



Atlantic Council

SCOWCROFT CENTER
FOR STRATEGY AND SECURITY

PERMANENT DETERRENCE

Enhancements to the US Military
Presence in North Central Europe



Ambassador Alexander R. Vershbow (Ret.)
General Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (Ret.)

Cover Photo: US soldiers with the Army's 2nd Cavalry Regiment fix American and NATO flags to their Stryker armored fighting vehicle during their 680-mile road march from Vilseck, Germany, to Orzysz, Poland, to be part of Battle Group Poland in support of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence initiative.

Photo: US Army: Jennifer Bunn

PERMANENT DETERRENCE

Enhancements to the US Military Presence in North Central Europe

Ambassador Alexander R. Vershbow (Ret.)

Ambassador Alexander “Sandy” R. Vershbow (Ret.) is a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council. Previously, he served as deputy secretary general of NATO, as well as US ambassador to NATO, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Korea.

General Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (Ret.)

General Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (Ret.) is a board director at the Atlantic Council. Previously, he served as commander of US European Command and supreme allied commander Europe of NATO.

Project Director:

Ian J. Brzezinski

Project Rapporteur:

Lauren M. Speranza

Research Support:

Conor Rodihan

This report is written and published in accordance with the Atlantic Council Policy on Intellectual Independence. The authors are solely responsible for its analysis and recommendations. The Atlantic Council and its donors do not determine, nor do they necessarily endorse or advocate for, any of this report's conclusions.

ISBN-13: 978-1-61977-582-4

February, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

7	TABLE OF CONTENTS
8	ATLANTIC COUNCIL TASK FORCE ON US FORCE POSTURE IN NORTH CENTRAL EUROPE
9	MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE
10	INTRODUCTION
14	CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED SECURITY ENVIRONMENT
21	THE US AND NATO RESPONSE
29	ASSESSING THE RESPONSE
34	POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC, AND MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS
39	PRINCIPLES FOR ENHANCED DETERRENCE
40	RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS TO US FORCE POSTURE IN NORTH CENTRAL EUROPE
46	CONCLUSION

ATLANTIC COUNCIL TASK FORCE ON US FORCE POSTURE IN NORTH CENTRAL EUROPE

In September 2018, the Atlantic Council established a task force on US Force Posture in Europe to assess the adequacy of current US deployments, with a focus on North Central Europe. The task force was co-chaired by General Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (Ret.), former NATO supreme allied commander Europe (SACEUR) and former commander of US European Command (EUCOM), and Ambassador Alexander R. Vershbow (Ret.), former NATO deputy secretary general.

This report is a product of the task force's assessment of the security situation in North Central Europe, including the military balance and the threats to military stability and peace, today and in the foreseeable

future. The report also recommends actions the United States should take to enhance deterrence and defense against aggression toward US allies in that region.

This set of force-posture recommendations has been approved by the two co-chairs as the appropriate response to the current and projected military and geopolitical situation in North Central Europe. All recommendations have been endorsed by the other members of the task force as steps that would strengthen the US posture in the region, in order to bolster NATO deterrence and political cohesion.

MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

- **General Philip Breedlove**, USAF (Ret.), board director, Atlantic Council; former supreme allied commander Europe (SACEUR), NATO; former commander, US European Command (co-chair)
- **Ambassador Alexander Vershbow** (Ret.), distinguished fellow, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Atlantic Council; former NATO deputy secretary general; former assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, US Department of Defense; former US ambassador to NATO, Russia, and Korea (co-chair)
- **Mr. Ian Brzezinski**, senior fellow, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Atlantic Council; principal, Brzezinski Group LLC; former deputy assistant secretary of defense for Europe and NATO policy, US Department of Defense (project director)
- **Dr. Hans Binnendijk**, distinguished fellow, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Atlantic Council; former senior director for defense policy and arms control, US National Security Council; former director of the Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University
- **Ambassador Paula Dobriansky**, board director, Atlantic Council; senior fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University JFK School of Government; former undersecretary of state for democracy and global affairs, US Department of State
- **Dr. Evelyn Farkas**, resident senior fellow, German Marshall Fund of the United States; founding partner, Scarlet Oak Advisors; former deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia, US Department of Defense
- **Ambassador Daniel Fried**, distinguished fellow, Future Europe Initiative and Eurasia Center, Atlantic Council; former US ambassador to Poland; former assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia, US Department of State; former senior director for European and Eurasian affairs, US National Security Council
- **Mr. Robert Nurick**, senior fellow, Atlantic Council; former director, Carnegie Moscow Center
- **Mr. Barry Pavel**, senior vice president, Arnold Kanter chair, and director, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, Atlantic Council; former senior director for defense policy and strategy, US National Security Council
- **Ms. Lauren Speranza**, deputy director, Transatlantic Security Initiative, Atlantic Council (rapporteur)
- **Mr. Jim Townsend**, adjunct senior fellow, Transatlantic Security Program, Center for a New American Security; former deputy assistant secretary of defense for Europe and NATO policy, US Department of Defense
- **Mr. Damon Wilson**, executive vice president, Atlantic Council; former senior director for European affairs, US National Security Council



US Army Soldiers participate in the opening ceremony of Saber Strike, US Army Europe's exercise focused on the Baltic States, at the Bemowo Piskie Training Area in Poland on Monday, June 4, 2018. Photo: Michigan Army National Guard: 1st Lt. Erica Mitchell/released

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Central Europe has become a central point of confrontation between the West and a revisionist Russia. Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia is determined to roll back the post-Cold War settlement, undermine the sovereignty of former Soviet states, and overturn the US-led, rules-based order that has kept Western Europe secure since the end of World War II and enlarged to countries of Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. Moscow's invasion and continued occupation of Georgian and Ukrainian territories, its military build-up in Russia's Western Military District and Kaliningrad, its intervention in Syria, and its "hybrid" warfare against Western societies have heightened instability in the region and made collective defense and deterrence an urgent mission for the United States and NATO.

The United States and NATO have taken significant steps since 2014 to enhance their force posture in Europe and respond to provocative Russian behavior. Despite these efforts, the allies in North Central Europe face a formidable and evolving adversary, and it is unlikely that Russian efforts to threaten and intimidate these nations will end in the near term. Now, ahead of NATO's seventieth anniversary, more can, and should, be done to enhance the Alliance's deterrence posture in the region.

