises.

Gain Initiative in the Baltic Sea Region

- ⑤ **Improve Speed in Crisis Decisions:** Galvanize momentum for finally enabling NATO to make more rapid decisions under crisis conditions.
- ⑤ **Use Regional Formats and Organizations:** Contribute to Alliance cohesion and coherence through smaller efforts that improve capabilities and strengthen regional cooperation.
- ⑤ **Align U.S. Security Cooperation (SC) Programs, Procedures, and Personnel with U.S. Policies and Priorities:** The U.S. should align political-military assignments with Partner and Ally capabilities and maximize the speed of delivery of capabilities under SC programs.
- ⑤ **Adopt a More Sophisticated Approach to "Burden-Sharing" and 2%:** Enhance NATO coherence by counting contributions with clear and demonstrable military value in NATO's 2 percent defense spending target.
- ⑤ **Ensure a Resilient Fuel Supply System:** The Alliance should update the NATO Pipeline System (NPS) to address fuel supply infrastructure vulnerabilities, and capacity and redundancy limitations.
- ⑤ **Modernize Nuclear Capabilities:** Preempt the potential expiration of New START in 2021 by modernizing strategic capabilities now.
- ⑤ **Improve Mission Command:** Maximize the effects of new regional headquarters (HQs), units, and other organizations through greater synchronization.
- ⑤ **Encourage Regional Cooperation:** The U.S. should encourage Poland — the region's lynchpin Ally in a crisis — to deepen relationships with the Baltic states, Sweden, Finland, Germany, and Romania.
- ⑤ **Increase Polish Divisional Capabilities:** The U.S. should advance Poland's divisional operational capabilities by implementing a multiyear program of division interaction, training, and exercises.
- ⑤ **Counter Russian Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) Innovations:** Modernize and install into position Baltic Ally and Partner forces and capabilities to counter Russia's A2/AD capabilities.

Gain Initiative in the Black Sea Region

- ⑤ **Conduct and Improve Comprehensive Defense Planning:** Develop a more comprehensive plan for the defense of the Black Sea region, similar to the Baltic Sea region.

⑤ **Develop a Common Operating Picture (COP) for air, maritime, and land for the Greater Black Sea Region:** Enhancing maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) is part of a more comprehensive and shared picture of the region and should include a Black Sea Situational Awareness Center.

⑤ **Reinforce Romania:** As the center of gravity of NATO's regional deterrence, Romania needs significant military reinforcement by improving road and rail infrastructure and completing regional Allied Command and Control (C2) architecture.

⑤ **Improve Capabilities:** To gain the initiative in the Black Sea region, NATO should increase its regional C2 footprint.

⑤ **Create NATO A2/AD "Bubbles":** Strengthen the defense of the western Black Sea with unmanned maritime systems and ground-based systems in Romania including anti-ship missiles, drones, and rotary wing attack aviation.

⑤ **Conduct Maritime Policing Missions:** Develop a Black Sea Maritime Policing (BSMP) Mission with a non-littoral NATO naval presence every day of the year.

⑤ **Improve Romania's ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance) capabilities:** U.S. European

Command (EUCOM) should focus component military-to-military engagement strategies on helping Romania build ISTAR capacity by training and sustaining joint ISTAR specialists.

⑤ **Invest in Romania's Cyber Capabilities:** Support Romania's strong cybersecurity potential with greater U.S. partnerships and technology-sharing.

⑤ **Economic Development:** Invest in the economic potential of the Black Sea region in order to improve the regional security environment for Allies and Partners.

Support NATO Partners

⑤ **NATO Membership Action Plan for Georgia and Ukraine:** Washington should pursue a more assertive policy in support of NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia.

⑤ **Strengthen Ukraine's Capabilities:** The U.S. should provide more support to Ukraine's navy, Russian naval vessels should be banned from NATO ports, and Ukraine should produce or purchase the capabilities needed to blunt future Russian offensives.

⑤ **Strengthen Georgia's Capabilities:** NATO should intensify cooperation with Georgia under existing initiatives and support modernization and infrastructure improvements at Vaziani military airfield.

INTRODUCTION

NATO, the most successful alliance in history, responded with speed and decisiveness after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and its illegal annexation of Crimea. Successive NATO Summits in Wales (2014), Warsaw (2016), and Brussels (2018) empowered the Alliance to transition from assurance to deterrence along its Eastern Flank.¹ Over the last six years, NATO has prioritized the Baltic Sea region by steadily improving mission command structures and processes and deploying enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) Battle Groups to the region. This prioritization has continued, as SACEUR General Tod Wolters testified in February 2020: "Poland and the Baltics remain a strategic focal point for both NATO and Russia. For NATO, this is the region at the greatest risk of Russian aggression and miscalculated escalation due to historical grievances and geographic position."² In the Black Sea region, the Alliance has increased its presence in an effort to deter Moscow, assure Allies (Turkey, Romania, and Bulgaria), and assist Partners (Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia) with the establishment of tailored Forward Presence (tFP). NATO members in both regions have increased defense spending and the Alliance has implemented numerous other capabilities to deter Russia's aggression and — if deterrence fails — to respond.

Nonetheless, Russia's aggression along the Eastern Flank has continued since 2014. In the Baltic Sea region, the Kremlin continues to apply pressure. Russia is bolstering and modernizing forces in its Western Military District and is transitioning the Kaliningrad exclave from an Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) threat to a potential launching platform to support a limited ground invasion or attack against a NATO Ally. It emplaced Iskander-M

missile systems in Kaliningrad to "counter" the U.S. missile defense site in Redzikowo, Poland, and added 120 kilometer-range BM-30 Smerch rockets, S-400 air defense, and a tank regiment equipped with Russia's current premier tank, the T-72B3 (until the T-90 Armata is in full production).³ Russia continues aggressive air and maritime domain behavior against Allies and Partners and has threatened Denmark and Sweden with nuclear attack, rehearsing such a scenario against Sweden on more than one occasion.⁴

**“Russia’s
aggression along
NATO’s Eastern
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since 2014.”**

Russia probes the region with snap exercises and has made its *Zapad* and Union Shield exercises increasingly larger, more sophisticated, and more aggressive against Poland and the Baltic states. The lack of transparency in Russian military exercises, their proximity to large strike capabilities in Kaliningrad and in bases such as Pskov, constant disinformation, and the continued dependence of countries in the region on Russian energy supplies illustrate NATO's challenges in the region. The Kremlin's pressure on Belarus adds to the uncertainty:



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in 2020. “Meeting of the North Atlantic Council” by NATO under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

an estimated 1,500 Russian ground forces are based in Belarus now, but under the guise of an exercise like *Zapad 2021*, Russia could force Minsk to accept the long-term stationing of more troops, as NATO believed might occur after previous *Zapad* and Union Shield exercises.⁵ The development of the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant in western Belarus is also a source of significant concern for Lithuania.⁶

In the Black Sea region, NATO’s more *ad hoc* response to deterrence with tFP has led to increasingly provocative Kremlin behavior. Russia brazenly attacked Ukrainian Navy vessels in November 2018 and refused to comply with the decision of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea to release 24 Ukrainian sailors until a Ukrainian-Russian prisoner exchange on September 7, 2019. More than 200 “Kremlin hostages” are still being held captive by Russian authorities in Crimea and Russian-backed militants in

the Donbas region, while the war in eastern Ukraine — with over 14,000 casualties and 1.5 million displaced persons — has not abated.⁷

In many respects, the Black Sea region is of even greater strategic value to Moscow than the Baltic Sea region. Russia views the Black Sea as the “launching pad” for its destabilizing operations in Syria (which have contributed to hundreds of thousands of casualties in the Syrian civil war) and its naval operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is more willing to use force in the Black Sea region than anywhere else along the Eastern Flank — particularly against the three non-NATO littoral countries — as demonstrated by the ongoing militarization of Crimea and war in eastern Ukraine. It continues an almost three-decade occupation of approximately 12 percent of sovereign Moldovan territory in Transnistria, occupies more than 20 percent of Georgian territory in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and is

destabilizing the Western Balkans and South Caucasus while attempting to drive a wedge between Turkey and the rest of the Alliance.⁸ Russia's growing military capabilities in Syria have surrounded Turkey — NATO's largest member in the region — and its penetration and destabilization efforts also threaten Turkey with mass refugee inflows from Idlib, Syria as Moscow continues to support the regime of Bashar al-Assad.⁹ If unchecked, the Kremlin will continue to flaunt international law with illegitimate claims to broader territorial waters and an increased Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that threatens NATO members' legitimate interests.

While the combined militaries, economies, and populations of NATO member states dwarf those of the Russian Federation, effective deterrence against Kremlin aggression has little to do with math. It is about conveying to the Kremlin that the Alliance and its Partners have the demonstrated capability to inflict significant costs that are unacceptable to Russia in the event of military conflict, and the willingness to use that capability.

Several potential vulnerabilities still exist that could undermine NATO's deterrence in the Baltic and Black Sea regions, including: (1) a perceived lack of cohesion which invites a potential miscalculation by the Kremlin; (2) inadequate readiness levels of several Allied air, land, and maritime forces; (3) insufficient integration of air and missile defense (AMD) capabilities and exercises; (4) deficient military mobility, including infrastructure, movement C2, and legal and diplomatic authorities; (5) incomplete coordination of joint operations by mission command for each region, where Joint Forces Command (JFC) is too stretched; (6) shortcomings in interoperability with tactical field manuals, digital fires, and common

“Several potential vulnerabilities still exist that could undermine NATO's deterrence in the Baltic and Black Sea regions.”

operational planning; (7) insufficient munitions stockpiles; and (8) growing capability gaps between U.S. forces and other Allies, especially digital systems and medical technology.

NATO's asymmetrical response to threats in the Baltic and Black Sea regions can unintentionally send a signal to Moscow that it is possible to not get “caught” probing along its frontier. NATO should instead begin by viewing the Eastern Flank as: “one flank, one threat, one presence.” It needs coherence across these two regions with a balance of capabilities that present a united, unassailable front against Russia's assertiveness.

Building the coherence necessary for deterrence requires speed: (1) speed of recognition of subversive Russian operations, including non-military activities such as disinformation and public statements, as well



Source: “NATO: Ready for the Future: Adapting the Alliance (2018-2019),” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, November 29, 2019, p. 6.

as what Russian forces might be planning and implementing; (2) speed of decision at all echelons of the Alliance based on a common definition of aggression and what exceeds the Article 5 threshold; and (3) speed of assembly to prevent or respond to a potential crisis. Progress has already been made with increased rotational forces from across the Alliance, more prepositioned equipment, and significant increases in the quantity, sophistication, and scale of NATO exercises.

Effective deterrence also requires cohesion, which is a manifestation of the will of its members (see *Appendix II*). Such cohesion was seen in the overwhelming support for the United States’ withdrawal from the INF Treaty, the significant if uneven increases in

the defense spending of nearly every member state, and commitments to improve readiness and responsiveness.

While geopolitics is resurgent, the U.S. and NATO cannot focus only on the threat from Russia.¹⁰ China is challenging the international system in the Pacific, across Eurasia, and in Europe and beyond by undermining democratic systems, controlling critical sectors of national economies, blocking freedom of access and navigation, and in some cases posing existential threats. Meanwhile, the U.S. remains heavily engaged in the Middle East and Afghanistan — where NATO provides significant support — while the Alliance remains committed to its “360-degree approach to security” by paying necessary attention to challenges emanating

from the Middle East, North Africa, and in the Western Balkans. From the U.S. perspective, the dual great-power challenges of China and Russia and other threats around the globe increase the necessity of a coherent response to the security and defense challenges along NATO's Eastern Flank because the U.S. military is increasingly structured to respond to a major conflict in the Asia-Pacific.¹¹

This report assesses Russia's geopolitical motives, strategic objectives, and rising offensive capabilities in the Baltic-Black Sea theater; it examines NATO and EU military deterrents and defense postures; it considers how the combination of NATO's current limitations and Russia's regional militarization are positioning Moscow to further undermine the security and sovereignty of targeted states; and it offers meaningful, achievable, and sustainable recommendations for building Eastern Flank coherence. These recommendations can significantly improve deterrence and greatly reduce the likelihood of a tragic miscalculation by the Kremlin about NATO willpower, cohesion, and capabilities.

THE STRATEGIC SETTING

The inherent challenges of defending the Baltic and Black Sea regions are not new. Both littoral theaters have been frequent flash points for great-power rivalry across the centuries — particularly the Black Sea region due to its unique history and geography.

The “Straits Question” — who controls access to the Black Sea — has played a critical role for centuries. The Russian Empire first secured Turkish guarantees for the free passage of Tsarist merchant vessels through the Dardanelles in the 18th century. In 1833, Russia negotiated the closure of the Straits to all non-littoral military vessels under the

Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi.¹² The London Straits Convention (1841) re-opened the Black Sea to foreign warships during peacetime, and the Lausanne Convention (1923) extended that freedom to all warships during war and peace.¹³ In 1936, diplomatic maneuvering from Russia and Turkey resulted in the Montreux Convention (see *Appendix III*).¹⁴ Montreux remains in place today and recognizes Turkish sovereignty over the Straits, grants Ankara the authority to restrict military access, and prohibits non-littoral countries from possessing a permanent naval presence in the region.

The “Straits Question” remains a fundamental one: is the Black Sea part of international waters, a “Russia lake,” a “Turkish lake,” or

“The inherent challenges of *defending the Baltic and Black Sea regions are not new. Both littoral theaters have been frequent flash points for great-power rivalry across the centuries.*”



“Aerial view of the Bosphorus from north (bottom) to south (top), Istanbul at the southern end” by Adbar under CC BY-SA 3.0.

a “NATO lake?” The answer appears to be a “condominium arrangement” between Russia and Turkey, the countries with the region’s most powerful naval capabilities.¹⁵ In past decades, the Turkish navy was the preeminent military power in the region. Ankara still has final say over access under Montreux but Russia’s transformation of Crimea into an armed fortress — a “Kaliningrad of the south” — and its bolstered Black Sea Fleet have tilted the regional balance of forces in Moscow’s favor.

Throughout the region, and along NATO’s Eastern Flank more broadly, the core problem for NATO in fully deterring the Kremlin results from asymmetries in perceptions (Russia’s geographic “arc” vs. Western “silos”), aims (Russia’s revisionism vs. the Western status quo), and means (Russia’s constant probing and weakening of neighbors vs. limited Western defenses).

Among NATO members, there are different threat perceptions and a lack of consensus

concerning Alliance policy toward Russia. This was evident in the weak Western response to the Azov Sea annexation. In the Black Sea region, Romania is alarmed by Moscow's revisionism — like Poland and the Baltic states in the Baltic Sea region — while Turkey is much less concerned and is only likely to react strongly if Russia directly threatens its territory.

In terms of aims, Western powers seek to uphold the international order in which treaties are honored, borders are respected, and state sovereignty is upheld. In contrast, Putin's Kremlin is engaged in a comprehensive revisionist enterprise to restore Russia's control over nearby countries and to prevent them from freely joining international organizations such as NATO and the EU. Treaties, borders, and state sovereignty are persistently violated, and an incoherent response by NATO members further encourages Moscow and exacerbates fissures in the Alliance.

Western means also differ significantly from those of Russia. Many NATO leaders believed in a post-Cold War rapprochement with Moscow, calculating that the Alliance had little need to vigorously defend the Eastern Flank and could scale down defenses — until Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. NATO belatedly responded, declaring at the 2014 Wales Summit that the Alliance “will ensure that our Allied forces maintain the adequate readiness and coherence needed to conduct NATO's full range of missions, including deterring aggression against NATO Allies and demonstrating preparedness to defend NATO territory.”¹⁶ But the West is engaged in an essentially defensive operation against Moscow's multi-pronged offensives. It is no longer an effective option to try and secure Europe's entire eastern shoulder based on a defense-in-depth posture that places more than two-thirds of NATO military power in

the western half of the European continent. Measures beyond NATO's “tripwires” must be employed. The Alliance must also bolster naval forces in each region as they cannot readily move between the Baltic and Black Sea regions once committed and could more quickly reinforce either region from Norfolk, Virginia than circumnavigate Europe.

Without a change in response to the strategic context along the Eastern Flank, the Kremlin will continue to view gaps in Alliance coherence as exploitable vulnerabilities. There will be an elevated level of risk to NATO interests at both the theater and global/strategic levels. Theater risks include allowing a second annexation in the region that would further truncate and destabilize Ukraine, enable greater Russian militarization along the Eastern Flank, further undermine the Black Sea military balance, and threaten control over Romanian and Ukrainian offshore energy fields. The broader global/

“It is no longer an effective option to try and secure Europe's entire eastern shoulder based on a defense-in-depth posture.”

strategic risks of allowing further Russian military expansion along the Eastern Flank would include the pursuit of precedents in other contested regions such as the Eastern Mediterranean, Southeast Asia, and the Straits of Hormuz that would threaten the free passage of merchant shipping through international waters as well as NATO naval operations.

RUSSIA'S CHALLENGE TO THE ALLIANCE

Moscow looks coherently at its Western Flank and has a long-term strategy for this extensive zone. Above all, it seeks to restore its own predominance, to limit NATO's presence, and to use the Baltic and Black Sea regions for force projection into nearby theaters, including Southeast and Central Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Moscow also envisages

establishing an operational corridor for moving its military forces between the Caspian, Azov, Black, and Adriatic Seas facilitated by a mixture of captured territories, proxy regions, and Russian allies. Analysts estimate Russia's military expenditure to be in the range of \$150-180bn annually, or about four percent of GDP, with a much higher percentage dedicated to procurement, research, and development than in Western defense budgets.¹⁷ With conscripts making up almost a third of its military, Russia spends much less on maintaining its military than its Western counterparts. This level of expenditure has been largely unaffected by Western sanctions, but in the wake of covid-19 and the collapse of oil revenues, it is unclear whether Russian can sustain it.

Russia's Capabilities in the Baltic Region: In the Baltic littoral, Moscow has demonstrated an alarming growth in military power on land, air, and sea. In Russia's Baltic exclave



"Before the meeting of the Defence Ministry Board, the President visited an exhibition of advanced weapons and equipment" in 2019 by Kremlin under CC BY 4.0.