Against this backdrop, the Republic of Poland submitted to the United States in April 2018 a proposal to host, on a permanent basis, a US military division on Polish territory, and offered \$2 billion to finance infrastructure for that deployment. While the Polish offer is being weighed inside the United States, the issue is broader than just enhancing the US presence in Poland; it is fundamentally about what the United States and NATO need to do to defend all of Europe. Any decision about an enhanced US presence in Poland would have serious implications for the region and for the Alliance as a whole. The ongoing negotiations and discussions on this matter, within the US government and in Poland, could significantly benefit from an independent perspective outside the US government that considers these issues in the context of a broader, long-term transatlantic approach toward Russia.

To that end, the Atlantic Council established a task force, led by General Philip Breedlove and Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, to assess the broader political and military implications of an enhanced US posture and presence in North Central Europe and provide recommendations for the way forward. This report and its recommendations are products of the task force's study, consultations, and deliberations on the current US military force posture in North Central

Europe. Overall, the members of the task force agree that significant enhancements to the existing US presence could, and should, be undertaken to bolster deterrence and reinforce Alliance cohesion. The task force members also believe this can be done while maintaining the framework of deterrence by rapid reinforcement reaffirmed by allied leaders at the 2018 NATO Brussels summit, and while avoiding a divisive debate on the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act.

The task force's recommendations are focused on negating the threat of a fait accompli that could be achieved by a limited Russian land grab in the Baltic States. Although NATO's aggregate conventional capabilities surpass those of Russia, Russia maintains a conventional overmatch on its border with NATO allies. The recommendations in this report would reduce NATO's time-distance gap, improving the ability of allied forces to defend the Baltic region in the initial period of a conflict, while facilitating rapid reinforcement into the area. These enhancements to US presence in North Central Europe are designed to create an untenable risk for Russia in any military operation against NATO.

The task force has outlined several key principles that should guide US decisions regarding the United States' force posture in Europe, asserting that any deployment should:

- enhance the United States' and NATO's deterrent posture for the broader region—not just for the nation hosting the US deployment—including strengthening readiness and capacity for reinforcement;
- reinforce NATO cohesion;
- promote stability with respect to Russian military deployments to avoid an action-reaction cycle;
- be consistent with the US National Defense Strategy and its concept of dynamic force employment;¹
- include increased naval and air deployments in the region, alongside additional ground forces and enablers;

- promote training and operational readiness of US deployed forces and interoperability with host-nation and other allied forces;
- ensure maximum operational flexibility to employ US deployed forces to other regions of the Alliance and globally;
- expand opportunities for allied burden sharing, including multilateral deployments in the region and beyond; and
- ensure adequate host-nation support for US deployments.

In addition, US and NATO decisions should be made in a way that strengthens the foundation of shared values and interests on which the Alliance rests.

Within these parameters, the task force members propose a carefully calibrated package of permanent and rotational deployments in Poland and the wider region. This would largely build on the significant US capabilities already deployed in Poland, and should be complemented by capabilities from other NATO allies. Ultimately, the recommended package would make certain elements of the current US deployment in Poland permanent, strengthen other elements of that deployment by reinforcing the brigade combat team (BCT) deployed there with various enablers, assign another BCT on a permanent or rotational basis to Germany, establish a more frequent rotational US presence in the Baltic States, and increase the US naval presence in Europe. The task force members are confident this can all be done while maintaining NATO solidarity and enhancing burden sharing among allies. The task force strongly recommends that the United States and the rest of the Alliance move forward on this basis.

These recommendations, laid out in detail on pages 39 - 43 would maintain a continuous US rotational military presence at permanent installations in North Central Europe by:

- upgrading and making permanent several headquarters units, to provide continuity for command elements;

¹ Dynamic force employment is an effort to prepare the US military to transition from a focus on fighting terrorist groups to a possible great-power conflict, with about the same force size. It calls for greater agility, more lethality, less operational predictability, higher readiness, irregular deployments, and maximum surge capacity. See Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), 7, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

PERMANENT DETERRENCE

- making rotational units in Poland and the Baltic States more predictable, continuous, and enduring;
- deploying more enablers to the region;
- strengthening other US forces in Europe for training and rapid reinforcement to the northeastern region, and making Poland a staging area for forward operations; and
- ensuring and accelerating European Defense Initiative funding, and focusing Polish financial contributions on training facilities.



Russian Army T-72s participate in large-scale exercises as part of the Zapad 2017 military exercise in Western Russia and Belarus.
 Photo: Wikimedia Commons

INTRODUCTION

North Central Europe has become a central point of confrontation between the West and a revisionist Russia. Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia is determined to roll back the post-Cold War settlement, including by undermining the independence and sovereignty of the states that reemerged from the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union. More broadly, Russia is seeking to thwart US-led efforts to build a Europe whole, free, and at peace, and to overturn the rules-based order that has kept the general peace in Europe since the end of World War II. Moscow's invasion and continued occupation of Georgian and Ukrainian territories, its military build-up in Russia's Western Military District and Kaliningrad, its intervention in Syria, and its "hybrid" warfare against Western societies have heightened instability in the region and have reanimated collective defense and deterrence as an urgent mission for the United States and NATO.

To strengthen deterrence and effectively defend against Russian aggression, the United States and NATO have taken significant steps since 2014 to enhance their force posture and respond to provocative Russian behavior. US efforts have included significantly increased investments to support the

activities of the US military and its allies in Europe through the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), formerly the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). The United States has also begun rotating an armored brigade combat team (ABCT) to Europe in "heel-to-toe" rotations every nine months, and prepositioning equipment for a second brigade combat team (BCT) that would deploy from the United States in a crisis. NATO efforts have included, among other important steps, deploying battalion-sized battle groups to each of the Baltic States and Poland through the Alliance's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) initiative. The United States leads the NATO eFP battalion based in northeastern Poland, near the Suwalki Corridor.

Despite these and other US and NATO efforts, the allies in North Central Europe face a formidable and evolving adversary, and it is unlikely that Russian efforts to threaten and intimidate these nations will end in the near term. Despite NATO's overall military superiority, Russia still maintains a local tactical advantage in North Central Europe. Accordingly, the transatlantic community must reassess its response and adopt a more strategic, long-term approach to the Russian challenge. As long as the Kremlin continues

on its current track, the military elements of the Alliance's response will remain critically important, for both political and military reasons. The current US military presence in the region is predominantly rotational, which offers both geopolitical and operational advantages and disadvantages. Looking forward, assessing whether the United States should transition to a more permanent deterrence posture in the region—one that features a mix of permanent and rotational capabilities—has become timely and urgent.

It was against this backdrop that the Republic of Poland submitted to the United States in April 2018 a proposal to host, on a permanent basis, a US military division on Polish territory, and offered \$2 billion to finance infrastructure for that deployment. The offer underscored Poland's commitment to contribute to regional stability, burden sharing, and making the concept cost-effective for the US government. Still, the issue of an enhanced US presence in Europe is broader than Poland; it is fundamentally about NATO and defending all of Europe. Any decision about an enhanced US presence in Poland would have serious implications for the region, and for the Alliance as a whole.

The US Congress has expressed high interest in this Polish concept. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2019, passed in June 2018 and signed into law on August 13, 2018, tasked the US Department of Defense with producing a report on the feasibility and advisability of establishing a more permanent presence in Poland, which is due March 1, 2019. The report requires “an assessment of the types of permanently stationed United States forces in Poland required to deter aggression by the Russian Federation and execute Department of Defense contingency plans” and “an assessment of the international political considerations of permanently stationing such a brigade combat team in Poland, including within the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization.² This presents an important opportunity to catalyze a broader conversation about the United States' and NATO's long-term strategic approach to Russia, with military presence and force posture in the region as fundamental components of that.

During the September 2018 Washington summit between US President Donald Trump and Polish President Andrzej Duda, the US president emphasized that his administration was carefully considering the Polish offer and exploring concrete options. While the original Polish proposal sought a permanently stationed US armored division, negotiations since then have suggested a shift, with discussions moving away from one major base and toward a lighter US footprint, with rotational US personnel based at existing facilities across the country.³ At the time of this writing, US-Polish negotiations on this matter are ongoing.

Meanwhile, the discussions could significantly benefit from an independent perspective from outside the US government and the halls of Congress that considers these issues in the context of a broader, long-term transatlantic approach toward Russia. That is the goal of this Atlantic Council task force, established to consider the wider political and military implications of an enhanced US presence in Poland and the North Central European region.

This report and its recommendations are a product of the task force's study of the security situation in North Central Europe, including the military balance and the threats to military stability and peace, today and in the foreseeable future. The report also reflects the group's deliberations on the actions the United States should take to enhance deterrence and defense against aggression toward US allies in that region, which are captured in the final recommendations.

2 H.R. 5515, John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, (2018), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5515/text>.

3 “Poland Wants a Fort with Donald Trump's Name on It,” *Economist*, January 10, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/01/12/poland-wants-a-fort-with-donald-trumps-name-on-it>; Rick Noack, “Syria and Afghanistan are Losing U.S. Troops but ‘Fort Trump’ Talks are Going Well, Poland Says,” *Washington Post*, December 21, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/12/21/syria-afghanistan-are-losing-their-us-troops-fort-trump-talks-poland-are-going-well/?utm_term=.98b7d5f6ed98.



A Stryker Armored Vehicle from Lightning Troop, 3-2 Cavalry Regiment reaches the old city of Krakow on March 26 during Operation Dragoon Ride; a capstone exercise for the unit's rotation under Operation Atlantic Resolve. *Photo: 1st Lt. Henry Chan 6th Sustainment Brigade*

CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The two decades following the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union saw a significant shift in US defense priorities and resources away from Europe and toward other regions. The strategic assumption was that a post-Soviet Russia would be less antagonistic in the European security environment, and potentially a strategic partner. The United States drew down its combat forces in Europe, while European defense spending and readiness declined with the fall of the Alliance's greatest strategic threat.

While there were signs that Russia had begun pivoting to a more hostile posture toward NATO—with cyberattacks against Estonia in 2007, the invasion of Georgia in 2008, and its subsequent major force build-up and modernization program—the United States and its NATO allies failed to fully anticipate and direct resources toward deterring the growing threat.⁴ In 2014, when Russian forces invaded first Crimea and then eastern Ukraine, the United States and its allies were caught flat-footed.

RUSSIA'S STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Russia has continued to be a driving factor in the European threat environment. Russia's current strategy under President Vladimir Putin focuses on rolling back the post-Cold War settlement, including by undermining the independence and sovereignty of the states that reemerged from the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union. More broadly, Russia is seeking to thwart US-led efforts to build a Europe whole, free, and at peace, and to undermine the rules-based order that has kept Europe secure since the end of World War II. Key objectives to that end include weakening NATO, the European Union (EU), and other democratic institutions to create a divided Europe based on zones of influence. In fact, the Russian National Security Strategy, published in 2015 after Crimea, named the United States and its NATO allies as the primary threat to Russia.⁵ Russia has attempted to create seams in the Alliance that it can exploit in pursuit of its aims, including attempts to cut the Baltic States off from the rest of the Alliance. Moreover, the Kremlin seeks to revise what it sees as a US-dominated world order, secure a strong

⁴ "How a Cyber Attack Transformed Estonia," BBC, April 27, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/39655415>.

⁵ "Russian National Security Strategy," December 2015, paragraph 12, <http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2016/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.pdf>.

voice or even a veto in key European security decisions, regain Russia’s clout as a major player on the global stage, and dominate the former Soviet space.

Accordingly, Russia has adopted a broader strategy of intimidation, underpinned by increasing hybrid actions coupled with a conventional military build-up and increasingly robust nuclear posture. This has been manifested in regions stretching from the Black Sea and Mediterranean, to the Baltic Sea and High North, and into the North Atlantic. For example, Moscow has used its conventional overmatch in the Suwalki Gap, the border between Poland and Lithuania, in attempts to intimidate the Baltic States. Russia’s constant probing has heightened instability across the transatlantic community, making the European security environment increasingly congested, contested, and susceptible to potential miscalculations and incidents.