Armed Forces of Russia

Type	2010	2020
Total Active	1,027,000	900,000
Army	360,000	280,000
Airborne	35,000	45,000
Navy	142,000	150,000
Air	160,000	165,000
Strategic Deterrent Forces	80,000	50,000
Special Operations Forces	N/A	1,000
Railway Troops	N/A	29,000
Command and Support	250,000	180,000
Paramilitary	449,000	554,000
Reserve	2,000,000	2,000,000

Sources: “Chapter Four: Russia” in IISS, *The Military Balance 2010*, p. 222; and “Chapter Five: Russia and Eurasia” in IISS, *The Military Balance 2020*, p. 194.

of Kaliningrad, the Kremlin is undertaking an aggressive buildup of naval, air, land, and long-range strike capabilities. Nested inside of NATO territory, Kaliningrad is a heavily fortified platform for conducting provocative military exercises, simulating attacks on NATO members, demonstrating disregard for the airspace of neighbors, violating the sovereign territorial waters of Baltic littoral states, and extending Russia’s strategic reach via A2/AD capabilities in a broad radius within the region. Russia’s S-400 missile defense system — a key component of its A2/AD capability — has a maximum range of 250 kilometers, although its effective range in combat would be significantly shorter.¹⁸

During its *Zapad* exercise in 2017, Russia positioned nearly 100,000 forces in the Baltic region for a simulated war against the West.¹⁹ Russian forces have rehearsed nuclear strikes on Poland and Sweden, threatened Finnish research vessels in the Baltic Sea, and frequently violate the airspace of neighbors. In July 2017, Moscow conducted military

exercises in the Pskov region (adjacent to Estonia and Latvia) with 2,500 soldiers from its Airborne Forces.²⁰ Later that month, Russian and Chinese vessels participated in joint exercises on the Baltic Sea for the first time; and Russia’s Naval Day Parade featured 40 vessels from the Baltic and Northern fleets, including new amphibious landing ships and frigates.

Russia conducted a three-day missile test in April 2018 just outside of NATO territorial waters near Latvia. Sweden and Poland were also on high alert after receiving notification of live-fire exercises in the Baltic Sea from the Russian Ministry of Defense. Latvia was forced to impose a partial shutdown of civilian airspace while Sweden rerouted flights over the course of the operation. Russian exercises continued in 2019 with Union Shield, a joint exercise with Belarus in Russia’s Western Military District.

Moscow’s Baltic maritime excursions have also been used in an attempt to reverse regional energy independence from the Kremlin.

Russian naval exercises in the Baltic Sea in the spring of 2015 disrupted the installment of a high-voltage undersea power line between Sweden and Lithuania. Though the lines were eventually completed, Russia's pressure on states in the region has not relented. NATO also began expressing its concern about Russia's increased undersea activity in the entire North Atlantic region, particularly its threat to undersea cables designed to bolster transatlantic communications capabilities. At the same time, Moscow continues to construct the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) pipeline under the Baltic Sea. This would not only enhance the Kremlin's use of energy supplies as a political weapon against the Alliance and partner states such as Ukraine, but also provide pretexts for deploying Russia's military to "protect" critical infrastructure.

Over the past two decades, Russia's defense industry has also developed, tested, and fielded dozens of Electronic Warfare (EW) systems to disrupt and suppress a wide range of adversary land-, air-, and space-based communications and electronic signals. Russian technologies target signals emitted and used by aircraft, cruise missiles, radars, rockets, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Russia's military is currently fielding the Palantin EW system in its Western Military District. This system is designed to suppress an adversary's communications and serve as an electronic intelligence (ELINT) platform. Norway's Intelligence Service charged Moscow with disrupting its Global Positioning System (GPS) signals during NATO Trident Juncture drills in October-November 2018. Oslo claimed that Russian forces on the Kola Peninsula were behind the GPS interference. NATO considers signal jamming a growing threat to the Alliance. Russian special forces were also reportedly found operating in Norwegian territory in September 2019.

The significant Russian AMD capabilities in Kaliningrad and its ability to wage EW from there give the Kremlin the capability to make the operation of air and naval forces in the Baltic Sea extremely difficult for NATO and its partners. This would be particularly important in the event of a short but intensive land attack on Lithuania near the Suwałki Corridor or into southeastern Latvia — although NATO would almost certainly have some advance warning, as Russia would need to forward-deploy troops and equipment because of the low readiness of its motor rifle and tank units.

“The significant Russian AMD capabilities in Kaliningrad and its ability to wage EW from there give the Kremlin the capability to make the operation of air and naval forces in the Baltic Sea extremely difficult.”

Russia's Capabilities in the Black Sea Region:

Since 2014, Russia has embarked on a major military buildup on the Crimean peninsula and the northeastern Black Sea. This “fortressing” of Crimea and its surrounding maritime spaces has immediate consequences for Ukraine and littoral NATO members Romania and Bulgaria. Not least, Russian forces now surpass the naval, air, and long-range strike capabilities of other Black Sea littoral states, including Turkey. Russian ground troops exceed 11,000 in Ukraine’s Donbas and 28,000 in Crimea.²¹ After the Soviet collapse, the Black Sea Fleet underwent two decades of steep decline, operating only a handful of aging vessels. In 2015, after six years of military reform, Moscow began placing new, advanced surface combatants and submarines in the Black Sea Fleet, alongside a massive shore-based buildup of air defense and coastal defense cruise missiles.²² A more capable and confident fleet steamed into the Mediterranean to support Russia’s successful intervention to prop up the Assad regime in Syria.

In the north Black Sea, Russia is growing more assertive and expansive. In 2018, the Kremlin initiated a “soft” annexation of Ukraine’s previously uncontested maritime zone in the Sea of Azov while controlling movement between the Azov and Black Seas through the Kerch Strait chokepoint. This passage represents Ukraine’s only maritime link between international waters and the ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk. Under international law, Ukraine should enjoy free travel through this narrow channel. However, the Russian navy has imposed a unilateral cordon across the passage, stopping and detaining Ukrainian and foreign ships. For Russia, this is a low-cost, economy-of-force operation which requires only a handful of ships. At the tactical level, this Azov cordon diverts Ukrainian military

resources away from the war over the Donbas region. In strategic terms, the closure of the Kerch Strait cuts off Ukraine’s steel exporting ports to international shipping. That trade is vital because it generates hard currency that Ukraine needs to sustain its defensive war against Russia.

In Crimea, Russia has established a “self-sufficient military formation” consisting of an air defense division, an aviation division, a naval base, and an army corps. It has shifted some of its most advanced anti-air and anti-surface weapons to Crimea to reinforce its naval forces. This fusion of shore- and sea-based capabilities is the fulcrum upon which the maritime balance in the Black Sea has tipped in Russia’s favor. The shore-based force is key to Russian military superiority. The seizure of Crimea has allowed Moscow to use long-range, land-based anti-air and anti-ship systems, such as S-400 SAM and Bastion-P coastal defense cruise missile systems, to cover virtually all of the Black Sea. Moscow has also emphasized fleet development as an instrument of regional power and has transformed the focus of Crimea’s economy from tourism to defense, even incorporating Crimean enterprises into mainland Russian defense companies. What was once a Russian naval backwater is now the centerpiece of Moscow’s power projection into the Mediterranean.

The Black Sea Fleet is the most operationally and tactically capable of Russia’s four major fleets.²³ Its modernization includes arming warships with high-tech, long-range Kalibr cruise missile systems. This not only extends Russia’s Black Sea A2/AD umbrella but also makes it mobile and offers the Russian navy unprecedented long-range missile capabilities that threaten the entire Black Sea littoral. Moscow is adding six new Admiral

Grigorovich-class guided missile frigates, various classes of missile corvettes, and six Kilo 636.3 submarines. In the summer of 2018, the Russian navy transferred five ships from the Caspian Flotilla to the Azov Sea that could be deployed to block Ukrainian ports, claim Ukraine's territorial water, and support the proxy insurgency in Donetsk.

Crimea has become a platform for various Russian missile systems. Moscow's new shore-based A2/AD umbrella in Crimea includes potentially WMD-capable tactical ballistic missiles, as well as long-range anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles. The Bastion mobile coast defense missile system, armed with supersonic P-800 Oniks anti-ship missiles, is scheduled for deployment in Crimea in 2020.

In February 2019, Moscow announced the deployment of Tupolev Tu-22M3 Backfire bombers to the Gvardeyskoye airbase in Crimea allegedly to counter U.S. Navy Aegis

Ashore missile defense installations in Poland and Romania. These strategic bombers are capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Aegis Ashore is based on radar and missile systems contained aboard American guided-missile destroyers and cruisers but configured as a ground installation. The sites in Romania and Poland can detect, track, target, and launch interceptors to counter a ballistic missile threat coming from the Middle East. The Aegis Ashore system was part of the Obama administration's European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) to missile defense designed to interdict small numbers of missiles from Iran and Syria; if modified, it could defend against Russian missile threats.

An additional element is Russia's Caspian Flotilla, which has significantly expanded its capabilities and will be based in Kaspiysk, Dagestan, much closer to the Azerbaijan and Iran borders than before.²⁴ It will have enhanced air support to more effectively project power



"Joint exercises of Northern and Black Sea fleets" in 2020 by Kremlin under CC BY 4.0.



Adapted from © Mapbox 2020.

and dispatch forces to adjacent regions. Ships from the Flotilla have been deployed in the Sea of Azov after passing through the Don-Volga Canal. Russia is planning to expand its internal canal system between the Caspian and Azov, enabling it to rapidly shift forces from one theater to the other. Russia's Caspian fleet possesses more firepower than the navies of any of the other Caspian littoral countries, and has been used as a strategic missile platform, firing Kalibr missiles into Syria in 2015.²⁵

The Russian navy protects Moscow's appropriation of Ukraine's gas resources following the capture of Crimea and the control of nearby maritime energy fields. It also has the ability to launch naval bombardments both from the Black and Azov Seas, enable amphibious attacks against ground targets, and impose an economic blockade. A massive increase in army, navy, and air deployments in

Crimea and dual-use missiles that can carry either conventional or nuclear warheads threaten a much wider region. For instance, overflights by Russian fighters in Romanian airspace and provocative incursions by the Russian navy into Romanian waters have intensified since 2018. Moscow can threaten Romania if it attempts to repel an intruder from NATO's air and maritime domains.

Along the eastern littoral, about 10,000 Russian troops are stationed in Abkhazia and South Ossetia — two occupied regions that form nearly 20 percent of Georgian territory. There is constant pressure along the perimeters between these occupied territories and the rest of Georgia. "Borderization" remains an ongoing direct threat to Georgia's integrity as Russian forces continue to annex its territories by surreptitiously moving border posts month by month. Moscow also maintains two bases

in Armenia and manipulates disputes between all three South Caucasus states, including the unresolved conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over occupied Azerbaijani territories, including Nagorno-Karabakh, in a classic example of “divide and rule.”

Russia is bolstering its military contingents in Armenia and occupied territories of Georgia.²⁶ Moscow stages regular exercises in the region and deploys various new weapons including surface-to-air missiles. The growing military presence not only enables Russia to control the sky over Georgia, but it also threatens the broader Black Sea region. Moscow is increasing its military contingent at its base in Gyumri, Armenia. The 102nd base in Armenia, the 7th base in Abkhazia, and the 4th base in South Ossetia are all integrated into the Southern Military Command of Russia's Armed Forces. Moscow also continues to conduct cyberattacks against Georgia in attempts to disable Tbilisi's financial and commercial infrastructure.

Moscow has tested several additional means of exerting pressure in the Black Sea, including the periodic blocking of maritime areas on the pretext of conducting military exercises. Every Black Sea littoral state has the legal right to conduct military drills, including live-fire exercises. However, international law stipulates that the government must first send an official request to international maritime services. In the summer of 2019, Russia blocked several maritime zones without having filed any such requests, thus interrupting navigation and obstructing international shipping to and from Georgia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine. The objective of such blockades, which often coincide with regional NATO exercises, is to demonstrate that Moscow can disrupt the commerce of neighboring NATO allies and partners.

Moscow's Revisionist Objectives: As enclosed maritime spaces, Europe's littoral flanks expose Baltic and Black Sea countries to Russia's great-power maneuvers. They form integrated parts of Moscow's “Eurasian project” designed to subordinate neighboring states and diminish NATO's effectiveness. They simultaneously act as “expressways” for projecting energy resources, political influence, and military power beyond Russia's immediate shores into Europe.

Russia's “hard” and “soft” subversive powers are interlinked. Moscow's pipeline politics involves cutting beneficial deals with key NATO Allies and testing Allied unity in the energy domain. Undersea, the Nord Stream 1 (NS1)

“As enclosed maritime spaces, Europe's littoral flanks expose *Baltic and Black Sea countries to Russia's great-power maneuvers.*”

natural gas pipeline physically connects Russia to Germany via gas transit under the Baltic Sea. Presidents Putin and Erdoğan heralded the Turk Stream 1 pipeline in January 2020, further isolating Ukraine and threatening Allied cohesion. Still more pipelines are either under construction (NS2 in the Baltic) or planned (Turk Stream 2 in the Black Sea). Moscow is promoting the Turk Stream 2 gas pipeline to cement the dependence of Southeast European states and strangle Ukraine as a gas transit country. America's regional allies are anxious that under the cover of "protecting" its energy infrastructure, these pipeline links will serve as a pretext for the Kremlin to exert greater physical control over maritime navigational routes. For instance, in Bulgaria, Russia has an energy monopoly in gas supplies, conducts a large-scale and intensive propaganda campaign, and exerts significant political influence. In effect, energy deals

with Russia degrade the bedrock of political solidarity upon which NATO was founded.²⁷

Energy, transportation, and infrastructure across the Black Sea are crucial for NATO security. Moscow is steadily blocking Ukraine's Black Sea shoreline which Putin has defined as Russia's "Pricernomorje," (Next to Black Sea) a more restricted version of the "Novorossyia" (New Russia) project to divide Ukraine. Through its control of the Kerch Strait, Ukraine's transport corridors are hampered. Not only has the export capacity of the Ukrainian ports of Berdyansk and Mariupol decreased, delays caused by long cargo inspections also increase commercial and financial risks and favor the competitor, Russia's Novorosiysk port, which is expanding its capacity. Moscow also seeks to control the Giurgiulești port in Moldova — previously, it attempted to buy the port through Russian or



"At the concert marking Defender of the Fatherland Day" in 2020 by Kremlin under CC BY 4.0.

pro-Russian investors — already has access to a strategic airport, a former Soviet airbase in Transnistria, and controls the Chişinău airport through Avia Invest. These could be used to provide lines of communication to support Russian military offensives in the region towards, for example, Odesa. In addition to controlling the Azov Sea, Moscow has taken over several drilling platforms that are part of Ukraine's critical infrastructure and installed radars and military capabilities on them. It has abused international law by running military exercises near international shipping routes, making large areas of the Black Sea off limits, while placing pressure on shippers and threatening the entire transportation corridor in the northern part of the Black Sea.

Russia's pressure and influence have undermined two other major strategic energy and infrastructure projects — the Neptun Deep gas project in Romania's EEZ and Georgia's Anaklia Deep-Sea Port.²⁸ The postponement of Anaklia's construction is delaying the development of Georgia's infrastructure, including roads, railroads, logistical centers, and airport. Such setbacks underscore that NATO needs to develop a strategy to ensure free commercial movement and the security of the maritime energy infrastructure and transport corridors in the entire Black Sea littoral.

The Black Sea region is growing in geo-economic importance, with Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Romania planning to host transit routes for Chinese, Central Asian, and European goods crossing between Europe and Central Asia. But Moscow is growing increasingly alarmed by the prospect that rail, road, and shipping corridors will bypass Russia and push the country to the periphery of Eurasian trading networks. The

proposed deep-water port of Anaklia — which would improve the economic importance of Georgia to Western Europe by mobilizing European investment and focusing attention on its security — is a valuable example where Russian disinformation campaigns and corrupt influence create obstacles to development. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called on Georgia to move forward with the project because its development would improve Georgia's economic and security viability.²⁹

Moscow views the wider Black Sea region as more strategically valuable than the Baltic Sea region in projecting its power into nearby regions. It is evidently more willing to use force in the Black Sea region than anywhere else along the Eastern Flank, particularly against the three non-NATO littoral countries in order to expand Russia's zone of influence and prevent them from freely choosing their political and security alliances.

“Moscow views the wider Black Sea region as *more strategically valuable than the Baltic Sea region.*”



Transnistria's law enforcement in 2016. "PMR Internal troops during the 25th year of independence parade" by Trebik 1407 under CC BY-SA 4.0.

In Moldova, Russian troops continue an almost three-decade charade of "peacekeeping" in Moldova's breakaway Transnistria region. This sends a clear message to Chișinău and the West that the sovereignty and integrity of Moldova is ultimately determined by Moscow. Joint exercises with Russian and Transnistrian separatist forces increased from 48 in 2016 to over 200 already in 2020, including provocative exercises simulating an attack in the direction of the Moldovan capital across the Nistru River.³⁰ Borrowing tactics from the 2014 invasion of Ukraine, Russian forces use unmarked military vehicles in the exercises.³¹

Russia possesses significant leverage over Moldova, not only in Transnistria but also with the autonomous region of Găgăuzia, which has a staunchly pro-Moscow government. It can thereby threaten Moldova's territorial integrity

and blunt its aspirations for Western integration. Moldova is dependent on Transnistria for its electricity supplies and Transnistria itself is fully dependent on Russian gas. Moldova is also trapped in intense competition between pro-European and pro-Russian parties that paralyze its reform process. Russia has significant influence in the information domain, with the majority of media outlets using the Russian language. The EU and NATO can help Chișinău to reduce Moscow's influence but needs to be careful not to reinforce Russia's propaganda narrative that Romania is seeking to absorb Moldova.

Russia's military foothold includes Tiraspol airport, a former strategic Soviet airbase modernized in 2012-2013 to receive IL-86 aircraft provides Russia with a regional power projection platform capable of handling its

largest military transport aircraft. The 14,000-15,000 Transnistrian separatists are force multipliers for Moscow in the region. The separatists are integrated into Russian military structures, led by Russian officers, and trained, funded, and equipped by Moscow. They are engaged in illegal weapons transfers to Iran, Syria, and Sudan.³² A 40,000-ton cache of Soviet-era arms and ammunition remains in Transnistria, is shoddily protected, and has the potential for widespread destruction.³³ Transnistria could be used in the event that Moscow seeks to open a southwestern front in the war against Ukraine.

In the case of Ukraine, even without firing a shot Moscow could economically strangle a sizable portion of southeastern Ukraine and trigger additional domestic instabilities. Ukraine's economic and geostrategic interests in the Azov Sea are premised on two major transportation pivots: Berdyansk and Mariupol. Prior to 2014, both of these Azov Sea ports handled almost a quarter of Ukraine's maritime exports. Current output has plummeted — despite an annual capacity of 17 million tons, the actual export volumes are currently 5.8 million — primarily because of Russia's detentions of vessels and the proximity to the Donbas war zone.³⁴ Another limiting factor is the height of Russia's Kerch Strait Bridge (connecting occupied Crimea to the Russian mainland), which has resulted in Mariupol losing up to 30 percent of its shipping fleet and breaching contracts with foreign customers, including the United States.

To reinforce its revisionist objectives, Moscow is engaged in continuous disinformation and influence operations to convince its adversaries that war is not in their interest and that NATO is untrustworthy.³⁵ For instance, the Kremlin depicts the governments of the three

Baltic states as U.S. proxies driven toward war with Russia — an obvious attempt to weaken their political resolve and reject NATO integration. Moscow aims to soften up its opponent through disinformation campaigns and by stirring political, social, ethnic, and inter-state disputes.

Disinformation and Cyber Offensives:

Kremlin anti-Western propaganda offensives are intended to paralyze democratic systems, fracture international institutions, and incapacitate national decision-making, particularly in countries that may challenge

“ In the case of Ukraine, even without firing a single shot *Moscow could economically strangle a sizable portion of southeastern Ukraine* and trigger additional domestic instabilities. ”

Russia's neo-imperial aspirations. While Soviet communism had a unitary ideological message in the global competition between two distinct socio-economic systems, Moscow's contemporary narratives are "multi-ideological." Its messages are tailored and adapted for maximum impact among a diversity of targeted audiences. They include at least three major message clusters: traditionalist, progressivist, and sovereigntist.

The "traditionalist" narrative is constructed to appeal to anti-liberal, Euro-skeptic, social conservative, and conventional religious constituencies in which Russia poses as the defender of traditional values. Conversely, EU and U.S. leaders and institutions are depicted as immoral, deviant, and decadent. The principles of NATO and EU integration are condemned as being in direct confrontation with traditional social, familial, and religious values. Whereas the Soviet Union proclaimed itself as a revolutionary social force, Russia now poses to conservatives as a counter-revolutionary power that cherishes stability, continuity, faith, and tradition.

A second Kremlin-generated narrative is "progressivist." It is a more direct successor to Soviet propaganda and crafted to appeal to Western radical leftist, militant pacifist, anti-globalist, anti-militarist, anti-capitalist, and radical environmentalist movements. It depicts Russia as a staunch bastion of anti-imperialism and an internationalist vanguard against American global hegemony and corporatist capitalism.

A third distinct Kremlin narrative bundle is the "sovereigntist." It focuses on the promotion of ethnic nationalism, regionalist separatism, xenophobic racism, protectionist nativism, and state sovereignty. Propaganda campaigns are

designed to fracture Western democracies by promoting domestic secessionist movements and inter-ethnic or inter-regional rivalries, while urging the dismantling of multi-national institutions such as NATO that allegedly threaten state independence.

Kremlin-linked oligarchs fund organizations and campaigns in Western societies that reinforce Moscow's narratives. A number of ultra-rightists and populist parties have reportedly received loans, public relations (PR) assistance, and campaign funds from Russian sources. In return, party leaders applaud Russia's foreign policy and heap praise on Putin as a strong and effective leader. Moscow has also funded or publicized ultra-leftist parties that can help challenge the policies of Western governments. They primarily target the younger generation, which is more inclined to participate in anti-government protests, or maneuver green movements and other causes to promote Kremlin interests. Russian institutes also support ethno-nationalist, separatist, and pro-sovereignty movements in Europe and invite them to conferences in Moscow. Such gatherings enable Russian officials to showcase and legitimize separatist groups in Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova while excluding autonomist, regionalist, and separatist organizations active in the Russian Federation.

As Western economies become increasingly digitalized, the vulnerabilities of cyber systems are probed and penetrated by hostile actors. Russia's cyber policies have become particularly aggressive, testing the weaknesses of Western societies. U.S. critical infrastructure, including energy grids, industrial systems, and communications, remain vulnerable to Russian cyber-attacks, together with biometric data, election systems, and

government services.³⁶ The EU's increased dependence on Fifth Generation Wireless Communications (5G) infrastructure will also generate greater vulnerability to attack. Russia is also developing military cyber capabilities and space-based assets have become a particular area of concern for NATO, which relies heavily on space capabilities including positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT), intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), missile defense, communications, and space situational awareness (SSA).³⁷

Along NATO's Eastern Flank, Moscow continues to play the ethnic card. In the Baltic states, Moscow tries to manipulate Russian-speaking minorities against the central government while its propaganda offensives focus on attacking national histories and delegitimizing the resistance of the Baltic states to Soviet rule.

It also fosters inter-ethnic disputes, engages in cyber-attacks against strategic sectors, twists laws and treaties to assert new territorial claims, and interferes in the politics of targeted countries. In effect, the Kremlin is treating the Baltic and Black Sea regions as proprietary theaters, seeking to widen the gap between its influence and Western reactions.

Conflict Scenarios: Russia's subversion, probing, and interventions along the Eastern Flank could develop into several outright conflicts along NATO's Eastern Flank. It is for this reason that the Alliance needs to make preparations — whether to deter escalation, defuse an armed conflict, or defend against outright military confrontation. The Kremlin invariably calculates how risky its interventions are likely to be in terms of expended resources and manpower, the degree of local resistance,



"The Main Naval Parade" in 2018 by Kremlin under CC BY 4.0.

and the prospects for international sanctions. Nonetheless, it may also miscalculate and overreach in its ambitions. NATO contingency plans should be developed for at least six conflict scenarios along the Eastern Flank, with the goal of inflicting severe costs for Moscow in three crucial domains: military resources, geopolitical effectiveness, and international sanctions.

1. Ukraine: In addition to seizing or blocking the Ukrainian ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk on the Azov Sea, the Russian navy can blockade other major Ukrainian ports along the Black Sea, including the key outlet of Odesa, while using Crimea as a bridgehead for its operations along the entire Ukrainian coastline. Having built up its maritime capabilities over several years, Moscow is in a much stronger position than NATO to defend its gains and ward off any countermeasures by NATO forces to open sea-lanes and unblock Ukrainian ports. The impact of a long-term blockade would be to strangle Ukraine economically, promote social instability, and weaken the government in Kyiv. Without strong Western support, Ukraine would become more vulnerable in conceding to Russia's territorial and political demands.

2. Baltic States: Moscow could engineer a provocation involving ethnic Russians or Russian speakers in Estonia or Latvia in order to justify a direct incursion on behalf of allegedly endangered national minorities. Undercover Russian agents and disinformation outlets could provoke or inject separatism, similar to the Ukrainian Donbas model, in Russian-speaking areas of eastern Estonia (Narva) and eastern Latvia (Latgale) or even stir ethnic conflicts in major cities such as Riga and Tallinn. Several subversive scenarios could be manufactured simultaneously in one or both countries and precipitate a direct challenge

to NATO. This would test whether there is sufficient Alliance cohesion to subdue Russian proxies and whether this would precipitate a full-scale conflict with Moscow.

3. Belarus: A number of developments could destabilize Belarus and increase tensions along NATO's Eastern Flank. Moscow may seek to engineer the replacement of Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka in favor of a pro-Moscow loyalist if links between Minsk and Western governments and institutions are intensified and Belarus is seen to be veering outside of Russia's orbit. President Putin can also push toward a closer union between Russia and Belarus and thereby provide additional pretext — the Russian Constitutional Court's ruling has already removed obstacles to Putin remaining in power through 2036 — for another term in office as president of a new state after his current term expires in 2024.³⁸

“NATO contingency plans should be developed for at least six conflict scenarios along the Eastern Flank.”



“S-400” in 2017 by Dmitriy Fomin under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Such moves by the Kremlin could precipitate resistance within Belarusian society and lead to a more comprehensive Russian intervention, including a military one.

Moscow could also use the pretext of an increase in NATO forces in the Baltic states and Poland to claim that its military intervention in Belarus is intended to defend the country from an imminent Alliance attack. The permanent presence of Russian troops in Belarus, particularly along its western borders, would be viewed as a direct threat to Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Latvia. It would raise the prospects that Moscow could engineer incidents in order to close the Suwałki Corridor and link up its forces in Belarus with those in Kaliningrad. Having incorporated Belarus into a single state, Moscow would also be in a more favorable position to threaten and attack Ukraine from the north as well as the east. The Russian-built Astravets Nuclear Power

Plant in Belarus places Vilnius in potential danger of a nuclear disaster, undermines the advances Minsk has made in cooperating with the EU, creates a bilateral dispute between a NATO member and a purported Russian ally, and enables Moscow to prolong energy dependence among states bordering NATO's Eastern Flank.³⁹ Another dual reactor plant has been proposed in Kaliningrad, which would wedge Lithuania and other regional Allies between potentially unsafe nuclear reactors.

4. Transnistria: The Moscow-backed Transnistrian separatist region between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine could be used to precipitate a conflict within Moldova or with Ukraine or Romania. Moscow's disinformation attacks have claimed that Kyiv threatens Transnistria's existence by preparing to assist Romania in annexing Moldova. Concurrently, Russia's anti-Romanian propaganda claims that Bucharest seeks to capture Moldova together

with pockets of territory in Ukraine, including northern Bukovina, southern Bessarabia, and several islands in the Danube Delta. Moscow's purpose is to stir uncertainty and conflict between Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine and lay the groundwork for possible intervention to defend Transnistria or Russian-speaking populations in Moldova and Ukraine.

Assertions that Kyiv is a direct threat to Transnistria can justify a Russian territorial offensive that would enable Transnistria to gain a narrow Black Sea coastline from Ukraine. Moscow can also support Găgăuz separatism in southern Moldova and Danubian Ukraine as a pretext to emplace its troops or proxies in these territories. Concurrently, it may threaten both Romania and Ukraine with partition by backing the creation of a Budjak Republic in southern Moldova to include Găgăuzia in Moldova and parts of Odesa *oblast* in Ukraine that contain Moldovan, Găgăuz, Russian, and Bulgarian minorities. The Kremlin would position itself as their alleged protector both diplomatically and militarily.

5. South Caucasus: Moscow can provoke conflicts in the South Caucasus to increase its influence and prevent the development of closer ties between the three South Caucasian states and the West. It can undercut Georgian sovereignty with a new offensive bifurcating Georgia with a military corridor between the Russian-occupied territory of South Ossetia and Russian-allied Armenia. This would boost Russia's military presence in Armenia and signal to the reformist government in Yerevan that Moscow will not tolerate the country moving closer to the West.

Moscow could also reignite the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region and adjacent

territories under Armenian occupation as a pretext to inject its troops as "peacekeepers" and apply more pressure on both states. Tensions between Tbilisi and Baku, including disputes over access to a Georgian Orthodox monastery in Azerbaijan can also be fanned by Russia to its advantage. Such maneuvers could enable Moscow to disrupt energy and transportation links between the Caspian basin and Europe, including the Southern Gas Corridor from Azerbaijan to Turkey.

6. The Russian Federation: There is another destabilizing scenario that could spill over NATO's Eastern Flank—potential fractures in the Russian Federation itself. NATO Allies and Partners that neighbor Russia need to closely monitor rising tensions and conflicts in several regions of the country, including the North Caucasus, such as Ingushetia's internal unrest and growing tensions between Chechnya and Dagestan and between Ingushetia and North Ossetia-Alania. In several other regions, including Siberia, Russia's Far East, and the Far North, protests against Moscow's authoritarian centralism, economic neglect, and resource exploitation are mushrooming. Economic decline and falling living standards, while global oil prices (Russia's main source of revenue) are collapsing, can precipitate public protests that increasingly challenge Putin's "power vertical." The Kremlin could stage a comprehensive police crackdown as well as provoking international crises to deflect attention from its internal problems. NATO Allies and Partners along Russia's borders must be prepared for various contingencies that could challenge their security.

Russia's Weaknesses: In all military or sub-military conflicts, each adversary faces its own set of weaknesses, which could result in failure and defeat. For Moscow, its primary weakness

is its corrupt and repressive state system — the polar opposite of Allied cohesion, which is based on shared democratic values, individual freedom, sovereignty, and the rule of law.

Although Russia defines itself as a federation, in reality it is a centralized structure that has failed to develop a modern civic state.⁴⁰ The Federation consists of 85 federal subjects (including the illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol), of which 22 are republics representing non-Russian nationalities, including the Middle Volga, North Caucasus, and parts of Siberia, northern Russia, and the far eastern provinces. Even in regions where ethnic Russians predominate, a growing number of residents feel alienated from Moscow and are consolidating their unique local identities. Regional restlessness is based on an accumulation of grievances, including economic stagnation, official corruption, exploitation of regional resources, attacks on language rights, and threats to eliminate or merge federal units. The federal structure primarily benefits a narrow elite of political police, bureaucrats, oligarchs, and regional governors appointed by the Kremlin. Moscow extracts maximum resources from the regions with minimal investment in a crumbling local infrastructure. Without regional autonomy, investment, and local control of resources, the federal structure will become increasingly unmanageable and public resistance will expand.

In order to function, Moscow needs an economic engine. This makes the Kremlin vulnerable to Western sanctions and even more so to earnings from oil exports. Russia is heavily dependent on oil revenues with its budget based on a price of \$42 per barrel.⁴¹ Once the price falls below this level for a prolonged period of time, Russia will be

unable to balance its budget or increase social spending for the growing number of poor families unless it further depletes its financial reserves and significantly cuts spending on the military and internal security. Oil prices collapsed by over 60 percent in the first few months of 2020, as the result of falling global demand triggered by the covid-19 pandemic and are unlikely to rebound to any significant extent in the near future, thus deepening Russia's financial and economic crisis.⁴²

If Moscow continues to pursue a confrontational course with the West, NATO planners will need to assess and exploit Russia's fears, vulnerabilities, and disadvantages, especially in the event of an escalating confrontation along the Eastern Flank. Moscow's aggressive probing is grounded in inflated propaganda about its own capabilities. It often pursues an aggressive agenda toward neighbors in order to camouflage its internal weaknesses, which are not just economic and financial

“Although Russia defines itself as a federation, in reality it is a centralized structure that has failed to develop into a modern civic state.”



“Reception to honour graduates of higher military educational institutions” in 2019 by Kremlin under CC BY 4.0.

but also social, ethnic, and regional. It is important for the NATO Alliance to challenge Moscow’s disinformation that depicts Russia as an invincible power and to widely publicize its internal vulnerabilities, as evident in its ongoing economic distress and escalating social and regional protests against the central government.

Moscow fears conflicts adjacent to Russia that could spill over into its territory or potential separatist rebellions inside the Russian Federation. NATO’s enhanced military capabilities, including land and maritime forces, air defense, striking capabilities, and speed of mobility are important in projecting a sense of uncertainty in Moscow that, if provoked and attacked, the Alliance is not only capable of defending itself but also of striking inside Russia’s territory. In such a scenario, a resolute NATO response could reveal the insecurities of Russia’s leadership as well

as the country’s political vulnerabilities and military weaknesses, and thereby stimulate unrest in some regions of the Federation.

In the Baltic region, NATO can turn the strategic table on Russia by focusing on Kaliningrad. NATO should encourage Moscow to view Kaliningrad as a vulnerable outpost surrounded by NATO territory, isolated from Russia, and with little chance of resupply in the event of war.¹⁶ Russian forces are “anchored” to this location and cannot risk losing it, while their access in and out of the Baltic Sea can be completely controlled by NATO and Sweden. NATO can exploit this potential vulnerability by making it clear that in case of armed conflict Kaliningrad would be a prime target for a punishing Alliance air, missile and artillery attack to neutralize it, just as the Baltic states are depicted by Moscow as a prime target for Russia’s assault. NATO could also leverage Moscow’s fear in order to deter Russia from

using its long-range A2/AD assets to interfere with NATO's lines of communications to the Baltic states during a crisis. This posture could entail reinforcing NATO forces and firepower in proximity to the exclave and underscoring that Kaliningrad could be neutralized and lost to Russia through offensive military action.

Belarus also presents both an opportunity and vulnerability for Putin. He may seek another "Crimea effect" in domestic politics by absorbing Belarus and deflecting attention from rising economic problems inside Russia. If Moscow's diplomatic and economic pressures fail to dissuade Minsk from pursuing integration with the West, the Kremlin could try to engineer the replacement of President Lukashenko with a more pliant leader, while claiming that Western services are preparing a coup in order to turn Belarus into another Ukraine. However, the Alliance can clearly signal that any forceful Russian intervention in Belarus could provoke more extensive Western sanctions against Russia, intensify NATO's military buildup along its Eastern Flank, and potentially challenge Moscow's presence in Kaliningrad and the Baltic Sea.

It is to NATO's benefit that only a limited number of Russian ground troops are stationed in Belarus where they control an early warning radar station and a naval communications center. The steady development of cordial relations with Minsk would enhance the security of NATO members, reassure Minsk about NATO's peaceful intentions, and undercut Moscow's assertions that Belarus needs to be defended from NATO through the deployment of Russian forces. A great start in helping to chip away at some longstanding diplomatic ice, is the recent reintroduction of an American Ambassador and Defense Attaché to Minsk. In developing ties with Belarus, Western capitals

can also address the future of the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant that has undermined relations between Lithuania and Belarus. The plant, located only forty kilometers from Vilnius, has generated fear of environmental hazards in Lithuania.⁴³ A dialogue between Minsk and Vilnius on the operations of the plant would reduce bilateral tensions, enhance Belarus's relations with both NATO and the EU, and remove the issue from potential exploitation by Moscow.

An additional challenge for Russia would be for NATO and the EU to successfully promote neighboring countries such as Ukraine and Georgia to implement reforms that meet the criteria for joining both organizations. Commitment to such an outcome undermines Moscow's claims to regional dominance, enlarges NATO's scope and reach in ensuring European security, revives the EU's attraction for aspiring states, challenges Kremlin claims that it is effectively defending Russia, and may ultimately unravel the rationale and legitimacy of the Putin regime.

NATO'S DETERRENCE POSTURE

NATO has adapted rapidly to the changing security environment (see *Introduction*) since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and illegal annexation of Crimea, most notably with the transition from assurance to deterrence, bolstering Baltic Air Policing and the deployment of Enhanced Air Policing (EAP) in the Black Sea area, increased exercises, and improvements in logistics, mission command, and intelligence.⁴⁴ However, NATO must still address several critical questions and bolster capabilities to ensure effective deterrence along the entire Eastern Flank. The cohesion of the Alliance is its center of gravity and must be

continuously protected and strengthened, but for NATO to achieve Eastern Flank coherence without revealing seams or gaps in capabilities, readiness, or watchfulness, specific aspects of its current deterrence posture require improvement.

NATO's Hard and Soft Power: *Hard power* is a necessary component of deterrence. Building coherent organizations and plans that incorporate all of the combined “hard power” of Allies and Partners is the primary mission to maintain security along the entire Eastern Flank. The combined militaries of 30 Allies plus Partners in Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific represent overwhelming real and potential combat power that, if trained and ready to operate in multinational formations and organizations, should readily defeat Russian military capabilities. The key to maximizing the benefit of this hard power potential is for each country to deliver its obligated forces at high

“NATO must still address several questions and bolster capabilities to ensure effective deterrence along the entire Eastern Flank.”

readiness and for these formations to train together regularly. Otherwise, the hard power advantage will be diminished in the absence of substantial logistics, weak infrastructure, poor or non-existent Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) and cyber defense, and an inability to move and deploy rapidly in all domains throughout the theater.