RUSSIA’S ACTIONS AND BEHAVIOR

As part of this strategic intimidation, Russia has been waging a significant hybrid warfare campaign against the transatlantic community. The Kremlin has employed a range of tools to exercise malign influence and carry out opportunistic aggression—not only in its traditional sphere of influence, but in the heart of Europe, and even in the United States. Russia’s hybrid actions include low-level conflict, such as the “little green men” maneuvers seen in Crimea, cyberattacks, disinformation, and political and economic subversion and coercion.⁶ Recent examples include the Skripal chemical attack in the United Kingdom, the cutting off of natural-gas pipelines to Ukraine, and the cyber and social media interference in the 2016 US elections.⁷ These hybrid activities directly threaten, and have gradually undermined, transatlantic security, interests, and values—to the benefit of Russian

aims. These actions are attempts to capitalize on diverging threat perceptions and views toward Russia within the Alliance, which has constrained collective response and further emboldened the Kremlin.

On the conventional side, increasingly aggressive behavior in the air, land, and sea has further highlighted Russia’s intent and capacity to challenge the current international security order. Russia has engaged in reckless incidents in and around Europe, such as buzzing US Navy ships and purposely violating the sovereign airspace of NATO allies.⁸ Moscow has increasingly attempted to assert its military power throughout Europe and the wider region, deploying forces and testing capabilities in the High North and North Atlantic that threaten to block potential reinforcements from North America.⁹ Russia has also maneuvered to employ advanced high-precision capabilities and project power into the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, as witnessed in its significant military campaign in Syria.¹⁰ Recently, Russia has also begun militarizing the Sea of Azov, adjacent to the Black Sea, deploying ships to block its only access point, and opening fire on and seizing Ukrainian vessels in the area.¹¹ These illegal actions heighten tensions, raise concerns that Russia is planning further action, and significantly increase the risk of miscommunication and accidents that could spiral and quickly escalate into conflict.

In a similar vein, Russia has repeatedly conducted large-scale, no-notice “snap” exercises, which many Russia watchers worry could be used to disguise a Crimea-like mass mobilization to invade elsewhere, or to leave forces or equipment behind in foreign territory such as Belarus.¹² Moscow has also continued to ignore several of its international

6 “Ukraine Security Agency Blames Attempted Cyberattack on Russia,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, December 5, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-cyberattack-thwarted/29638290.html>

7 Andrew Gardner, “Russia cuts gas to Ukraine,” *Politico*, June 16, 2016, <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-cuts-gas-to-ukraine/>.

8 Thomas Gibbons-Neff, “A Strange Recent History of Russian Jets Buzzing Navy Ships,” *Washington Post*, April 14, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/04/14/a-strange-recent-history-of-russian-jets-buzzing-navy-ships/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.86ea162c6cfe; Lizzie Dearden, “NATO Intercepting Highest Number of Russian Military Planes Since the Cold War as 780 Incidents Recorded in 2016,” *Independent*, April 22, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nato-russian-planes-intercepted-eu-europe-fighter-jets-scrambled-bombers-raf-typhoons-alaska-putin-a7696561.html>.

9 James Stavridis, “Avoiding a Cold War in the High North,” *Bloomberg*, May 4, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-05-04/russia-is-gearing-up-for-a-cold-war-in-the-arctic>.

10 Adam Chandler, “Russia is Really Just Showing Off in Syria at This Point,” *Atlantic*, October 7, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/russia-cruise-missiles-syria/409444/>. The Kremlin announced that, overall, sixty-three thousand Russian military personnel had seen combat in Syria since September 2015, claiming to destroy “terrorist targets” and kill “militants.” Most of Russia’s involvement, however, served to consolidate the position of its ally, Syrian President Bashar al Assad, at the expense of US-backed rebel forces. “Russia Says 63,000 Troops Have Seen Combat in Syria,” BBC, August 23, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45284121>.

11 “Russia-Ukraine Tensions Rise After Kerch Strait Ship Capture,” BBC News, November 26, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46340283>.

12 Dave Johnson, “VOSTOK 2018: Ten Years of Russian Strategic Exercises and Warfare Preparation,” *NATO Review*, December 12, 2018, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2018/Also-in-2018/vostok-2018-ten-years-of-russian-strategic-exercises-and-warfare-preparation-military-exercises/EN/index.htm>.

treaty commitments, including failing to accurately represent the size of its military exercises under the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Vienna Document, barring confidence-building Open Skies flights over Russian, Georgian, and Ukrainian territory, and violating the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which led to the US decision to withdraw from the treaty.¹³

On the nuclear side, the Kremlin has engaged in saber rattling, unveiling new types of strategic systems, including a hypersonic cruise missile designed to slip past NATO air- and missile-defense systems.¹⁴ Russia has used strong rhetoric to emphasize the concept of “de-escalatory” asymmetric strikes, which would involve limited nuclear strikes or cyberattacks in a conventional conflict to force its opponent to capitulate to its terms for peace.¹⁵ Though hardly new or distinctive in itself, this Russian emphasis on “escalating to de-escalate” has generated NATO concern that such threats might be employed in an effort to deter an allied response to a limited intrusion in NATO’s east. All these activities increase the risk of a second arms race in Europe between NATO and Russia, a highly destabilizing outcome.

RUSSIA’S FORCE POSTURE

The Kremlin’s assertive behavior has been backed by an enhanced Russian force posture, built up over the last ten years. In the decades following the Cold War, both Russia and the United States began downsizing their military presence and posture in and around Europe. Then, after the 2008 Russia-Georgia war, in which Russia managed to occupy two “break-away” regions of Georgia without any significant re-

percussions from the international community, Russia worked to build up its forces and capabilities. In light of relatively poor performance during the conflict—which highlighted the operational deficiencies of the Russian military even as it attacked a significantly smaller defender—Moscow also initiated a widespread modernization campaign, and began to increase its assertive activities around Europe’s periphery. According to a 2017 US Defense Intelligence Agency report, Russia’s defense-modernization program, the Strategic Armament Program (SAP), called for spending 19.4 trillion rubles (equivalent to \$285 billion) to re-arm Russian forces from 2011 through 2020.¹⁶

Since then, Russia has continued to take steps to improve its command structure, the speed of decision-making, and communication of decisions to its forces to support rapid deployment.¹⁷ It has also enhanced interoperability among military branches, increased combat readiness, modernized former Soviet-era equipment, and created a more professional army. These efforts have produced noteworthy improvements to Russia’s warfighting capabilities, and have effectively equipped Russian forces with more modern weapons systems.¹⁸ Combine this with valuable recent combat experience from Ukraine and Syria, and the result is a starkly transformed Russian force.