NATO's significant military advantages give the Alliance the potential to strike at multiple points — what military planners call “horizontal escalation” — which can exert pressure on Russian forces in vital areas and distract or degrade their ability to carry out their original intent. For example, a response to a Russian attack near the Suwałki Corridor might include strikes on Russian bases in the Arctic, Syria, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, or the Caucasus, in coordination with cyberstrikes, a blockade of Sevastopol, or disabling NS2, NS1, or other Russian pipelines.

The combined industrial base of NATO and its Partners has the potential to generate modern capabilities and the necessary quantities of ammunition, fuel, and repair parts for sustained combat. NATO currently has a significant but not a guaranteed or inevitable advantage in space-based platforms. Both Russia and China are gaining in this domain; hence the Alliance will need to ensure the protection of space-based platforms which are essential for navigation, communications, targeting, and intelligence while developing the ability to degrade or blind the capabilities of potential opponents. U.S. Space Command (SPACECOM) is intended to accomplish this for the U.S.

NATO has naval superiority in the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic. Control or potential control of key straits in

Total Armed Forces of NATO Members in Europe

Type	2010	2020
Total Active	4,036,445	3,264,250
Army	2,030,823	1,554,425
Navy	622,284	589,550
Air	753,988	654,325
Other	628,009	558,800
Paramilitary	620,010	633,200
Reserve	3,093,613	2,101,250

Authors' own calculation from: "Chapter One: North America" and "Chapter Three: Europe" in *The Military Balance 2010*, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and "Chapter Three: North America" and "Chapter Four: Europe" in *The Military Balance 2020*, IISS.

Europe (such as Gibraltar, the Turkish Straits, the Danish Straits, and the Aegean Sea) by Allies and Partners is necessary to ensure maritime reinforcement and flexibility. In the event of conflict, NATO would expect to achieve rapid "sea control" — exercising "the full range of operations of which it is capable within and from that area" by dominating the undersea, surface, air, and electronic domains — in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Baltic. However, the Russian navy is likely to counter with submarines, disrupting undersea capabilities, and conducting missile strikes on critical infrastructure.⁴⁵ Vital to success in this contested region will be working closely with Allies and Partners, particularly Sweden and Finland, enhancing anti-submarine capabilities, and expanding the network of bases in the Baltic Sea, Greenland, Iceland, and the Arctic Circle.

Air superiority is achievable but will be challenged immediately by high-quality and high-density Russian AMD systems. Allied and Partner air forces, particularly with the addition of fifth generation F-35 multirole fighters, in coordination with EW, cyber capabilities, and land-based digital fires, should be able to

eventually achieve the necessary penetration and neutralization of Russian AMDs.⁴⁶ Along NATO's Eastern Flank, regional allies have stepped up to modernize their air forces, signaling their commitment to defend NATO to both Brussels and Moscow.⁴⁷ In 2006, Poland led the way with the acquisition of 48 Block 50/52 fourth generation F-16s and signed a contract for 32 F-35s in 2020, making it the first fifth-generation fighter partner in CEE. Poland added significant lethality to its F-16 fleet by becoming the first foreign partner to acquire Extended Range (ER) versions of the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM-ER). In 2016, Romania acquired older F-16s from Portugal, which it is upgrading and is planning to acquire more, while considering purchasing F-35s in the future.⁴⁸ In 2019, Slovakia and Bulgaria contracted for 14 and 8 respectively, "fourth-generation-plus" Block 70 F-16s, while the Czech Republic is considering generation 4+ or fifth-generation fighters.⁴⁹

The employment of hard power faces a different challenge in the Black Sea. Access to the Black Sea is governed by Turkey under the provisions of Montreux (see *Strategic Setting*), which limits the size, number, and

operational duration of warships of non-littoral states in the Black Sea. Because of Montreux, Moscow will almost always have the numerical advantage. Hence, the Alliance must work closely with Partners and coordinate efforts to achieve the highest possible deterrence to counter Russia's aggression, ensure freedom of navigation, and protect the sovereignty of Allies around the Black Sea. But while some planners have chafed at the restrictions on Allied naval presence, in reality neither NATO nor its members have come close to maximizing the allowed capabilities under the convention. Montreux admittedly creates planning challenges, but it is not the main impediment.

Effectively countering the Russian Black Sea Fleet will require bolstering several aspects of hard power. These include modernized naval capabilities, anti-ship systems, increased AMD

systems, use of maritime unmanned systems, and a joint headquarters (HQ) — or at least a joint, multinational intelligence fusion center that is focused on the Black Sea to provide a comprehensive “unblinking eye” on Russian air and naval activity in the Black Sea. Black Sea Allies and Partners will have to depend on a combination of NATO maritime support and national-level capabilities. For example, despite limited defense budgets, Romania and Bulgaria have improved naval capabilities, while Bulgaria plans to acquire two new patrol craft from Germany in early 2020 to help replace the existing older Soviet models which can no longer be maintained.

If properly integrated and trained, NATO could have the capability to achieve “sea denial” (preventing Russia's Black Sea Fleet from using certain sections of the sea for its own objectives), if not “sea control” (where



“EXERCISE POSEIDON 2017” by NATO HQ MARCOM under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

NATO is able to use all international waters for its own activities while denying Russia the same capability).⁵⁰ NATO members have the naval capacities to increase their presence in the Black Sea. Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMGs) 1 and 2 are the Alliance's maritime formations carrying out a wide array of maritime missions. Historically, SNMG-2 has been responsible for patrols on the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean, though it can be deployed globally. Three ships from SNMG-2 have patrolled the Black Sea since March 23, 2020, one of which was a Turkish frigate. The patrol included combined maneuvers with Georgian border police vessels and a visit to the Georgian port of Poti. While periodic NATO and individual Allied countries' patrolling is important, NATO needs a continuous and consistent approach to maritime presence in the Black Sea region. NATO should consider ways to upgrade periodic Black Sea patrolling into full-time Black Sea Maritime Policing (BSMP), in a similar way that NATO Baltic and Black Sea Air Policing missions operate 365 days per year, in order to maximize the presence of non-littoral navies on the Black Sea for assurance, deterrence, and defense of Allies and Partners.

It may also be worth considering which offensive military actions by Moscow would precipitate blocking the Turkish Straits to Russian ships. The Montreux Convention has provisions for when Turkey can close the Straits and entails diplomatic, economic, and military considerations for Turkey. Ankara's control over the Straits is one of many reasons why protecting relations and cohesion with NATO is vital.

Soft power typically includes the use of diplomacy, multinational frameworks and institutions, international law, and economics.

Competing in the “information space” can occur in the realm of both soft and hard power. As Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has stated, “With NATO each nation starts with [29] other friends.” Their combined economies and populations far surpass those of the Russian Federation, but when the Alliance works together, it has the combined diplomatic, legal, and information efforts of 30 nations with shared values and interests. The Secretary General's appointment of a forward-looking NATO reflection group is an encouraging sign of progress toward greater political cohesion.⁵¹

Allies must also learn how to muster their combined diplomatic power to exert pressure on the Kremlin to comply with international agreements, respect international law, and respect internationally-recognized borders in CEE. Moscow routinely uses “lawfare” — the malicious exploitation of international and domestic law — to twist and misinterpret international legal norms and reinforce its information warfare to provide quasi-legal

“If properly integrated and trained, NATO could have the capability to achieve ‘sea denial,’ if not ‘sea control.’”



“The Bulgarian Head of State is on a visit to Romania to take part in the Three Seas initiative summit” in 2018 by Presidency of Bulgaria under CC BY 2.5.

justification for its aggressive actions. Russia has leveraged its membership in major international organizations to gain acceptance or non-criticism of its revisionist agenda and to provide a legalistic cover in pressuring its neighbors.⁵² Moscow also dismisses treaties and international bodies that may restrict its ambitions. For example, although the seizure of Ukrainian naval vessels and sailors in December 2018 was recognized as an act of aggression by the May 2019 ruling of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), Russia does not recognize international jurisdiction in the Kerch Straits; it regards it as Russia’s “internal waterway” by virtue of its illegal annexation of Crimea.

NATO is making considerable progress in countering Russian lawfare with the formation of a Legal Operations Working Group at

Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe’s (SHAPE) Office of the Legal Advisor, which is headed by Czech Brigadier General Pavel Kříž. More needs to be done, including the establishment of a NATO Center of Excellence (COE) for lawfare. To support Ukrainian sovereignty, NATO and the West should also closely follow international legal obligations to deny entry into Western ports of any ship that has previously visited a Crimean port. Such coordination is necessary to prevent Russia from breaking out of the existing international sanctions regime by enticing international shipping companies — cargo or cruise ships — from Western nations to visit Crimea in violation of sanctions.

Another element of NATO’s soft power deterrence is visible in the Danube River Commission. Three decades after the collapse

of the Soviet Union, the Commission continues to include Russia as a member, on the grounds that Russia declares itself the legal successor of the Soviet Union and its membership in various international organizations. Russia's membership in the Commission allows it to exert undue influence, potentially in a disruptive way, in making decisions related to Europe's most important river artery and transportation corridor. This is one of the many blatant examples of Russia leveraging its membership in international bodies that are unrelated to its geographic location or actual economic interests. Such dubious membership must be revised whenever possible to prevent potential "lawfare" blocking actions by Moscow that could affect areas vital for the economic security of NATO's Eastern Flank.

In the economic sphere, continued Western support for the development of north-south transport, energy, and digital infrastructure under the Three Seas Initiative (TSI) is vital for securing the Eastern Flank and unleashing the economic potential of the Black Sea and Baltic Sea regions. The announcement by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo supporting \$1bn in loans to TSI, as well as Estonia becoming the third TSI country to commit to the project's Central Funding mechanism, are encouraging signs.

In addition to ensuring energy, transportation, and infrastructure security, NATO needs to focus more intensively on the cyber domain and strengthen its defenses against increased Russian and Chinese attacks. Such attacks can take various forms, including data corruption, interception, and jamming. Allied wargames for cyberwar scenarios are critical, such as those organized by the NATO Cyber Defense COE in Estonia, and more attention must be paid to developing collective and coordinated

offensive actions to deter and disrupt attackers. For instance, U.S. Cyber Command has implanted cyber tools in Russia's power grid systems in case of an attack on America's infrastructure.⁵³ The U.S. Cyberspace Solarium Commission advocated for a strategy of "layered cyber deterrence."⁵⁴ Secretary General Stoltenberg has underscored that retaliatory action can be conducted under Article 5 provisions in case of a serious cyber incident, although a more specific threshold should be discussed.⁵⁵ In creating permanent structures to respond to cyber threats, NATO can establish integrated operational centers for rapid response based on the model of

“NATO needs to focus more intensively on the cyber domain and strengthen its defenses against increased Russian and Chinese attacks.”

NATO's Cyber Center in Estonia. These should include common multi-annual programs, scenario-based cybersecurity incident response capabilities tests, and permanent taskforce teams including governmental and private entities. As a vital domain of modern warfare, NATO's cyber efforts need to reach beyond national settings and integrate into practical training and exercises of NATO units from tactical to strategic. NATO's cyber teams and centers should develop permanent relationships with NATO's Command and Force structure organizations by routinely exercising together. The U.S.-led Defender exercise series is a great place to start.

NATO Capabilities in the Baltic Sea Region:
Allies and Partners in the Baltic region are concerned about a revisionist and aggressive

Russia. On paper, these countries are wealthy enough to defend themselves: their combined GDP exceeds \$2tn, far more than Russia's \$1.3tn. NATO Air Policing has provided a constant presence in the Baltic Sea region since April 2004.⁵⁶ Since 2014, the U.S. and NATO have significantly increased military readiness and exercises in the region. NATO's deployment of the multinational eFP Battle Groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland was a powerful manifestation of the Alliance's decision to transition from assurance to deterrence as was Washington's European Assurance Initiative, subsequently designated by Congress as the European Defense Initiative (EDI). U.S. investment in logistical infrastructure in the Baltic states and the continuing presence of U.S. Army aviation at the Lielvārde Air Base in Latvia ensure American capabilities in the



Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup Lithuania in 2020. "Norway and the United Kingdom practise close air support in Lithuania" by NATO under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.



Patriot surface-to-air missile defense system in Turkey in 2015. Along with Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, part of Spain's mission was protecting Turkey from Russian-made missiles from Syria. "A Spanish soldier in PATRIOT" by NATO Allied Air Command under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

region. Having adequate capabilities to ensure the Suwałki Corridor remains open is also key for the defense of the Baltic states.⁵⁷

IAMD and long-range digital fires capabilities in the Baltic Sea region are inadequate but improving. Poland, Romania, and Sweden will soon join the U.S., Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Greece as interoperable AMD partners with the arrival of the Patriot AMD systems. Poland and Romania are also purchasing highly sophisticated long-range precision artillery — the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) — which can target and counter Russian assets in Kaliningrad and elsewhere. Poland is also the host site for the U.S. Navy's strategic Aegis Ashore missile defense system in Redzikowo, near the Baltic Coast. Completion has been delayed,

but is now expected by the end of 2021 and should be operational by 2022. However, it is important to note that Poland's Aegis Ashore is designed to counter the exoatmospheric threats from Iran and the Middle East—not the endoatmospheric threat posed by Russia—although its loadout could be adapted to be somewhat more useful.⁵⁸

Although neither Sweden nor Finland are NATO members, the armed forces of both countries routinely train with and often deploy with NATO forces. Their ability to help with air defense and sea control in the Baltic Sea region should figure significantly in Alliance planning. Sweden's decision to reposition military forces on Gotland Island was an important move as it signaled to the rest of Europe and to Moscow that Stockholm takes

the Russian threat seriously. Equally important, Sweden now helps deny what would be a critical addition to Russian A2/AD capabilities in the Baltic region should Russian forces try to seize Gotland in a quick strike as a precursor to armed conflict. Finland plays a similar role, ensuring that its many islands do not serve as Russian bases for quick strikes, intelligence gathering, or cyber operations that degrade Allied capabilities.

Given the Alliance's efforts in the Baltic region and the significant improvements in the self-defense capabilities of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the chances for the Kremlin to miscalculate and attack are less today than they were four or five years ago. But this is not a certainty, as much remains to be accomplished to shore up any regional deficiencies. Establishing NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) and new NATO HQs in the region have the potential to improve Mission Command, readiness, responsiveness, and fighting capabilities.

The wider Baltic region is divided — between NATO and non-NATO, EU and non-EU, big and small, rich and poor, and heavy and light defense spenders. Strategic incoherence and an inability of states to defend themselves without outside help continues to pose a threat to NATO's credibility and performance. There is still a need to eliminate coherence gaps and establish the principle of "one flank, one threat, one presence." Clearly, the Alliance must strengthen IAMD for the region's critical transportation infrastructure and protect all European citizens, which will "guide [NATO] aerospace capabilities to operate together jointly, more swiftly, and effectively in peacetime, crisis, and conflict." And in response to the new threats posed by cruise missiles, which have made space a "highly dynamic and rapidly

evolving area, which is essential to a coherent Alliance deterrence and defense posture," the Alliance has agreed to develop an overarching NATO Space Policy.⁵⁹ The establishment of HQ without clear lines of authority and responsibility undermines the effectiveness of these mission command nodes. Improving the mission command relations between JFC Brunssum, Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC-NE), the eFP battle groups and their host nation brigade HQ and Multinational Division Northeast (MND-NE) and Multinational Division North (MND-N), and the NFIUs is essential if

“Strategic incoherence and an inability of states to defend themselves without outside help continues to pose a threat to NATO's credibility and performance.”



Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 in the Baltic Sea in 2016. “NATO Supports Baltic Security” by NATO HQ MARCOM under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

this substantial investment in senior ranking manpower and modern facilities is to yield the results needed by the Alliance and its members.

The Alliance has made great strides to improve coherence, but Mission Command and C2 must be better organized and synchronized. In the last six years, a staggering array of new HQs were established and other enduring or rotational organizations were deployed. Getting these organizations to full operational capability (FOC), able to work together as new players on the field, and to ensure they are nested and synchronized with NATO’s Command Structure (NCS), is crucial to coherence on NATO’s Eastern Flank.

These efforts have seen meaningful progress, spearheaded in 2014 by Poland’s leadership with German and Danish support to convince

NATO of the urgent need to raise the readiness level of MNC-NE in Szczecin. Over a two-year period, MNC-NE doubled its staff and moved from Low Readiness to High Readiness, advancing its mission “to be the one NATO Land Corps HQ dedicated to and focused on a single and vital region,” the Baltic states and Poland, as stated by former SACEUR General Philip Breedlove. U.S. European Command (EUCOM) saw this development as important enough to assign its first permanently-posted U.S. flag officer on NATO’s Eastern Flank to the MNC-NE. By 2015, Poland offered its 16th Mechanized Division HQ in Elbląg to become the basis of NATO’s Multinational Division Northeast (MND-NE), which inspired the development of three more regional MNDs on the Eastern Flank. Poland also added a fourth division to its national structure, the 18th Mechanized Division in Lublin, while rebuilding its 16th division staff, and initiated the creation

of a 40,000 troop Territorial Defense Force (TDF).

Denmark continues cooperation with Latvia and Estonia to establish Multinational Division North (MND-N) to cover C2 for Latvia and Estonia. German leadership is establishing the Baltic Maritime Component Command (BMCC) in Rostock. Since 2018, the Alliance has added two new major HQs as part of the NCS: Joint Forces Command (JFC) in Norfolk, Virginia protects North Atlantic strategic lines of communication, and the Joint Support Enabling Command (JSEC) in Ulm, Germany creates a secure and functioning rear area HQ to accelerate, coordinate, and safeguard the movement of Allied forces and equipment across Europe.⁶⁰ Additionally, the Baltic Allies strengthened the readiness of active forces and built or rebuilt TDFs. Lithuania added two additional brigades and is in the process of

establishing a division to provide C2 for these brigades.

As these new NATO and national structures were being formed, a number of other efforts were in motion, including NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and improved NATO Response Force (NRF) capabilities; the development in the Baltic states and Poland of focused Graduated Response Plans (GRPs); NATO's Readiness Initiative (NRI) calling for "4x30," or 30 mechanized battalions, 30 combat ships, and 30 fighter squadrons ready in 30 days; the establishment of 8 NFIUs in the Baltic states, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria; and eFP Battle Groups in each of the three Baltic states and Poland.

It is also a positive sign that Hungary is partnering with Croatia on the establishment of Multinational Division Central Europe



"Exercise Steele Crescendo" in 2020 by NATO under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

(MND-CE) and organizing a regional Special Operations Component Command (SOCC) with Slovakia and Slovenia, which Austria seeks to join. These smaller-format regional efforts are force multipliers for NATO.

Meanwhile, the U.S. provides more than \$22.5bn in EDI funding, demonstrating commitment to Allies and Partners on the Eastern Flank.⁶¹ This funds a wide range of

infrastructure improvement projects, rotational deployments, and exercises. The U.S. maintains a division forward presence in Poznań, Poland; a U.S. Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) based in Żagań, Poland; a U.S. logistics battalion positioned at Powidz, Poland with a northern element in Marijampolė, Lithuania; an Army Detachment (ARDET) in Warsaw; Army Prepositioned Stocks (APS) in five countries; a U.S. National Guard Fires Brigade positioned in Germany; and a Combat Aviation Brigade in Germany with forward elements on the Eastern Flank. Since 2019, and the signing of new U.S.-Poland strategic declarations, additional U.S. units are being assigned to Poland, including permanently assigned personnel to an Area Support Group (ASG) to provide coordination and continuity for rotational forces and a U.S. Air Force (USAF) Reaper UAV Squadron. U.S. EDI also funds increased Navy, Air Force, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) rotational deployments to the Eastern Flank.

During this intense period of expansion and deployment, NATO has also managed to significantly boost its tempo of training and exercises and added needed sophistication to exercises and operational integration among Allies. Meanwhile, many of the organizations in the region are reaching or approaching FOC. The main remaining obstacles are the integration and synchronization of multiple new HQs and staffs. Beyond the Mission Command of disparate HQs, this effort requires greater NATO leadership to maximize new opportunities for increasing deterrence, defense, and coherence. From SHAPE down to individual units, a determined effort towards synchronization and integration is required. In just a few short years, NATO gained more capacity on its Eastern Flank than it might have imagined over 20 years — and it is time to take advantage of it.

“In just a few short years, NATO gained more capacity on its Eastern Flank than it might have imagined over 20 years — and it is time to take advantage of it.”



Romanian Navy helicopter Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 in 2018. “A Romanian Navy IAR-330 Puma NAVAL helicopter hovers over the landing deck of a ship in the Black Sea” by NATO under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

NATO Capabilities in the Black Sea Region:

Turkey has long been the leading NATO member in the region. It has been the home of a NATO HQ in Izmir since joining the Alliance in 1952, and possesses NATO’s largest and most capable military force in the region. But Turkey has had to reorient toward the challenges stemming from Syria and the Kremlin-backed Assad regime. The resulting massive refugee crisis and its ongoing operations against the terrorist forces of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)/People’s Protection Units (YPG) limit the attention and resources Turkey is willing to provide in the Black Sea. As a result, Romania has become NATO’s regional hub. Given its geographical location and based on its current modernization efforts, available infrastructure, host nation support, and its approach to

building readiness, Romania is where NATO and the U.S. have focused their efforts to build facilities, naval presence, mission command, and intelligence fusion, and where moving fully from AMD to IAMD should be encouraged.

NATO’s tFP in the Black Sea region includes improvements in mission command, an increase in exercises, and a continuation of NATO’s Black Sea Air Policing mission. The Alliance has also prepared a package of measures to further strengthen its posture in the region, agreeing in April 2019 to improve situational awareness in the Black Sea region and strengthen support for Georgia and Ukraine. This has included coastal radar systems for Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Georgia, with other measures considered by NATO such as the pre-deployment of military

equipment, a larger military presence, base development, and special forces. New HQs in the region, all in Romania, include Multinational Brigade Southeast (MNB-SE) in Craiova, Multinational Division Southeast (MND-SE) in Bucharest, and Multinational Corps Southeast (MNC-SE) in Sibiu. All are multinational but strictly land force HQs. Hence, there is an absence of naval or joint HQ in the region that is focused specifically on the Black Sea.

IAMD in the region remains an aspiration but is starting to see some improvements. Romania hosts a U.S. Navy Aegis Ashore land-based ballistic missile defense system at Deveselu, which is deployed to protect European cities from Iranian missiles and is already operational. Romania is increasing the capabilities of its growing F-16 fleet. It is also purchasing the Patriot surface-to-air missile

system and expects to begin receiving them in 2021. Turkey's purchase of the Russian-made S-400 Air/Missile Defense System is a serious concern for the Alliance. It is not interoperable with NATO systems and the U.S. has declared that Turkey can no longer be a part of the F-35 program. However, Turkey continues hosting critical TPY-2 tracking radar capabilities for the ballistic missile defenses of the region.

The U.S. Navy has also increased its presence in the Black Sea, participating in exercises as well as normal operational deployments, all within the parameters of the Montreux Convention. NATO's maritime forces increased their presence in the Black Sea from 80 days per year in 2016 and 2017 to 120 days in 2018, but decreased again in 2019. This is still well below the maximum allowed by Montreux — hence, the main obstacle to increasing the



U.S. Naval Support Facility in Deveselu in 2019. "U.S. deploys THAAD to Romania" by NATO under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

U.S. and NATO naval presence is not the Convention but the availability of warships and the prioritization of deployments.

The Mihail Kogălniceanu (MK) Air Base near Constanța, Romania on the Black Sea coast is the key platform in the region for access, power projection, and deterrence. It is home to logistics, mission command, and rotational U.S. Army forces, including an armored battalion task force and an Army Aviation unit. It is also the home of NATO's Enhanced Black Sea Air Policing (EBSAP) mission. MK is the U.S. Army's main support vector in Romania and to Georgia, Bulgaria, and Moldova. The U.S. National Guard-led Area Support Team (AST) based at MK also supports visiting Allies participating in EBSAP (notably the UK, Canada, and Italy).

The U.S. Air Base at Incirlik, Turkey, within the Turkish Air Force Base on the Mediterranean Coast, is a substantial platform for the projection of U.S. and Allied airpower. It focuses on missions in the Middle East but could also support operations in the greater Black Sea region.

Bulgaria has made moves toward a modest reinvestment in its navy but has limited naval capabilities in the Black Sea. In April 2016, the government approved a \$1.14bn purchase program for new aircraft and naval vessels, including two modern, multi-functional corvettes and eight (in Phase 1) modern Block 70 F-16 multirole fighters.⁶² In 2018, Sofia also completed a modernization program of its fleet of (Russian-made) MiG-29 fighters. While the acquisition of less than a handful of new corvettes may not appear as a major investment, their upgraded capabilities will allow the Bulgarian navy to forge closer ties with NATO navies through participation in a variety of NATO maritime exercises. Bulgaria

should also consider joining NATO's Maritime Unmanned Systems Initiative (MUSI).

Romania has demonstrated its commitment to burden-sharing, having met the 2 percent defense-spending guidelines since 2017 — of which over 30 percent has been allocated for modernization — a trend it intends to maintain until at least 2027. Romania's modernization program includes the aforementioned Patriot AMD system. It has also purchased HIMARS, is improving its air force, and is considering acquiring attack aviation helicopters. It has also established a Cyber Defense Command. Its navy is small but Romania has pursued cost-effective means of improving regional ISR, anti-submarine warfare, and counter-

“The main obstacle to increasing the U.S. and NATO naval presence is not the Convention but the availability of warships and the prioritization of deployments.”



“EXERCISE SEA SHIELD 2018” by NATO HQ MARCOM under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

mine efforts by joining NATO’s MUSI. The government has announced plans to buy four new surface combatants and three submarines for operations in the Black Sea although acquisition has been delayed. It is deepening maritime relations with Allies and Partners, including Romanian Navy participation in the annual Ukrainian-hosted “Sea Breeze” multinational naval exercise.

Bucharest pursues regional cooperation through various formats, including the “Bucharest 9” (Poland, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia) and trilateral (Romania, Turkey, Poland) sessions as well as the TSI. At the 2020 Munich Security Conference, the ministers of defense of Romania and Ukraine reached an agreement to increase joint exercises and improve bilateral collaboration and

intelligence-sharing, an example that others in the region, including NATO Partners, should emulate.⁶³

Finally, Partners offer a means of strengthening the Alliance’s regional capabilities. Kyiv’s military posture has been land-oriented but its 2019 Naval Strategy concentrates on building capabilities to respond to maritime threats, defining the priorities for developing effective naval capabilities in three stages by 2035.⁶⁴ The first stage, until 2025, aims to establish control over territorial waters and up to 40 nautical miles from the coast. A highly mobile “mosquito” fleet will perform this operation, including Giurza-class armored boats, Centaur-class assault craft, and two U.S.-built Island-class patrol cutters. Kyiv is also planning to purchase 22 modern patrol ships. The second stage until 2030 envisions developing naval

capabilities to protect Ukraine's EEZ, up to 200 nautical miles from the coast. The third stage aims at further expanding maritime capabilities. Washington is expanding arms supplies to Ukraine in order to build up the country's naval forces and in May 2019, the U.S. Congress passed into law the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2020, which authorized the Pentagon to allocate \$300m for strengthening Ukrainian defense capability by incorporating coastal defenses and anti-ship missiles.⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

Build Coherence Along NATO's Eastern Flank

Raise the Priority of the Black Sea Region: NATO should develop a strategy for the greater Black Sea region that places the Black Sea in the middle of the geostrategic map.

This strategy should be underpinned by a GRP, similar to what has already been accomplished in the Baltic region. Such a strategy and GRP will drive planning, resources, exercises, and presence in such a way that deters Russia's aggression against Allies and Partners and also provides a bulwark against Iranian inroads. The Black Sea region is essential to Western security and stability and needs greater focus by Western defense planners. As the Montreux Convention ensures that Russia will always have numerical advantage, the Alliance must find innovative ways to gain the initiative in order to counter Russian probing and pressure which can erode the confidence of NATO members, undermine Alliance cohesion, and damage the credibility of NATO's deterrence posture toward major adversaries. The Eastern Flank and, most urgently, the Black Sea region is the front line of transatlantic security. Allies and Partners in the region should follow the successful example of the Baltic states



Exercise Sea Breeze 2019 in the Black Sea. "Fast Transit" by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Fred Gray IV, U.S. Department of Defense under Public Domain.

and Poland, which came together to raise their profile in the West, by pursuing a more effective diplomatic campaign in Brussels and Washington.

Upgrade “Tiered” Forward Presence: NATO’s tFP in the Black Sea region is a weaker deterrent than NATO’s eFP in the Baltic region. NATO should strengthen its deterrence posture in all domains and declare its capabilities across the entire Eastern Flank as FP. This would minimize the gaps and seams across the Eastern Flank and provide a more straightforward framework for “Enabling SACEUR’s Area of Responsibility” with more effective logistics, mission command, intelligence, and Integrated Air/Missile Defense. This will also help enhance military mobility across Europe to ensure the deployment of reinforcements wherever needed. A major initiative in this area undertaken by the U.S. is the reestablishment of the Army’s V Corps focused on Europe with elements of a “Corps Forward” staff assigned in Europe. It should be positioned on NATO’s Eastern Flank where according to General McConville, Army Chief of Staff, it can “provide the needed level of command and control focused on synchronizing U.S. Army, allied, and partner nation tactical formations operating in Europe.”⁶⁶

Publicize Threat Analysis: Civilian leaders and populations must understand that NATO’s Article 5 is neither “triggered” nor “automatic,” but that it is a political decision requiring the consensus of all 30 NATO members. Nations can always act unilaterally, bilaterally, or multilaterally — but the most effective deterrence is the unmistakable cohesion of the Alliance. Building consensus toward a commonly-acknowledged potential threat is key to mobilizing the Alliance in undertaking the additional steps necessary to improve

deterrence along NATO’s Eastern Flank. To help achieve consensus, NATO should conduct recurring, periodic risk analyses to identify and assess potential Russian threats and produce a publicly-releasable report describing the Kremlin’s aggression. Such assessments will be complemented by follow-up reports explaining to citizens the necessity of NATO’s deterrence posture along its Eastern Flank. By eliminating the distinction between eFP and tFP and adopting a common regional threat assessment, NATO will be better equipped to pursue a coherent policy of “one flank, one threat, one presence.”

Improve Situational Awareness: The Alliance needs improved situational awareness along its Eastern Flank that provides all necessary Indications and Warning (I&W) required for effective deterrence and crisis response. This means addressing U.S. and European policies, laws, and structures that limit or inhibit intelligence- and information-sharing between

“NATO should declare its capabilities across the entire Eastern Flank as Forward Presence.”

Allies and Partners, particularly in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea, where at present there is no joint, COP of what activities are taking place. There has been bilateral progress (between the U.S. and Romania) to create the framework for sensitive intelligence-sharing, but more must be achieved. For example, in the area of geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), the U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) should be more engaged in developing greater situational awareness in the Black Sea region.

This will also require the establishment of joint multinational HQs that are focused on each of these regions or, at a minimum, the establishment of appropriate intelligence fusion centers for the purpose of building situational awareness. The Alliance and its Member States should invest significantly in increasing terrestrial, aerial, maritime, space, and virtual ISTAR coverage along NATO's entire Eastern Flank. Demonstrating an ability to track and anticipate Russian activities will

frustrate and deter the Kremlin's tactics of deception, disinformation, and ambiguity.

Enhance Deterrence and Defense

Enable SACEUR's Area of Responsibility

(AOR): The enablement of SACEUR's AOR will require harmonization of the operational space and rear area. Greater investment is needed in trans-continental infrastructure and dual-use transportation infrastructure that would facilitate the movement of NATO forces across Europe. Poland's Solidarity Transport Hub (STH) will significantly increase Allied mobility through Poland, which lies at the strategic transit heart of NATO's Eastern Flank challenge. STH is an excellent example of a national effort to increase NATO military mobility. At the multinational level, the TSI, involves 12 European countries between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas. The TSI includes a vital transportation infrastructure pillar that can significantly contribute to mobility, buttressing NATO's deterrence and defense capabilities.



M1A2 Abrams tanks in Germany in 2014 by SPC Brian Chaney, U.S. Army under Public Domain.



German soldiers from NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force conduct river crossing training during exercise Trident Juncture 2018. "181023-F-TA811-899" by U.S. Department of Defense under Public Domain.

Continued U.S. support for TSI and closer cooperation with the EU and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) initiative on military mobility are essential.

Pan-continental infrastructure and periodic logistical exercises demonstrate NATO's speed of assembly and rapidity of movement, underscoring Allied commitments and acting as a deterrent to Moscow. These exercises should be executed in both planned and "snap" modes to test and demonstrate NATO's speed of assembly and rapidity of movement. They highlight joint Allied commitments and serve as a deterrent to Moscow by demonstrating that the Alliance can move as fast or faster than an adversary in the early stages of confrontation. NATO's Defender 2020, a major reinforcement exercise with emphasis on the Baltic Sea region, was terminated early due to the covid-19 pandemic but remains

a strong demonstration of U.S. commitment and strategic readiness — and a valuable experience practicing for preparing and initiating deployments. Defender 2021, which will focus on the greater Black Sea region, is already being planned and will provide further opportunity to demonstrate Allied cohesion and willingness to invest in NATO's logistical capabilities. Planning and exercising should also be undertaken for "coalitions of the willing" in confronting scenarios that may fall short of Article 5 invocation for all NATO Allies, including cyberattacks. Finally, in order to regain the initiative on the Eastern Flank, NATO should consider more frequent Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises (EDREs) and multinational surges of ISTAR collection during major Russian exercises.

Improve Speed in Crisis Decisions: The most significant deterrence against Russian probing

is a cohesive, decisive, and rapidly moving NATO. This starts at the top. For too long, NATO has discussed how the North Atlantic Council (NAC) should be able to render speedy crisis decisions and how to provide the SACEUR with robust authorities to deploy forces. The current covid-19 crisis may provide some new thinking on how to energize this process. NATO should take advantage of the urgency generated by the pandemic and its need for innovative virtual communications to develop an “Enhanced Crisis Decision Making Initiative.”⁶⁷

Use Regional Formats and Organizations: Well-led, smaller, and manageable regional formats and organizations can be effective frameworks for achieving improved capabilities and strengthening regional relations that contribute to increased cohesion and coherence. These include the Bucharest Nine (B9), TSI, the Visegrád Group (V4), the Eastern Partnership (EaP), and other formats. Smaller regional formats can act as a continuation of NATO’s concept of “pooling and sharing” and would be particularly effective in terms of modernization, sustainment, and training as well as improving military mobility between smaller groups of nations. With effective strategic communication efforts at the NATO and EU levels, these formats can raise awareness and inspire greater participation from Western allies on the Eastern Flank.

For example, the V4 often seek concrete military cooperation opportunities but are sometimes limited in the practicalities. One opportunity for closer regional cooperation is through the Joint Multinational Training Group Ukraine (JMTGU) in Yavoriv, Ukraine, which was established in 2014 to improve Ukrainian tactical and operational capabilities. As Poland takes the reigns of the V4 rotational presidency

in the summer of 2020, the timing is opportune to encourage additional V4 trainers to assist Ukraine.

Align U.S. Security Cooperation (SC) Programs, Procedures, and Personnel with U.S. Policies and Priorities: The proper alignment of assignments of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) personnel at U.S. embassies along NATO’s Eastern Flank would significantly improve how SC programs deliver capabilities to Allies and Partners. Therefore, DoD should: (1) Prioritize filling all positions in the Defense Attaché Office (DAO) and the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) at each U.S. embassy with officers of the appropriate rank and training; and (2) Ensure these assignments come from the U.S. military service (Army, Navy, Air Force,

“The most significant deterrence against Russian probing is a cohesive, decisive, and rapidly moving NATO.”

Marines) most appropriate to U.S. objectives for the Host Nation. The militaries and leadership of most Eastern Flank Allies and Partners are land-centric and their modernization efforts largely focus on land systems. In several cases where U.S. Army officers are needed, the U.S. Air Force is assigned as senior U.S. DAO and/or ODC leaders (in some cases both). For maritime-centric countries, the U.S. military representative should be assigned by the Navy. The Air Force should be assigned where the principal U.S. security cooperation objective is building Allied and Partner air capabilities. The objective should be aligning assignments to best achieve SC policies and priorities.

The “speed of delivery” of SC should also increase for major capital equipment items (artillery, air defense, tanks, aircraft, etc.). Most

of our Allies and Partners can only afford to purchase limited capabilities and therefore strive for coproduction or to offset costs for domestic reasons. A strategic approach by DoD could help find ways to streamline SC processes and reduce cost burdens. The major slowdowns are found in contracting processes and production timelines. DoD, working with defense industry and Allies and Partners, can improve SC speed by: (1) training and developing the professionalization of Ally and Partner acquisition officers, along with associated decision-makers; (2) demand shorter turn-around times for back and forth contract negotiations (these should be cut in half); and (3) treating even small acquisition efforts as strategically important and critical to U.S. security as well as that of Allies and Partners.