Today, Russian military forces are segmented into five distinct districts, each with its own geographic focus: the Western Military District, Southern Military District, Central Military District, Eastern Military District, and Joint Strategic Command North Fleet.¹⁹ The Western Military District has principal responsibility for confronting NATO, as well as supporting operations in Ukraine under the command of the Southern Military District.²⁰

- 13 This follows suit with a number of Kremlin decisions to ignore international treaty commitments, including its suspension of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) in 2007, and implementation issues and violations of the Open Skies Treaty (OST). See Gustav Gressel, “Under the Gun: Rearmament for Arms Control in Europe,” European Council on Foreign Relations, November 28, 2018, https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/under_the_gun_rearmament_for_arms_control_in_europe; Aaron Mehta, “US, Russia Remain at ‘Impasse’ over Open Skies Treaty Flights,” *Defense News*, September 14, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/air/2018/09/14/us-russia-remain-at-impasse-over-nuclear-treaty-flights/>; Daniel Boffey, “NATO Accuses Russia of Blocking Observation of Massive War Game,” *Guardian*, September 6, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/06/nato-russia-belarus-zapad>; “Russian Compliance with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty: Background and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, December 7, 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R43832.pdf>.
- 14 James J. Cameron, “Putin Just Bragged About Russia’s Nuclear Weapons. Here’s the Real Story,” *Washington Post*, March 5, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/03/05/putin-claims-russia-has-invincible-nuclear-weapons-heres-the-story-behind-this>.
- 15 US Department of Defense, 2018 *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, 30, <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF>.
- 16 Defense Intelligence Agency, *Russia Military Power*, 2017, 20, <http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Russia%20Military%20Power%20Report%202017.pdf>.
- 17 Scott Boston, et al., *Assessing the Conventional Force Imbalance in Europe*, RAND, 2018, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2400/RR2402/RAND_RR2402.pdf.
- 18 *Russia Military Power*, 12-13.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 58.
- 20 Institute for the Study of War, *Russia’s Military Posture: Ground Forces Order of Battle*, March 2018, 12, https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Russian-Ground-Forces-OOB_ISW-CTP-1.pdf.

The Western Military District has also been the focus of the majority of Russia's recent conventional build-up, which most significantly threatens NATO members in Eastern and North Central Europe. After the illegal annexation of Crimea, NATO allies have raised concerns that the former Soviet states in the region, now NATO members, could be Russia's next targets.

The ground troops are the largest component of the Russian Armed Forces, with roughly 350,000 personnel centered around forty maneuver brigades and eight maneuver divisions.²¹ These major combat units are further operationally and administratively organized into combined-arms armies (CAA), of which the Western Military District has three, in addition to the Baltic Sea fleet. According to a report by the RAND Corporation, Russia has built up roughly eighty thousand combat personnel in the Western Military District, with almost eight hundred main battle tanks in active units or based near Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.²² A major concern is that Russia's force posture has been reorganized and repositioned, enabling it to deploy combat troops to the country's western border very rapidly, with little warning. Russia has also improved infrastructure to facilitate quick border crossings into its western neighbors, including the three Baltic States, whose comparably smaller forces and capabilities could be quickly overwhelmed in the absence of significant US or NATO presence.²³

This posture underscores Russia's ability to quickly generate massive manpower and firepower in its "near abroad" in Eastern and North Central Europe.

As part of the Western Military District, Russia also maintains forces in its Kaliningrad enclave. Because of the enclave's geostrategic position between Lithuania and Poland, along with port access to the Baltic Sea, Russia has used it as a hub for powerful capabilities and as the basis for maintaining transport routes through allied territory. The territory houses a host of ground units, including two motor rifle brigades (roughly the same size as a US BCT), and artillery, mis-

sile, and anti-aircraft brigades.²⁴ In Kaliningrad, Moscow has steadily built up its anti-access/area denial (A2AD) capabilities. This involves using integrated air defenses, counter-maritime forces, ballistic and cruise missiles, and other precision-guided munitions to create a layered array of strategic surface-to-air missiles aimed at denying an enemy's ability to operate in the region.²⁵ Part of this network relies on high-precision, long-range strike capabilities, including the Iskander-M ballistic missiles and S-400 "Triumf" anti-aircraft missile system, which could be used to attack NATO installations and aircraft in the Baltics.²⁶

Kaliningrad also hosts a growing Russian naval presence with the Baltic Sea fleet. The fleet includes several ships and submarines capable of firing long-range Kalibr cruise missiles. Other Baltic Sea fleet assets include a destroyer, six frigates, and seven corvettes, which carry advanced anti-ship missiles and provide additional anti-surface, anti-submarine, and anti-air warfare capabilities.²⁷ Together, the Russian navy and air force also maintain roughly eighty fighter aircraft and more than one hundred ground-attack aircraft in the district, supported by powerful electronic-warfare and advanced technological capabilities that can be employed in the region, reducing a previously stark gap with the United States and NATO.²⁸

Together, these capabilities create a potential threat to US or NATO forces attempting to enter North Central Europe to defend or reinforce the region in a potential crisis. While Russia's posture would not stand up to the United States or NATO in the long term, denying or contesting US or allied forces' ability to maneuver in the region could impede or delay their response long enough for Russia to achieve a *fait accompli*. **Given Russia's readiness, proximity, and ability to quickly mass firepower close to its borders, along with its demonstrated behavior and objectives in the region, North Central Europe remains arguably the most vulnerable potential flashpoint between Russia and the United States and NATO.**

21 *Russia Military Power*, 50.

22 Boston et al., *Assessing the Conventional Force Imbalance in Europe*, 7-8.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Lidia Kelly, "Russia's Baltic Outpost Digs in for Standoff with NATO," Reuters, July 5, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-russia-kaliningrad-idUSKCNOZLOJ7>.

26 Ian Williams, "The Russia-NATO A2AD Environment," *Missile Threat*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2, 2017, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/russia-nato-a2ad-environment/>. Charlie Gao, "NATO's Worst Nightmare: Russia's Kaliningrad is Armed to the Teeth," *National Interest*, May 25, 2018, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/natos-worst-nightmare-russias-kaliningrad-armed-the-teeth-25958>.

27 Charlie Gao, "NATO's Worst Nightmare: Russia's Kaliningrad is Armed to the Teeth," *National Interest*, May 25, 2018, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/natos-worst-nightmare-russias-kaliningrad-armed-the-teeth-25958>.

28 "Chapter Five: Russia and Eurasia," in *The Military Balance* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2017), 202, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/04597222.2018.1416981>.

Russia has also extended its provocative force posture farther south; Moscow has been militarizing the Crimean Peninsula since its illegal annexation of the territory in 2014. Russia established an army corps, supported by a long-range coastal air-defense brigade.²⁹ It also built up its naval and air assets, deploying twelve SU-30 fighter jets, helicopters, an additional six submarines, three frigates, a coastal radar complex for surveilling NATO maritime activity, and its S-400 air-defense system on the Crimean Peninsula.³⁰ Russia has used the strategic location of the peninsula to create a second A2AD bubble in the region, from which Moscow could strike targets in Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East.³¹ This significant military footprint has provided Russia strategic access to the Black Sea, which threatens NATO assets and territory, and could allow the Kremlin to extend its influence and power projection toward the Mediterranean Sea and the Balkan States, and into North Central Europe.

Against the backdrop of this assertive force posture on NATO's borders, Russia has also developed and boasted about its nuclear arsenal, including a long-range, ground-launched cruise missile—in violation of the INF Treaty—and controversial low-yield and tactical nuclear weapons, which Russia's doctrine suggests it could use at dangerously low thresholds of conflict. Compounding that, its recent iterations of the major Zapad and Vostok exercises have highlighted Russia's ability to rapidly coordinate, mobilize, and deploy large military formations that include advanced air defense, armored formations, and long-range strike capabilities.³² **Taken together, Russia's readiness, proximity, advanced capabilities, and ability to quickly mass significant firepower showcase Russia as a more formidable and emboldened opponent than has been seen since the Cold War—one that NATO and the United States must address with their own enhancements to defense and deterrence in the region.**

LOOKING AHEAD: THE FUTURE OF THE RUSSIAN THREAT AND OTHER EMERGING THREATS

The Kremlin's current and foreseeable course of action is largely driven by internal political dynamics inside Russia, which are not likely to change in the near term. The legitimacy of Putin's regime, strained by a struggling economy but not likely to fall soon, is underpinned by the narrative of "encirclement of Russia by a hostile West." This provides the pretext for Russia to demonstrate its power on the world stage. As a result, Moscow will continue to assert its interests most boldly in its sphere of influence in Eastern and North Central Europe, and may do so with force when it deems that necessary, or when the Kremlin sees a low-cost opportunity to increase its political or military power. However, Putin will avoid actions he believes would provoke a major military response from the United States and NATO, making the Alliance's deterrent posture even more crucial. If Putin questions the credibility of NATO's deterrence, because of perceived military inadequacy or alliance disunity, a carefully calculated military action on allied territory is not unimaginable. For these reasons, Russia's current conventional overmatch in North Central Europe, especially in the Baltic States—although it has been mitigated by NATO since 2014—remains a matter of serious concern for the Alliance.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin will seek to exploit the narrative that the West is weak, and is divided over internal disputes and differences between Washington and its European allies. The Kremlin will continue to increase the intensity, complexity, and scope of its hybrid and cyber activities, in attempts to destabilize Western societies and discredit democratic values. Russia will also likely continue to ignore its international treaty obligations, in an effort to undermine the security architecture set by the United States and Europe.

Despite a further decline in 2018 to 2.771 trillion rubles (\$41.5 billion), Russian defense spending is expected to grow again, to 2.808 trillion rubles (\$42.1 billion) in 2020.³³ Russia will continue to develop and modernize

29 "The Shore of Russia was Covered by 'Rocket Monsters,'" *Izvestiya*, January 7, 2018, <https://iz.ru/680351/nikolai-surkov-aleksei-ramm-evgenii-dmitriev/poberezhe-rossii-prikryli-raketnye-monstry>.

30 Dmitry Gorenburg, "Is a New Russian Black Sea Fleet Coming? Or Is It Here?" *War on the Rocks*, July 31, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/07/is-a-new-russian-black-sea-fleet-coming-or-is-it-here/>; "Russia to Continue Deploying Advanced S-400 Air Defense Missile Systems in Crimea," Tass, May 4, 2018, <http://tass.com/defense/1002861>.

31 Ruslan Minich, *Russia Shows its Military Might in the Black Sea and Beyond*, *Atlantic Council*, November 6, 2018, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/russia-shows-its-military-might-in-the-black-sea-and-beyond>.

32 The Zapad and Vostok exercises are part of Russia's four annually rotating regional training operations that tests military strategy and troop preparedness by simulating war. For more, see https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/13/5-things-to-know-about-russias-vostok-2018-military-exercises/?utm_term=.8631776edfe8 and <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/articles/zapad-2017-a-guide-to-russia-s-largest-military-exercise>.

33 Sergey Zhavoronkov, "Two Lean Years: Russia's Budget for 2018–2020," *Russia File* (blog), Wilson Center, December 8, 2017, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/two-lean-years-russias-budget-for-2018-2020>.