Allied soldiers parachute onto a drop zone in Germany in 2018. “180919-Z-Y1114-075” by U.S. Department of Defense under Public Domain.

Adopt a More Sophisticated Approach to “Burden-Sharing” and 2%: NATO should give credit towards the 2 percent defense-spending target for investments that have real military value for the Alliance, such as: dual-use transportation infrastructure; cyber protection for critical transportation infrastructure; research and development for dual-use technologies such as AI, light-weight materials, treatment for traumatic injury, renewable energy (especially storage), and unmanned air and maritime systems; improvements in defense against biological weapons based on the gaps and vulnerabilities that were exposed during the coronavirus pandemic; medical infrastructure and multinational medical training events, which also benefit civilians as medical technology trickles down into the civilian sector; and Host Nation Support functions that enable rapid reinforcement of U.S. and other Allied forces. This should be part of a broader discussion within the Alliance to reframe “burden-sharing” into the notion of “responsibility-sharing.”

Ensure a Resilient Fuel Supply System: NATO’s Pipeline System (NPS) and fuel supply infrastructure are vulnerable, have limited capacity, and lack redundancy.⁶⁸ The NPS needs to be updated and extended to NATO’s Eastern Flank to ensure Allied crisis readiness, and to support increasing numbers of enduring U.S. and NATO forces, postured in the region.⁶⁹ NATO and the EU should enhance cooperation, including through regional involvement of the B9. Political efforts can be linked to the TSI, which offers opportunities to help extend the NPS as it yields vital military capabilities, regional economic benefits, and thwarts the malign goals of Russia and China in the region. NATO and the EU should cooperate on an analysis of critical oil and fuel supply infrastructure focused on: (1)

investments needed for alternative supply routes; (2) determining required fuel supplies and locations to store forward positions for a range of contingencies; (3) building fuel storage infrastructure in Poland, Romania, the Baltic states, Ukraine, Georgia, and other locations aimed at making it fully compatible with NATO, secure, and with the capacity for worst-case scenarios. The NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) plays a critical role for the supply of fuel and other essential logistical support. States may be able to better achieve their 2% of GDP defense-spending target by working closely with NSPA in providing fuel or infrastructure for storage and distribution. Additionally, NATO’s Joint Support Enabling Command (JSEC) should play a leading role in helping to develop NATO’s resilient fuel supply system.⁷⁰ With an important fuel and logistics supply corridor, Allies and Partners should work to guarantee access and passage on the Danube River, including strengthening relations with Serbia to help undercut Moscow’s destabilizing influence in the Western Balkans, and removing Russia from the Danube Commission.⁷¹ For additional capacity and redundancy, significant potential exists for a Poland-Czech Republic fuel pipeline along the 120km-long gap between Trzebinia, Poland and Sedlnice, Czech Republic, while the Kralupy refinery in the Czech Republic should be adapted to process oil from non-Russian sources.

Modernize Nuclear Capabilities: The U.S. is modernizing its strategic capabilities given Russia’s nuclear modernization program and the prospect that it will be less capable of monitoring Moscow’s initiatives if New START expires in 2021. Russia deployed intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missiles (SSC-8), which can support a nuclear warhead, in violation of the Intermediate Range Nuclear



Anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare training during NATO exercise Dynamic Manta in 2020. “DYNAMIC MANTA 20” by NATO HQ MARCOM under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Forces (INF) Treaty.⁷² It is also deploying a hypersonic weapon (Avangard) which can evade American missile defense systems. There is an additional danger that Moscow may deploy nuclear weapons in occupied Crimea, thus violating the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as Ukraine is a non-nuclear weapon state. The Pentagon has underscored that nuclear modernization is its number one priority to counter potential Russian threats.⁷³ The U.S. is testing two hypersonic prototypes, which should become operational in 2022, and is developing sensor technology to trace hypersonic missiles. The USAF is also conducting major modernization programs, notably through its Global Strike Command which develops stealth bombers and cruise missiles.⁷⁴

Improve Cyber Defense and Develop Emerging Technologies: NATO faces diverse dangers that cannot all be addressed by conventional defenses alone. Cyberspace has been designated a domain in which NATO will need to enhance operations to defend the critical infrastructure of its members. NATO’s Secretary General has underscored that a serious cyberattack could potentially be considered an armed attack under Article 5. NATO is also establishing a Cyberspace Operations Centre in Mons, Belgium that will draw on national cyber capabilities for NATO missions. The Alliance must also focus on integrating new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), cyber, robotics, quantum computing, and biotechnology. At the NATO Summit in Brussels on July 11, 2018,

Allied leaders announced the establishment of Counter Hybrid Support Teams to provide targeted assistance to Allies, upon request, in preparing for and responding to hybrid activities.⁷⁵ NATO needs a comprehensive assessment of the role and impact of this initiative.

Enhance and Integrate Air and Missile Defenses (AMD): Improvements in the quality and quantity of ballistic and cruise missiles, rockets, and hyper-velocity weapons by several potential adversaries, and the proliferation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), represent a significant threat to the safety of European citizens and to the critical infrastructure necessary for deterrence, defense, and rapid reinforcement. The opening attacks and salvoes of missiles, UASs, and enemy aircraft will likely come in combinations and swarms, and across a 360 degree attack azimuth, at a variety of altitudes. The initial responses will be national or coalition/multinational until the Alliance decides to respond.

At the political level, the Alliance must build consensus about the perceived threats of air and missile attack. It should decide in advance how it might respond to an air and missile attack and then refine and rehearse its framework for political decision-making to respond quickly. At the military level, the Alliance must therefore improve and organize its various AMD capabilities into an Integrated Air and Missile (IAMD) system that effectively combines land, air/space, and maritime-based capabilities. And it must figure out how it will transition from peacetime to conflict. Properly organized, resourced, and well-trained IAMD will give nations and the Alliance the right blend of sensors, weapons, and early-warning systems and the requisite C2 systems and structures which will provide for a responsive,

layered defense; and enable rapid decision-making needed to protect European citizens and critical infrastructure. Critically important is having sufficient resources and capabilities that can defend for as long as needed. As former SACEUR General Philip Breedlove has written, “establishing integrated and robust air defense [...] is the next logical step in protecting NATO’s forward presence, pre-positioned equipment, and the United States’ and NATO’s ability to access and operate in the broader region during a potential crisis or conflict.”⁷⁶

NATO should undertake the following specific initiatives in order to enhance AMD:

(1) Establish a permanent, fully-integrated AMD architecture — led by NATO’s Air Command (AIRCOM) and EUCOM led by U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) — that can perform early

“At the political level, the Alliance must build consensus *about the perceived threats of air and missile attack.*”

warning and C2 functions and defeat incoming air and missile threats during the transition from peacetime to conflict.

(2) Synchronize the several existing IAMD exercises into a coherent exercise program that is designed to develop, implement, and validate the technical solutions and procedural controls needed to conduct combined and joint IAMD exercises across the entire European theater. IAMD must be exercised at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels so that the procedures are established and validated to seamlessly transition from peace to conflict. These exercises should also include analysis of how much AMD capacity is needed to ensure adequate munitions and interceptors, as well as redundant sensors and systems to enable effective AMD for as long as necessary.

Specifically, NATO should transition exercise Tobruq Legacy, an annual multilateral ground-based air defense (GBAD) exercise with a rotating lead nation, to an annual NATO-

sponsored exercise that integrates High and Medium Altitude Air Defense (HIMAD) systems with Short Range Air Defense (SHORAD) systems to help develop the layers necessary for effective AMD. Next, NATO should align other exercises, such as exercise Astral Knight, an annual regional combined and joint exercise (air, land, maritime) with Tobruq Legacy in order to establish and validate the technical solutions and procedural controls it needs to coordinate and control IAMD operations throughout the theater and to synchronize defensive and offensive counter-air operations with ground-based air defense operations. Where possible, these should include naval AMD exercises such as Formidable Shield to better integrate AMD forces from all components and domains. This exercise program should also incorporate command post exercises (CPX) at the operational level to train and stress the senior level staffs and operation centers and to refine plans and procedural controls. Another critical element is a tabletop exercises (TTX) program, conducted throughout the year, for senior and operational level commanders. These



Exercise Tobruq Legacy in 2017 by Pfc. Nicholas Vidro, U.S. Army under Public Domain.

are designed to address policies, operating concepts plans, and procedures, and which would inform the scenarios and procedures to be exercised or tested in the operational or tactical level exercises. Finally, under the leadership of AIRCOM, these linked exercise programs should culminate each year with a theater-wide joint multinational exercise, alternating between live exercises (LIVEX) and CPX each year.

(3) Invest in next generation fighter aircraft and a follow-on for NATO's Airborne Warning And Control System (AWACS). Given the dynamic 360-degree threat posed by cruise missiles, the first line of defense will be from the air. Coverage by Patriot and other GBAD systems is inadequate to cover most of the likely targeted parts of Europe. Air forces will be a significant component of defending Europe from air and cruise missile attacks because they can cover more territory and flex more readily to the direction of the threats. But to do this, NATO must have a robust sensor network and an integrated air defense C2 system to direct fighter aircraft and integrate aircraft with GBAD fires in a coordinated defense. Europe's fighter fleet is aging. The F-35 is an answer — and a European fighter could be a solid addition — but European Allies and Partners must invest in the capability that optimizes Alliance interoperability. Similarly, while some countries may not be able to afford aircraft or complete modern missile defense systems, they can contribute by purchasing/hosting sensors that integrate into the overall NATO AMD system.

(4) Greater contributions from several NATO Allies to the maritime component of IAMD. The Netherlands, Spain, UK, Norway, and Denmark are the closest to being ready to contribute their ship-based sensors and shooters.

(5) Increase capacity for AMD. Russia has developed a wide range of missiles in large quantities. These will overwhelm NATO air defenses, especially when used in combination with cyberattacks, swarms of drones, and other enabling tactics, unless the Alliance has enough sensors and shooters to defeat or degrade their effects.

(6) Support the rapid fielding and training of Patriot systems in Sweden, Poland, and Romania. Several Allies are currently equipped with Patriot, including the U.S., Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, and Spain. This so-called "Patriot Community" is led by U.S. Army Europe's (USAREUR) 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC) and the German/Netherlands Competence Center for Surface-Based Air and Missile Defense (CCSBMD) at Ramstein Airbase. This "community" should actively assist Allies and Partners who are currently fielding those systems (Sweden) or will in the near future (Poland and Romania) to enable the deployment and fastest possible achievement of FOC. It should also organize routine training, integration exercises, and activities, and assist with the education of Officers and NCOs from Sweden, Poland, and Romania. The Patriot "community" should also support initiatives to integrate with other similar national systems such as Germany's Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) and France's "Aster" systems.

(7) Support the development of new technologies such as solid-state lasers and capabilities that achieve "left of launch," or disrupt or defeat air and missile development programs and individual missiles before they actually launch.

(8) Review and update doctrine and specifically exercise the other part of "integrated" in IAMD:

offensive fires and counterair. Each exercise should be conducted in the context of offense-defense integration considering in advance the implications for the Alliance and its members.

(9) Improve “passive defense.” This is a component of IAMD that depends on minimizing detection and damage through dispersal, camouflage, deception, and hardening. Because there will never be enough active AMD, passive defense must play a larger role. This should be a point of emphasis for all ground force exercises but also as part of defenses for fixed sites such as airfields, seaports, and other critical infrastructure.

(10) Convert NATO Air Policing missions in the Baltic Sea and Black Sea regions to NATO Air Defense with the associated necessary changes in mission profile, armament, and rules of engagement.

(11) Conduct periodic rotations of Allied and Partner IAMD forces to each country along NATO’s Eastern Flank as part of readiness tests to demonstrate capabilities and rehearse contingencies, to familiarize commanders and staffs with the challenges of “out of area” operations.

Gain Initiative in the Baltic Sea Region

Improve Mission Command: The U.S. and NATO have established several new regional HQs and deployed multiple enduring-presence rotational units along NATO’s Eastern Flank. The majority of U.S. forces are in Poland but are available for further deployments and exercises throughout the region. A challenge remains to synchronize and maximize the effects of these new HQs, units, and other organizations. Too often during exercises, recurring challenges — particularly related to movement and host



Polish Air Force F-16s in 2019. “BAP2019_1_Q_FM_00015” by NATO Allied Air Command under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

nation support — are solved through work-arounds and ad hoc relationships, rather than by improving organizational synchronization. Two potential solutions would involve: (1) Proper Allied liaison elements and support teams with longer than rotational tours of duty in order to improve continuity. NATO NFIUs, U.S. ASGs, ASTs, Aviation Detachment (AVDET) and ARDET, as well as the Germany liaison (LNO) team in Poland, are examples of such organizations which help reduce friction before and during a crisis; and (2) NATO must ensure that clear lines of communication, authorities, and procedures are developed among the myriad new formats supporting deployments along NATO's Eastern Flank.

The covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of backup communications, as national border closure decisions were not coordinated with NATO. Exercises test existing capabilities but they must include robust review processes to respond to new challenges and ensure improvement. Finally, many lessons learned in the more developed NATO response in the Baltic region can be applied as the Alliance moves away from tFP in the Black Sea region to Forward Presence and “one flank, one threat, one presence.”

Additionally, Germany has established a new multinational HQ BMCC in Rostock which can provide improved mission command, a common maritime and air picture, and more sophisticated naval exercises and anti-submarine warfare capabilities in the Baltic region. It will include Sweden and Finland as well as the surrounding NATO countries of Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Norway. This greater C2 capability in the Baltic Sea region should be an inspiration for similar efforts in the Black Sea region.

Encourage Regional Cooperation: The U.S. presence in Poland encourages Warsaw to be more active beyond its borders. Poland is deepening relationships with the Baltic states, Sweden, Finland, Germany, and Romania. This should be encouraged as Poland is the lynchpin Ally during a crisis in the Baltic region. The U.S. AVDET assigned to Poland is a model for air force bilateral cooperation and should be developed into a multinational AVDET to include the growing number of regional F-16 partners (Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia). Other interoperable Partners should join. Poland and Germany have large land force capacities but have limited military-military cooperation. A Poland-Germany armored unit

“The covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of backup communications, as national border closures were not coordinated with NATO. ”

exchange program shows promise and should be accelerated with routine large combined armor exercises in Germany and Poland. This can be a magnet for more partners to join, increasing NATO's combined arms interoperability.

The renewal of regional TDFs provides an opportunity for cross-border cooperation and for U.S. National Guard partners under EUCOM's State Partnership Program (SPP) to enhance these emerging capabilities. According to U.S. Special Operations Command, Poland is among its top five SOF partners. Poland is already increasing regional SOF cooperation and as a regional leader, it can encourage more SOF-SOF initiatives. Special Operations Command Europe maintains SOF forces in the Baltic states and Poland. These deployments could expand their reach by including engagements with other Eastern Flank SOF partners such as the Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary, and several others. Cyber security cooperation should also be increased with combined training programs initiated in air defense, anti-armor, engineer, intelligence, and logistics.

Several initiatives are underway or can be pursued in the energy sphere to reduce regional dependence on Russia, including developing liquefied natural gas (LNG) corridors and synchronizing regional electricity networks. Poland is developing important projects to increase and diversify LNG options. These include the Baltic Pipe Project, connecting Norway's LNG to Danish and Polish gas markets; the expansion of LNG delivery and transfer capacity at the Świnoujście Terminal; the development of a floating LNG terminal near Gdańsk; and two interconnector pipelines to Slovakia and Ukraine. There is potential for Poland, Romania,

and Ukraine to partner in developing a Central European gas market exchange. Romania has significant offshore reserves, while Ukraine has substantial unused storage capacity and Poland's gas requirements are increasing (as it reduces dependence on coal). Poland is also a transit corridor to Western Europe. In the Baltic states, Lithuania has significantly expanded its LNG capacity, bringing its Klaipėda terminal online in 2014, doubling its capacity by 2021, and planning to connect to both Finnish and Polish gas markets. Latvia and Estonia are both considering LNG terminals. A major regional initiative is the future synchronization of energy networks in the Baltic states with the rest of Europe via Poland. This will effectively decouple Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania from dependence on Russian sources. The development of TSI with its energy, transport, and digital pillars will further reduce the dependence of CEE states on Moscow.

Increase Polish Divisional Capabilities: The U.S., Poland, and NATO need Polish divisions to operate in high intensity combat in a joint and combined environment at a much more sophisticated level. Polish divisions will almost certainly be the first to respond for NATO in a crisis scenario in the Baltic region. Combining Poland's division level capabilities with the U.S. Army's division forward presence in Poland could advance Polish operational capabilities at the division level. This can be accomplished with a focused multiyear program of division interaction, training, and exercises and could take advantage of major regional division exercises such as Defender. It should also include robust use of division exercise capabilities at the U.S. Joint Multinational Training Center, Germany, and the growing capabilities at Poland's Drawsko Pomorskie Training Center. As the program develops, other NATO, multinational, and regional



Polish army soldiers with the 15th Mechanized Brigade in Exercise Saber Strike in 2018. “180614-A-AM237-1134” by U.S. Department of Defense under Public Domain.

divisions should be incorporated, including newly forming divisions in Lithuania, Romania, and the Czech Republic.

Counter Russian A2/AD Innovations: Baltic region Allies and Partners as a group have significant means to counter Russia’s A2/AD capabilities.⁷⁷ These include modern (or modernizing) land, air, maritime, SOF, and cyber domain capabilities, although not everything needs to be modernized to have a deterrence effect. In the spring of 2019, Poland initiated a “proof of concept” drill during Exercise Spring Storm in Estonia. Using an old minesweeper, it deployed its modern Norwegian Naval Strike Missile (NSM) systems to Estonia. Once in firing position, the NSMs had nearby patrolling Russian ships under Allied A2/AD for significant periods of time. There are unlimited possibilities in moving

forces and capabilities into position temporarily or threatening Russian assets under allied A2/AD for prolonged periods. This helps NATO to gain the initiative, while demonstrating Alliance commitment. During Exercise Spring Storm, General Rajmund Andrzejczak, Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, stated that his view on security was regionally oriented because the defense of Poland starts in the Baltic states.

Gain Initiative in the Black Sea Region

Conduct and Improve Comprehensive Defense Planning: NATO needs to develop a more comprehensive plan for the defense of the Black Sea region, similar to what it has already accomplished for the Baltic region with GRP. This plan would drive training exercises and mission command adjustments as well

as provide the requirements necessary to improve military mobility. Such a program would underscore the strategic importance of the Black Sea region for NATO and U.S. security and gain the attention of U.S. policymakers. The vulnerability of the region as a platform for Russia's military operations in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, Caucasus, and Balkans presents direct threats to American interests.

Develop a COP for air, maritime, and land for the Greater Black Sea Region: In enhancing maritime ISR, NATO and its Allies and Partners need a clearer, more comprehensive, and shared picture of developments in the region. This will contribute to “speed of recognition” and “speed of decision” and will enable more effective efforts to counter Russian disinformation operations. In the maritime theater, aerial, surface, and underwater drones are affordable and dependable, which reduces the need for a major navy buildup. Black Sea countries should consider rotating USAF Predator B/MQ9 Reaper and Army tactical UAVs — which are effective at relatively low-cost — from U.S. squadrons in Poland during bad weather to the Black Sea region, where Romania has fewer restrictions for UAV operations, massive airspace, and good weather for UAV training, exercises, and operations. More UAVs in the Black Sea region would help provide a better COP to Allied HQs, while U.S. personnel could complete UAV certification requirements in Romania. With U.S. support, NATO could establish a NATO UAV COE in Romania — the first in the Alliance.

Romanian military intelligence leaders have already formally discussed plans to develop a Black Sea Situational Awareness Center. It would fuse single-source intelligence and produce a timely, relevant, accurate, and

predictive COP of Black Sea threat activity. There is a COP already in existence, but it is focused primarily on maritime threats and must be expanded to include more ground and air order of battle analysis, open source intelligence (OSINT) analysis, and cyber threat intelligence. The U.S. and NATO should invest in this concept, building upon the EUCOM and Romanian Ministry of National Defense (MoND) intelligence-sharing relationships and combined infrastructure already in existence in order to enhance “speed of recognition” in the Black Sea region.

“In enhancing maritime ISR, NATO and its Allies and Partners need a clearer, more comprehensive, and shared picture of developments in the region.”



“AWACS arrival in Bucharest, Romania kicks off NATO planning conf” in 2017 by NATO Allied Air Command under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Reinforce Romania: As the center of gravity of NATO deterrence in the Black Sea region, Romania needs significant military reinforcement. Above all, this means improving Romania’s road and rail infrastructure to enhance military mobility, whether through the TSI or with funding from NATO Allies and the EU, and developing existing NATO structures in Romania. This also means accelerating the establishment of MNC-SE, in order to complete the Allied C2 architecture in the Black Sea region, and strengthening MNB-SE. Assigning a U.S. flag officer to the MNC-NE in Poland was a watershed to encourage capabilities growth. Such a U.S. commitment to MNC-SE would have a similar effect.

The regional maritime NATO HQ (now only a command sub-element within NATO Maritime Command (MARCOM) in Northwood, UK)

could be located in Constanța, Romania, in order to coordinate the naval efforts of Black Sea littoral states and other NATO countries, following the example of the HQ BMCC in Rostock. MK Air Base should be reinforced as a power projection platform for logistics, land, mission command, and air activity. A Romanian-Ukrainian brigade could be established to enhance military cooperation, modeled on the Polish-Ukrainian-Lithuanian brigade, perhaps with an additional NATO Ally such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, or Greece.

The U.S. should accept Bucharest’s invitation to contribute forces to MNB-SE. Romania provided an Air Defense Battery to the U.S.-led eFP Battle Group in Poland; the U.S. should reciprocate with a company or battery-size element for the Romanian-based MNB-SE. This could be done with a rotational unit

from the National Guard such as the Alabama Army National Guard (Romania's state partner) or from the Rotational ABCT. Likewise, U.S.-Romanian naval cooperation would greatly benefit from assigning a U.S. Navy Liaison Officer to the Romanian Navy HQ in Constanța to closely cooperate and help guide the Romanian Navy. This would help deepen bilateral naval relationships and increase the U.S. Navy's understanding of the challenges posed by Russia on the Black Sea.

Improve Capabilities: To gain the initiative in the Black Sea region, NATO should increase its regional C2 footprint. A phased approach to this goal is possible, starting with the Black Sea Situational Awareness (intelligence fusion) center, which could develop into a C2 node/coordination center for the entire Black Sea region. The Alliance should follow the example of MARCOM in Northwood, UK — where separate cells are dedicated to the Baltic Sea and Black Sea — and eventually phase in a more robust C2 node. In the Baltic Sea region, German leadership provides an excellent interim C2 capability at its new command in Rostock. Over time, the Alliance can use a logical, step-by-step approach to build out needed capabilities for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) in the Black Sea region.

NATO has been limited in deterring Russian aggression in the Black Sea region, partly because of the Montreux Convention. Respecting the practical implications of this treaty, NATO should develop a naval approach to the Black Sea that enables Turkey's full and transparent enforcement of Montreux, especially in the case of Russian military transits into the Eastern Mediterranean. First and foremost, this means non-littoral NATO

“To gain the initiative in the Black Sea region, NATO should increase its regional C2 footprint.”

Allies taking full advantage of the tonnage and time permitted under Montreux as the Alliance currently uses less than half of the allowances. This could be accomplished by encouraging the presence of SNMGs in the Black Sea. Working within the confines of Montreux, NATO must set as a priority the maintenance of an effective, year-round, rotational naval presence by non-littoral powers. In 2019, former SACEUR General Curtis Scaparrotti expressed concern about Russia's naval modernization and NATO's insufficient deterrence posture, including shortfalls in land and naval forces as well as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets. His recommendation that the U.S. deploy more troops and warships to Europe, including two additional naval destroyers to join the four already stationed in Rota, Spain, remains an imperative for improving capabilities in the region.

Create NATO A2/AD “Bubbles”: To help protect the western Black Sea, capabilities should include unmanned maritime systems, ground-based systems in Romania including anti-ship missiles, drones, and rotary wing attack aviation. Also needed is more NATO naval and air engagement, including the conversion of NATO’s Black Sea Air Policing mission to Air Defense, with new rules of engagement and enhanced capabilities. Several strategic locations around the Black Sea need to be militarily reinforced and serve as military hubs, which can include Ukraine’s Odesa and the Danube Delta.

Conduct Maritime Policing Missions: A BSMP needs to be developed, with non-littoral NATO naval presence each day of the year. Given the restrictions under the Montreux Convention

and Romania’s defense budget limitations, a short-term solution could involve equipping small vessels in Romania’s military fleet with modern UAS and missiles. In addition, as there is no international governing body that decides on violations of the Montreux Convention, Romania should establish a monitoring system that can inform and support the efforts of the Foreign Ministry of Turkey’s Department of Maritime Affairs about Montreux Convention violations, particularly by Russia, and publish their violations.

Improve Romania’s ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance) capabilities: As a frontline country, Romania is uniquely positioned to acquire I&W of future Russian aggression against NATO and the EU. EUCOM should focus



Live-fire range training at the Novo Selo Training Area in Bulgaria in 2018. “Green Gaze” by Cpl. Alexander Sturdivant, U.S. Marine Corps under Public Domain.



The German Navy and Dutch Navy in the Black Sea as part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 in 2018. “SNMG2 ACTIVITIES AT SEA” by NATO HQ MARCOM under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

component military-to-military engagement strategies on helping the Romanians build out ISTAR capacity by training and sustaining joint ISTAR specialists. An ideal starting point for this would be greater partnership at Romania’s Defense Intelligence Training Center and expanding into Romania’s future ISR Training Center in Buzău, Romania.

EUCOM assistance to help Romania expand UAV capabilities would be a game-changer for NATO’s Black Sea region ISTAR needs. UAVs provide “economy of force” and are force-multipliers, while Romania is uniquely suited to be NATO’s regional UAV hub. The USAF periodically operates MQ-9/Reaper UAVs from Romania. The USAF will soon position a Reaper unit in nearby Poland, which can also further deploy to Romania, especially during Poland’s poor weather months. USAREUR has requirements to certify its UAV units,

which it can do almost 12 months per year in Romania, instead of returning to U.S. locations. EUCOM and NATO can assist Romania in its own UAV acquisition program and support the development of a NATO UAV COE in Romania. The COE can help NATO develop common UAV doctrine and procedures, and also be NATO’s center for counter-UAV developments.

Invest in Romania’s Cyber Capabilities:

Romania is on the cyberattack frontlines and under constant probing by advanced persistent threats (APT) and other adversarial cyber activities. Several top performing commercial cyber defense ventures—homegrown in Romania—prove that Romania has both the technical workforce and IT infrastructure to excel in this new NATO domain. Additionally, Romania’s establishment of a separate Cyber Command and partnership with the U.S. to acquire training and infrastructure shows just

how seriously Romania takes cyber defense. A sensitive area of future development could be offensive cyber technology-sharing to serve as a deterrent to Russia's aggression in the Black Sea.

Economic Development: Investment in the economic potential of the Black Sea region, particularly in terms of transportation and energy infrastructure, will change the security environment of this region. Romania's full-fledged membership into the Schengen Zone is absolutely essential for the rest of the EU (and NATO) to acknowledge Romania's importance to Europe and drive increased regional investment. Schengen membership would bring a significantly increased throughput of commercial goods across the Black Sea into the Port of Constanța (the largest Black Sea port and thirteenth-busiest port in Europe) and to Western and CEE countries. Romania has met the technical requirements for Schengen membership outlined in 2018; what is needed now is a swift, final decision by the EU, most of which supports the move.

NATO Allies and Partners should also invest in maritime transport corridors between Romanian and Georgian ports as well as between the Black and the Caspian Seas, transforming Odesa into an EU free trade hub, raising the potential of the EU-Ukraine Free Trade agreement, and improving capacities for commercial shipping along the Danube River and through the Danube Delta. NATO should also undertake a strategic assessment of the Danube's transportation capacity and whether the river and delta can consistently enhance military mobility. It has already demonstrated significant capacity for heavy equipment transport to the Black Sea region and particularly Romania. As the road and rail systems to the region are developed, the

Danube offers a useful interim solution that should be fully explored. Contingencies must also be developed to defend the Danube Delta and prevent Russian subversion of riverine regions, including attempts to blockade or sabotage passage through the Danube and into the Black Sea. A multi-modal infrastructure sponsored by the EU can connect NATO's Eastern Flank with Moldova and Ukraine, in which the capacity of the Danube for commercial traffic is significantly enhanced.

Economic linkages must also include developing the Anaklia deep-sea port in Georgia, which can become a reliable, secure, and cost-effective gateway between Europe and Asia that will deflate Russian and Chinese monopolization and enable the full utilization

“Investment in the economic potential of the Black Sea region, particularly in terms of transportation and infrastructure, will change the security environment.”

of the Caucasus Transit Corridor. Allies should support efforts under the TSI that reduce energy dependence on Russia and which improve north-south trade to connect the Baltic region with the Black Sea region.

Bucharest is concerned that Moscow could try to affect the offshore energy installations deployed in its continental shelf and EEZ where NATO has only a limited capability to intervene. Moscow made an aggressive push in 2019 to purchase Exxon Mobil shares of the Neptun Deep offshore project in the Black Sea. The Romanian government passed an emergency ordinance to block Exxon's sale to countries that are not in the EU, which blocked Russia's commercial expansion. But the Kremlin will continue pursuing the domination of oil and gas production in the Black Sea, including through military and malign influence tools. The Alliance could greatly benefit overall Black Sea security by helping to deter potential revisionist probing of offshore energy resources located in littoral EEZs with land-based air defense systems, coastal defense systems, contributions to increased surveillance capabilities in the air and sea, and more intensive maritime patrolling in the Black Sea. This effort could also include closer U.S.-Romania cooperation to refurbish the Cernavodă nuclear power plant. As more countries gain a stake in the economic prosperity of NATO's Black Sea Allies and Partners, the more they will focus on their security and ensure freedom of navigation and respect for each country's territorial waters and EEZ.

Support NATO Partners

NATO Membership Action Plan for Georgia and Ukraine: The 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest declared that Georgia and Ukraine would become NATO members, although

no timeline was specified. Washington can pursue a more assertive policy in support of NATO accession for both countries. This will demonstrate that Russian pressure does not disqualify them from NATO and that any country has the right to choose its political and security alliances. Various intermediate steps can be taken to harmonize their militaries with NATO standards, including enhanced intelligence sharing, maritime cooperation, and the provision of military medical care.

Strengthen Ukraine's Capabilities: With the goal of attaining NATO membership, Ukraine should apply Western acquisition system processes. The United States should strongly support a decision by NATO to grant Enhanced Opportunity Partner (EOP) status to Ukraine in recognition of its strategic importance and substantial progress toward interoperability with NATO forces.⁷⁸ To preclude further territorial losses, Ukraine must enhance its military and economic potential and make all-out war too risky and expensive for Moscow. Kyiv can be assisted in integrating its maritime strategy with NATO's broader Black Sea strategy, with investments in the naval infrastructure in Odesa. Ukraine's defense-industrial sector must produce or purchase the capabilities needed to blunt any possible Russian offensives. It needs land-based short-range missiles, anti-ship, and anti-air missiles and all elements of a combined arms defense of its maritime borders. The U.S. can also provide various vessels in exchange for leasing port facilities to the U.S. Navy in Odesa. These could include Mark V boats, equipped with Hellfire missiles and Harpoon anti-ship missiles that can be transported by air to Mariupol and Berdyansk on the Sea of Azov. Concurrently, Russian Navy vessels should be banned from all NATO ports until Moscow enables the free movement of Ukraine's commercial and Navy



A Ukrainian Ka-27 helicopter takes off during exercise Sea Breeze in 2018. “180711-N-XT273-662” by U.S. Department of Defense under Public Domain.

ships through the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov.⁷⁹ Many of these ships home-port in illegally-annexed Ukrainian territory in Crimea. The EU could also extend this ban to Russian commercial ships originating in the Black Sea.

Strengthen Georgia’s Capabilities: NATO should intensify its defense cooperation with Georgia and continue to develop its national defense and deterrence capabilities. Georgia retains special status within the Alliance through the NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) and the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP).⁸⁰ The Alliance should review the existing areas of cooperation under these programs and ensure their alignment with current and emergent Russian threats. NATO should also support modernization and infrastructure improvements at Vaziani military airfield, which can facilitate joint exercises, cooperation, and operations. Georgia should also be considered as an alternative to host the Alliance’s TYP-2 tracking radar for ballistic missile defenses, in case that capability is no longer located in Turkey in the future.

CONCLUSION

Russia’s ambitions, capabilities, and actions along NATO’s Eastern Flank threaten the territorial integrity of the most vulnerable sector of the transatlantic Alliance. This danger is not necessarily confined to low-intensity or non-military forms of conflict. Moscow calculates that its forces can exploit uncertainties and internal political cleavages within the Alliance to conduct a wide range of offensives, including low-threshold probing, limited or temporary military incursions, or rapid “stab, grab, and hold” maneuvers aimed at creating a *fait accompli* at the negotiating table. Such a destabilizing strategy necessitates that NATO remove any asymmetries in its current Eastern Flank posture and adopt a common threat assessment in preparing for rapid political and military reactions to Moscow’s provocations. The readiness and resolve of NATO Allies to respond effectively when challenged by an expansionist adversary can be encapsulated in the rallying cry “**One Flank, One Threat, One Presence.**”

Appendix I

Key Acronyms

5G – Fifth Generation Wireless Communications

A2/AD – Anti-Access/Area Denial

AAMDC – Army Air and Missile Defense Command

ABCT – Armored Brigade Combat Team

AI – Artificial Intelligence

AIRCOM – Air Command

Alliance – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Ally – NATO Member

AMD – Air and Missile Defense

APS – Army Prepositioned Stocks

APT – Advanced Persistent Threats

ARDET – Army Detachment

ASG – Area Support Group

AST – Area Support Team

AVDET – Aviation Detachment

AWACS – Airborne Warning And Control System

B9 – Bucharest 9

BMCC – Baltic Maritime Component Command

BSMP – Black Sea Maritime Policing

C2 – Command and Control

C4ISR – Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

CCSBMD – Competence Center for Surface Based Air and Missile Defense

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

COE – Center of Excellence (NATO)

COP – Common Operating Picture

CPX – Command Post Exercise

DAO – Defense Attaché Office

DATT – Defense Attaché

DoD – U.S. Department of Defense

EaP – Eastern Partnership

EAP – Enhanced Air Policing

EBSAP – Enhanced Black Sea Air Policing

EDI – European Defense Initiative

EDRE – Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise

EEZ – Exclusive Economic Zone

eFP – enhanced Forward Presence

ELINT – Electronic Intelligence

EOP – Enhanced Opportunity Partner

EPAA – European Phased Adaptive Approach

ER – Extended Range

EU – European Union

EUCOM – United States European Command

EW – Electronic Warfare

FOC – Full Operational Capability

FP – Forward Presence

GBAD – Ground-Based Air Defense

GEOINT – Geospatial Intelligence

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GPS – Global Positioning System

GRP – Graduated Response Plan

HIMAD – High and Medium Altitude Air Defense

HIMARS – High Mobility Artillery Rocket System

HQ – Headquarters

I&W – Indications and Warning

IAMD – Integrated Air and Missile Defense

ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

ISR – Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

ISTAR – Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance

ITLOS – International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

JASSM-ER – Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (Extended Range)

JFC – Joint Forces Command

JMTGU – Joint Multinational Training Group Ukraine

JSEC – Joint Support Enabling Command

LIVEX – Live Exercise

LNG – Liquefied Natural Gas

LNO – Liaison Officer

MARCOM – Maritime Command

MEADS – Medium Extended Air Defense System

MK - Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base

MLRS – Multiple Launch Rocket System

MNB-SE – Multinational Brigade Southeast

MNC-NE – Multinational Corps Northeast

MNC-SE – Multinational Corps Southeast

MND-CE – Multinational Division Central Europe

MND-N – Multinational Division North

MND-NE – Multinational Division Northeast

MND-SE – Multinational Division Southeast

MoND – Ministry of National Defense of Romania

Montreux – Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits

MUSI – Maritime Unmanned Systems Initiative

NAC – North Atlantic Council

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Center for European Policy Analysis

NCO – Non-Commissioned Officer

NCS – NATO's Command Structure

NDAA – National Defense Authorization Act

New START – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

NFIU – NATO Force Integration Units

NGA – National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

NGC – NATO-Georgia Commission

NPS – NATO's Pipeline System

NRF – NATO Response Force

NRI – NATO's Readiness Initiative

NSPA – NATO Support and Procurement Agency

NS1 – Nord Stream 1

NS2 – Nord Stream 2

NSM – Naval Strike Missile

ODC – Office of Defense Cooperation

OSINT – Open Source Intelligence

Partner – NATO Partner

PESCO – Permanent Structured Cooperation

PKK – Kurdistan Workers' Party

PNT – Positioning, Navigation, and Timing

PR – Public Relations

SACEUR – Supreme Allied Commander Europe

SC – Security Cooperation

SDO – Senior Defense Official

SHAPE – Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

SHORAD – Short Range Air Defense

SNGP – Substantial NATO-Georgia Package

SNMG – Standing NATO Maritime Group

SOCC – Special Operations Component Command

SOF – Special Operations Forces

SPACECOM – United States Space Command

SPP – State Partnership Program

SSA – Space Situational Awareness

STH – Solidarity Transport Hub

TDF – Territorial Defense Force

tFP – tailored Forward Presence

TSI – Three Seas Initiative

UAV – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

UAS – Unmanned Aircraft System

USAF – United States Air Force

USAFE – United States Air Forces in Europe

USAREUR – United States Army Europe

V4 – Visegrád Group

VJTF – Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

YPG – People's Protection Units

Appendix II

The North Atlantic Treaty

Washington, DC - April 4, 1949

The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments. They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defense and for the preservation of peace and security. They therefore agree to this North Atlantic Treaty:

Article 1

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

Article 2

The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by

promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.