Other significant Russian units and assets in the Western Military District include:

- The 6th CAA is spread around St. Petersburg, roughly 60 miles from the Estonian border. It is centered around two motor rifle brigades and several supporting and enabling brigades, including artillery, air-defense, and missile units.¹
- The 20th Guards CAA is based in Voronezh, about 120 miles from the Russia-Ukraine border. In 2015, the army was moved to the Western Military District from its previous location roughly 360 miles east.² The 20th Guards CAA consists of two motor rifle divisions, roughly the equivalent of two brigades each, as well as an armored regiment.³ Similar to the 6th CAA, the 20th is also supported by significant enabling units, with several anti-armor, missile, air-defense, and reconnaissance units.
- The 1st Guards Tank Army is based around the Moscow region and provides the heavy armored force for the district's operations. The unit has a focus on combined operations, with one tank division and one motor rifle division serving as its primary operating units. The army is supported by a separate motorized rifle division and tank division, as well as various enablers and supporting units.⁴

1 *Russia's Military Posture: Ground Forces Order of Battle*, 19.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles, *The Russian Way of War*, US Army Foreign Military Studies Office, 2018, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/Hot%20Spots/Documents/Russia/2017-07-The-Russian-Way-of-War-Grau-Bartles.pdf>.

4 *Russia's Military Posture: Ground Forces Order of Battle*, 19.

its capabilities, including through the introduction of new electronic, cyber, and hypersonic technologies. The Kremlin has already demonstrated a new focus on advancing high-precision strike capabilities, as part of what it deems as “pre-nuclear deterrence.” General Curtis M. Scaparrotti, NATO supreme allied commander Europe and commander of US European Command, has emphasized that if the United States does not keep up its modernization efforts, the pace of Russia's efforts “would put us certainly challenged in a military domain in almost every perspective by, say, 2025.”³⁴

At the same time, Russia is expected to further modernize, if not increase, its nuclear arsenal—including tactical, short-range, and Iskander-class capabilities—and re-nuclearize Crimea.³⁵ Russia's continued ambiguity regarding its doctrine and “escalate to deescalate” strategy will force NATO to consider the possibility that the Kremlin will use asymmetric, or even nuclear, capabilities to settle a conventional conflict on its terms. This has significant implications for the United States and NATO—in terms of force posture, but also potentially strategy and doctrine.

Signs indicate that Russia will sustain its large-scale exercises and increase their complexity, maintaining and honing the ability to rapidly mass conventional forces with little warning. This enhances Russia's ability to prepare for potential offensive operations that could overwhelm forces on NATO's borders, increases the chances of Russia using a snap exercise to disguise another illegal intervention abroad, and raises the risks that a miscalculation by a NATO ally or Russia could escalate to full-scale conflict.

Looking to the future, the global threat environment may evolve in other ways, with growing instability emanating from the Arctic, China, Iran, and beyond. China continues to pose a challenge as a great-power competitor, while challenges to the nonproliferation regime from Iran and North Korea, as well as the developing impacts of climate change, could represent further threats for the United States and the transatlantic community in the coming years.

Against this backdrop, the United States must be able to strategically deploy its limited resources around the world. As Europe is the United States' closest and

34 Patrick Tucker, “Russia Will Challenge US Military Superiority in Europe by 2025: US General,” *Defense One*, March 8, 2018, <https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2018/03/russia-will-challenge-us-military-superiority-europe-2025-us-general/146523/>.

35 “Russia Deploys Nuclear Weapon Carriers in Occupied Crimea—Yelchenko,” Unian Information Agency, December 6, 2018, <https://www.unian.info/politics/10365714-russia-deploys-nuclear-weapon-carriers-in-occupied-crimea-yelchenko.html>.

most important ally, its security is critical to the US-global agenda. Russia now represents the most serious threat since the end of the Cold War to the collective peace and security that the United States and its allies in Europe have fought so hard to rebuild and preserve. To be sure, the Russian challenge, both in Europe and elsewhere, is only one aspect of the current and anticipated security environment, but a significant and

pressing one. The US National Defense Strategy underscores this with its focus on great-power competition and Russia, providing the strategic impetus and groundwork for action. The United States and its allies must bolster defense and deterrence against Russia, particularly where the Alliance is most vulnerable in North Central Europe. Steps have been taken, but more can be done to meet this long-term challenge.



A British soldier guides troops from the 2d Cavalry Regiment off of a M3 Amphibious Rig Bridge after ferrying them across the Nemen River near Kulautuva, Lithuania. *Photo: US Army: Spc. Andrew McNeil/22nd M/released*

THE US AND NATO RESPONSE

Recognizing the resurgence of Russia as a strategic competitor, the United States and NATO have taken several significant steps to respond to multiple aspects of the Russian challenge.

On the political, economic, and other non-military fronts, some notable progress has been made since 2014. The United States spearheaded sanctions, some multinational with EU partners, to punish Russia for its illegal annexation of Crimea, hybrid war and aggression in Eastern Ukraine, its cyber and critical-infrastructure attacks, and its interference in elections in the United States and Europe.³⁶ The United States, with the support of Congress, also established the Global Engagement Center (GEC) at the Department of State to counter Russian disinformation and

influence operations in Europe and Eurasia—though many assert that more resources and authorities are required for the GEC to have a real impact.³⁷ NATO has created its own Hybrid Analysis Branch focused largely on Russia, signed a watershed joint declaration to boost NATO-EU cooperation against hybrid threats, and, alongside the EU, supported the establishment in Helsinki of a multinational European Center of Excellence (COE) for Countering Hybrid Threats.³⁸ Many European allies have also sharpened their approaches for holistically tackling Russian malign influence.

On the military front, the United States and NATO have also made important strides by adapting their force posture, as described in more detail below.

36 Mark Landler, Annie Lowrey, and Steven Lee Myers, “Obama Steps Up Russia Sanctions in Ukraine Crisis,” *New York Times*, March 20, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/21/us/politics/us-expanding-sanctions-against-russia-over-ukraine.html>; Allan Smith, “U.S. Imposes New Russia-Related Sanctions, Citing Election Interference, ‘Other Malign Activities,’” *NBC News*, December 19, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/u-s-imposes-new-russia-related-sanctions-citing-election-interference-n949991>.

37 Gardiner Harris, “State Dept. Was Granted \$120 Million to Fight Russian Meddling. It Has Spent \$0,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/04/world/europe/state-department-russia-global-engagement-center.html>.

38 European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, “Common Set of Proposals for the Implementation of the Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” December 6, 2016, <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Common-set-of-proposals-for-the-implementation-of-the-Joint-Declaration-2.pdf>.