Article 3

In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Article 4

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.

Article 5

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary,

including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security .

Article 6

For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France ², on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;

on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

Article 7

This Treaty does not affect, and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations under the Charter of the Parties which are members of the United Nations, or the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 8

Each Party declares that none of the international engagements now in force between it and any other of the Parties or any third State is in conflict with the provisions of this Treaty, and undertakes not to enter into any international engagement in conflict with this Treaty.

Article 9

The Parties hereby establish a Council, on which each of them shall be represented, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council shall be so organized as to be able to meet promptly at any time. The Council shall set up such subsidiary bodies as may be necessary; in particular it shall establish immediately a defense committee which shall recommend measures for the implementation of Articles 3 and 5.

Article 10

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. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.

Article 11

This Treaty shall be ratified and its provisions carried out by the Parties in accordance with

their respective constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Government of the United States of America, which will notify all the other signatories of each deposit. The Treaty shall enter into force between the States which have ratified it as soon as the ratifications of the majority of the signatories, including the ratifications of Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, have been deposited and shall come into effect with respect to other States on the date of the deposit of their ratifications.

Article 12

After the Treaty has been in force for ten years, or at any time thereafter, the Parties shall, if any of them so requests, consult together for the purpose of reviewing the Treaty, having regard for the factors then affecting peace and security in the North Atlantic area, including the development of universal as well as regional arrangements under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 13

After the Treaty has been in force for twenty years, any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the United States

of America, which will inform the Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation.

Article 14

This Treaty, of which the English and French texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America. Duly certified copies will be transmitted by that Government to the Governments of other signatories.

(1) The definition of the territories to which Article 5 applies was revised by Article 2 of the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the accession of Greece and Turkey signed on 22 October 1951.

(2) On January 16, 1963, the North Atlantic Council noted that insofar as the former Algerian Departments of France were concerned, the relevant clauses of this Treaty had become inapplicable as from July 3, 1962

(3) The Treaty came into force on 24 August 1949, after the deposition of the ratifications of all signatory states.

Source: "The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C. – 4 April 1949," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, April 4, 1949, webpage last updated April 10, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

Appendix III

Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits

Montreux, Switzerland - July 20, 1936

ARTICLE 1 The High Contracting Parties recognize and affirm the principle of freedom of transit and navigation by sea in the Straits.

The exercise of this freedom shall henceforth be regulated by the provisions of the present Convention.

SECTION I. MERCHANT VESSELS

ARTICLE 2 In time of peace, merchant vessels shall enjoy complete freedom of transit and navigation in the Straits, by day and by night, under any flag any and with any kind of cargo, without any formalities, except as provided in Article 3 below. No taxes or charges other than those authorized by Annex I to the present Convention shall be levied by the Turkish authorities on these vessels when passing in transit without calling at a port in the Straits.

In order to facilitate the collection of these taxes or charges merchant vessels passing through the Straits shall communicate to the officials at the stations referred to in Article 3 their name nationality, tonnage, destination and last port of call (provenance). Pilotage and towage remain optional.

ARTICLE 3 All ships entering the Straits by the Aegean Sea or by the Black Sea shall stop at a sanitary station near the entrance to the Straits for the purposes of the sanitary

control prescribed by Turkish law within the framework of international sanitary regulations. This control, in the case of ship possessing a clean bill of health or presenting a declaration of health testifying that they do not fall within scope of the provisions of the second paragraph of the present Article, shall be carried out by day and by night with all possible speed, and the vessels in question shall not be required to make any other stop during their passage throughout the Straits.

Vessels which have on board cases of plague, cholera, yellow fever, exanthematic typhus or smallpox, or which have had such cases on board during the seven days, and vessels which have left an infected port within less than five times twenty-four hours shall stop at the sanitary stations indicated in the preceding paragraph in order to embark such sanitary guards as the Turkish authorities may direct. No tax or charge shall be levied in respect of these sanitary guards and they shall be disembarked at a sanitary station on departure from the Straits.

ARTICLE 4 In time of war, Turkey not being belligerent, merchant vessels, under any flag or with any kind of cargo, shall enjoy freedom of transit and navigation in the Straits subject to the provisions of Articles 2 and 3.

Pilotage and towage remain optional.

ARTICLE 5 In time of war, Turkey being belligerent, merchant vessels not belonging to a country at war with Turkey shall enjoy freedom of transit and navigation in the Straits on condition that they do not in any way assist the enemy.

Such vessels shall enter the Straits by day and their transit shall be effected by the route which shall in each case be indicated by the Turkish authorities.

ARTICLE 6 Should Turkey consider herself to be threatened with imminent danger of war, the provisions of Article 2 shall nevertheless continue to be applied except that vessels must enter the Straits by day and that their transit must be effected by the route which shall, in each case, be indicated by the Turkish authorities.

Pilotage may, in this case, be made obligatory, but no charge shall be levied.

ARTICLE 7 The term “merchant vessels” applies to all vessels which are not covered by Section II of the present Convention.

SECTION II. VESSELS OF WAR

ARTICLE 8 For the purposes of the present Convention, the definitions of vessels of war and of their specification together with those relating to the calculation of tonnage shall be as set forth in Annex II to the present Convention.

ARTICLE 9 Naval auxiliary vessels specifically designed for the carriage of fuel, liquid or non-liquid, shall not be subject to the provisions of Article 13 regarding notification, nor shall they be counted for the purpose of calculating the tonnage which is subject to limitation under Articles 14 and 18, on condition that they shall pass through the Straits singly. They shall,

however, continue to be on the same footing as vessels of war for the purpose of the remaining provisions governing transit.

The auxiliary vessels specified in the preceding paragraph shall only be entitled to benefit by the exceptional status therein contemplated if their armament does not include: for use against floating targets, more than two guns of a maximum caliber of 105 millimeters; for use against aerial targets, more than two guns of a maximum caliber of 75 millimeters.

ARTICLE 10 In time of peace, light surface vessels, minor war vessels and auxiliary vessels, whether belonging to Black Sea or non-Black Sea Powers, and whatever their flag, shall enjoy freedom of transit through the Straits without any taxes or charges whatever, provided that such transit is begun during daylight and subject to the conditions laid down in Article 13 and the Articles following thereafter.

Vessels of war other than those which fall within the categories specified in the preceding paragraph shall only enjoy a right of transit under the special conditions provided by Articles 11 and 12.

ARTICLE 11 Black Sea Powers may send through the Straits capital ships of a tonnage greater than that laid down in the first paragraph of Article 14, on condition that these vessels pass through the Straits singly, escorted by not more than two destroyers.

ARTICLE 12 Black Sea Powers shall have the right to send through the Straits, for the purpose of rejoining their base, submarines constructed or purchased outside the Black Sea, provided that adequate notice of the laying down or purchase of such submarines shall have been given to Turkey.

Submarines belonging to the said Powers shall also be entitled to pass through the Straits to be repaired in dockyards outside the Black Sea on condition that detailed information on the matter is given to Turkey.

In either case, the aid submarines must travel by day and on the surface, and must pass through the Straits singly.

ARTICLE 13 The transit of vessels of war through the Straits shall be preceded by a notification given to the Turkish Government through the diplomatic channel. The normal period of notice shall be eight days; but it is desirable that in the case of non-Black Sea Powers this period should be increased to fifteen days. The notification shall specify the destination, name, type and number of the vessels, as also the date of entry for the outward passage and, if necessary, for the return journey. Any change of date shall be subject to three days' notice.

Entry into the Straits for the outward passage shall take place within a period of five days from the date given in the original notification. After the expiry of this period, a new notification shall be given under the same conditions as for the original notification.

When effecting transit, the commander of the naval force shall, without being under any obligation to stop, communicate to a signal station at the entrance to the Dardanelles or the Bosphorus the exact composition of the force under his orders.

ARTICLE 14 The maximum aggregate tonnage of all foreign naval forces which may be in course of transit through the Straits shall not exceed 15,000 tons, except in the cases provided for in Article 11 and in Annex III to the present Convention.

The forces specified in the preceding paragraph shall not, however, comprise more than nine vessels.

Vessels whether belonging to Black Sea or non-Black Sea Powers, paying visits to a port in the Straits, in accordance with the provisions of Article 17, shall not be included in this tonnage.

Neither shall vessels of war which have suffered damage during their passage through the Straits be included in this tonnage; such vessels, while undergoing repair, shall be subject to any special provisions relating to security laid down by Turkey.

ARTICLE 15 Vessels of war in transit through the Straits shall in no circumstances make use of any aircraft which they may be carrying.

ARTICLE 16 Vessels of war in transit through the Straits shall not, except in the event of damage or peril of the sea, remain therein longer than is necessary for them to effect the passage.

ARTICLE 17 Nothing in the provisions of the preceding Articles shall prevent a naval force of any tonnage or composition from paying a courtesy visit of limited duration to a port in the Straits, at the invitation of the Turkish Government. Any such force must leave the Straits by the same route as that by which it entered, unless it fulfils the conditions required for passage in transit through the Straits as laid down by Articles 10, 14 and 18.

ARTICLE 18 (1) The aggregate tonnage which non-Black Sea Powers may have in that sea in time of peace shall be limited as follows:

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) below, the aggregate tonnage of the said Powers shall not exceed 30,000 tons;

(b) If at any time the tonnage of the strongest fleet in the Black Sea shall exceed by at least 10,000 tons the tonnage of the strongest fleet in that sea at the date of the signature of the present Convention, the aggregate tonnage of 30,000 tons mentioned in paragraph (a) shall be increased by the same amount, up to a maximum of 45,000 tons. For this purpose, each Black Sea Power shall, in conformity with Annex IV to the present Convention, inform the Turkish Government, on the 1st January and the 1st July of each year, of the total tonnage of its fleet in the Black Sea; and the Turkish Government shall transmit this information to the other High Contracting Parties and to the Secretary General of the League of Nations;

(c) The tonnage which any one non-Black Sea Power may have in the Black Sea shall be limited to two-thirds of the aggregate tonnage provided for in paragraphs (a) and (b) above;

(d) In the event, however, of one or more non-Black Sea Powers desiring to send naval forces into the Black Sea, for a humanitarian purpose, the said forces, which shall in no case exceed 8,000 tons altogether, shall be allowed to enter the Black Sea without having to give the notification provided for in Article 13 of the present Convention, provided an authorization is obtained from the Turkish Government in the following circumstances: if the figure of the aggregate tonnage specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) above has not been reached and will not be exceeded by the dispatch of the forces which it is desired to send, the Turkish Government shall grant the said authorization within the shortest possible time after receiving the request which has been addressed to it if the said figure has already been reached or if the dispatch of the forces which it is desired to send will cause it to be exceeded, the Turkish Government will immediately inform the other Black Sea Powers of the request

for authorization, and if the said Powers make no objection within twenty-four hours of having received this information, the Turkish Government shall, within forty-eight hours at the latest, inform the interested Powers of the reply which it has decided to make to their request. Any further entry into the Black Sea of naval forces of non-Black Sea Powers shall only be effected within the available limits of the aggregate tonnage provided for in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.

(2) Vessels of war belonging to non-Black Sea Powers shall not remain in the Black Sea more than twenty-one days, whatever be the object of their presence there.

ARTICLE 19 In time of war, Turkey not being belligerent, warships shall enjoy complete freedom of transit and navigation through the Straits under the same conditions as those laid down in Articles 10 to 18.

Vessels of war belonging to belligerent Powers shall not, however, pass through the Straits except in cases arising out of the application of Article 25 of the present Convention, and in cases of assistance rendered to a State victim of aggression in virtue of a treaty of mutual assistance binding Turkey, concluded within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and registered and published in accordance with the provisions of Article 18 of the Covenant.

In the exceptional cases provided for in the preceding paragraph, the limitations laid down in Articles 10 to 18 of the present Convention shall not be applicable.

Notwithstanding the prohibition of passage laid down in paragraph 2 above, vessels of war belonging to belligerent Powers, whether they are Black Sea Powers or not, which have

become separated from their bases, may return thereto.

Vessels of war belonging to belligerent Powers shall not make any capture, exercise the right of visit and search, or carry out any hostile act in the Straits.

ARTICLE 20 In time of war, Turkey being belligerent, the provisions of Articles 10 to 18 shall not be applicable; the passage of warships shall be left entirely to the discretion of the Turkish Government.

ARTICLE 21 Should Turkey consider herself to be threatened with imminent danger of war she shall have the right to apply the provisions of Article 20 of the present Convention.

Vessels which have passed through the Straits before Turkey has made use of the powers conferred upon her by the preceding paragraph, and which thus find themselves separated from their bases, may return thereto. It is, however, understood that Turkey may deny this right to vessels of war belonging to the State whose attitude has given rise to the application of the present Article.

Should the Turkish Government make use of the powers conferred by the first paragraph of the present Article, a notification to that effect shall be addressed to the High Contracting Parties and to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

If the Council of the League of Nations decide by a majority of two-thirds that the measures thus taken by Turkey are not justified, and if such should also be the opinion of the majority of the High Contracting Parties signatories to the present Convention, the Turkish Government undertakes to discontinue the measures in question as also any measures

which may have been taken under Article 6 of the present Convention.

ARTICLE 22 Vessels of war which have on board cases of plague, cholera, yellow fever, exanthematic typhus or smallpox or which have had such cases on board within the last seven days and vessels of war which have left an infected port within less than five times twenty-four hours must pass through the Straits in quarantine and apply by the means on board such prophylactic measures as are necessary in order to prevent any possibility of the Straits being infected.

SECTION III. AIRCRAFT

ARTICLE 23 In order to assure the passage of civil aircraft between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the Turkish Government will indicate the air routes available for this purpose, outside the forbidden zones which may be established in the Straits. Civil aircraft may use these routes provided that they give the Turkish Government, as regards occasional flights, a notification of three days, and as regards flights on regular services, a general notification of the dates of passage. The Turkish Government moreover undertake, notwithstanding any remilitarization of the Straits, to furnish the necessary facilities for the safe passage of civil aircraft authorized under the air regulations in force in Turkey to fly across Turkish territory between Europe and Asia. The route which is to be followed in the Straits zone by aircraft which have obtained an authorization shall be indicated from time to time.

SECTION IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 24 The functions of the International Commission set up under the Convention relating to the regime of the Straits of the

24th July, 1923, are hereby transferred to the Turkish Government.

The Turkish Government undertake to collect statistics and to furnish information concerning the application of Articles 11, 12, 14 and 18 of the present Convention.

They will supervise the execution of all the provisions of the present Convention relating to the passage of vessels of war through the Straits. As soon as they have been notified of the intended passage through the Straits of a foreign naval force the Turkish Government shall inform the representatives at Angora of the High Contracting Parties of the composition of that force, its tonnage, the date fixed for its entry into the Straits, and, if necessary, the probable date of its return.

The Turkish Government shall address to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations and to the High Contracting Parties an annual report giving details regarding the movements of foreign vessels of war through the Straits and furnishing all information which may be of service to commerce and navigation, both by sea and by air, for which provision is made in the present Convention.

ARTICLE 25 Nothing in the present Convention shall prejudice the rights and obligations of Turkey, or of any of the other High Contracting Parties members of the League of Nations, arising out of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

SECTION V. FINAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 26 The present Convention shall be ratified as soon as possible.

The ratifications shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the French Republic in Paris.

The Japanese Government shall be entitled to inform the Government of the French Republic through their diplomatic representative in Paris that the ratification has been given, and in that case they shall transmit the instrument of ratification as soon as possible.

A process-verbal of the deposit of ratifications shall be drawn up as soon as six instruments of ratification, including that of Turkey, shall have been deposited. For this purpose the notification provided for in the preceding paragraph shall be taken as the equivalent of the deposit of an instrument of ratification.

The present Convention shall come into force on the date of the said process-verbal.

The French Government will transmit to all the High Contracting Parties an authentic copy of the process-verbal provided for in the preceding paragraph and of the process-verbal of the deposit of any subsequent ratifications.

ARTICLE 27 The present Convention shall, as from the date of its entry into force, be open to accession by any Power signatory to the Treaty of Peace at Lausanne signed on the 24th July, 1923.

Each accession shall be notified, through the diplomatic channel, to the Government of the French Republic, and by the latter to all the High Contracting Parties.

Accessions shall come into force as from the date of notification to the French Government.

ARTICLE 28 The present Convention shall remain in force for twenty years from the date of its entry into force.

The principle of freedom of transit and navigation affirmed in Article I of the present Convention shall however continue without limit of time.

If, two years prior to the expiry of the said period of twenty years, no High Contracting Party shall have given notice of denunciation to the French Government the present Convention shall continue in force until two years after such notice shall have been given. Any such notice shall be communicated by the French Government to the High Contracting Parties.

In the event of the present Convention being denounced in accordance with the provisions of the present Article, the High Contracting Parties agree to be represented at a conference for the purpose of concluding a new Convention.

ARTICLE 29 At the expiry of each period of five years from the date of the entry into force of the present Convention each of the High Contracting Parties shall be entitled to initiate a proposal for amending one or more of the provisions of the present Convention.

To be valid, any request for revision formulated by one of the High Contracting Parties must be supported, in the case of modifications to Articles 14 or 18, by one other High Contracting Party, and, in the case of modifications to any

other Article, by two other High Contracting Parties.

Any request for revision thus supported must be notified to all the High Contracting Parties three months prior to the expiry of the current period of five years. This notification shall contain details of the proposed amendments and the reasons which have given rise to them.

Should it be found impossible to reach an agreement on these proposals through the diplomatic channel, the High Contracting Parties agree to be represented at a conference to be summoned for this purpose.

Such a conference may only take decisions by a unanimous vote, except as regards cases of revision involving Articles 14 and 18, for which a majority of three-quarters of the High Contracting Parties shall be sufficient.

The said majority shall include three-quarters of the High Contracting Parties which are Black Sea Powers, including Turkey.

In witness whereof, the above-mentioned Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Convention.

Done at Montreux the 20th July, 1936, in eleven copies, of which the first copy, to which the seals of the Plenipotentiaries have been affixed, will be deposited in the archives of the Government of the French Republic and of which the remaining copies have been transmitted to the signatory Powers.

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