NATO AND US FORCE POSTURE IN EUROPE PRE-2014

At the height of the Cold War, the United States, as the driving force behind NATO, had upward of three hundred thousand personnel deployed to Western Europe, operating as a *deterrence by denial* force. Posture in Europe was centered around four divisions and five brigade combat teams, primarily located in Germany, the expected point of attack for Soviet forces.³⁹ These NATO forces were supplemented by major stockpiles of equipment for further reinforcements in the event of a war. NATO routinely trained this capability in REFORGER exercises, which transported large-scale reinforcements from the United States to West Germany, and ensured NATO had the ability to rapidly return forces to Europe in the event of a conflict with the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

The end of the Cold War eliminated the basis for this American force posture in Europe. The collapse of the Soviet Union removed an urgent and significant military threat, and Russia under the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin generated hopes for a genuine and lasting partnership between the West and Moscow. In the years that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, notwithstanding conflict in the Balkans, the United States began decreasing its military footprint in Europe. In the late 1990s, the United States maintained four brigades permanently in Europe, housed under two divisions—the 1st Armored Division and 1st Infantry Division—in Germany, with an airborne brigade in Italy.⁴¹

In the early 2000s, with growing European integration, relative peace and stability on the European continent, and rising demands for US forces in the Middle East and elsewhere, US military leadership asserted that the United States could fulfill its commitments to an enlarged NATO with fewer forces in Europe. In 2004, President George W. Bush's administration decided to remove the heavy armored brigades of the 1st Armored Division and 1st Infantry Division back to the United States, along with their enablers and headquarters elements, as part of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission in 2005.⁴² This move was later

paused, in part due to infrastructure concerns in the United States.⁴³ In 2012, citing a downsizing of the US Army and a new focus on the Asia-Pacific region, the Barack Obama administration carried out the removal of these two brigades long stationed in Germany, and brought home all the US tanks and other heavy vehicles prepositioned in Europe. This left the US Army, the primary component of US forces in Europe, with just two light BCTs and approximately sixty-five thousand total US personnel stationed in Europe by 2014.⁴⁴

Still, throughout those years, the NATO Alliance maintained a modest, but important, presence on Europe's eastern flank, particularly to support its newest allies. Since 2007, NATO has maintained a Baltic Air Policing mission over Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, a Joint Force Training Center (JFTC) in Bydgoszcz, Poland, under NATO's Allied Command Transformation, and the Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC-NE) in Szczecin, Poland.⁴⁵ MNC-NE was established by framework nations Germany, Denmark, and Poland to assist with the collective defense of NATO territory, contribute to multinational crisis management including peace-support operations, and provide command and control for humanitarian, rescue, and disaster-relief operations. This grew to include fourteen contributing nations by 2014. However, in the early 2000s, many of its personnel were assigned to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, reflecting the West's rising focus on counterterrorism. Despite this shift, the United States continued to contribute a four-aircraft rotation to the Baltic Air Policing Mission, and maintained a small number of troops at both MNC-NE and the JFTC.

NATO FORCE POSTURE IN EUROPE POST-2014

Notwithstanding Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008, the transatlantic community was shocked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014—including the illegal annexation of Crimea and the seizure of territory in eastern Ukraine by Russian-led forces—as well as the Kremlin's demonstrated capacity for hybrid war-

39 Kathleen H. Hicks, et al., *Evaluating Future U.S. Army Force Posture in Europe* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016), https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160712_Samp_ArmyForcePostureEurope_Web.pdf.

40 "Countdown to 75: US Army Europe and REFORGER," US Army, March 22, 2017, https://www.army.mil/article/184698/countdown_to_75_us_army_europe_and_reforger.

41 Ibid.

42 Gary Sheftick, "Army Planning Drawdown in Europe," US Army, March 26, 2012, https://www.army.mil/article/76339/army_planning_drawdown_in_europe.

43 "Lawmakers Scramble to Save Bases," CNN, May 14, 2005, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/05/13/base.closings/>.

44 Philip Breedlove, statement to the House Armed Services Committee, February 25, 2015, www.eucom.mil/media-library/.../u-s-european-command-posture-statement-2015.

45 Paul Belkin, Derek E. Mix, and Steven Woehrel, "NATO: Response to the Crisis in Ukraine and Security Concerns in Central and Eastern Europe," Congressional Research Service, July 31, 2014, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43478.pdf>.

fare in eastern Ukraine and against Western democratic institutions. In response, the United States and NATO began to quickly rebuild their defense-and-deterrence posture in Europe, while also increasing assistance to non-NATO countries on NATO's periphery, to allow them to defend their territory from ongoing and potential Russian attack and subversion.

The Alliance's initial response to the invasion of Ukraine, a non-NATO nation on its frontier, was "assurance measures" focused on air defense and surveillance, maritime deployments, and military exercises. The primary focus was Europe's northeast, where allied territory was most vulnerable because of its geographic proximity with Russia. NATO increased the Baltic Air Policing mission from four to sixteen aircraft, and NATO AWACS conducted sustained missions over Poland and Romania to monitor events in Ukraine.⁴⁶ In the maritime domain, NATO deployed two maritime groups on patrol to the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas.⁴⁷ Outside of NATO's existing exercise regimen, NATO member states conducted a series of military drills in the Baltics, such as a drill in Estonia with six thousand participating allied troops, aimed at repelling a potential attack on Estonian territory.⁴⁸ Some allies, particularly the Baltic States, called for a more robust response, one that included the permanent stationing of troops in NATO's east.⁴⁹

At the NATO Wales Summit in September 2014, seven months after the invasion of Crimea and with escalating Russian-Ukrainian hostilities in eastern Ukraine, Alliance leaders promulgated a Readiness Action Plan designed to combine some of the short-term "assurance measures" already in place with "adaptive measures" that offered a longer-term response to Russian aggression.⁵⁰ The Readiness Action Plan centered around building up NATO's reinforcement capabilities, rather than building a permanent conventional deterrence structure. The plan increased the size of the NATO Response Force (NRF), nearly tripling it from thirteen thousand to forty thousand personnel, and incorporating land, sea, air, and special-forces

components.⁵¹ Within the NRF structure, NATO created the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), a quick-reaction force of five thousand personnel designed to respond to a crisis within a matter of days. Allies also established NATO force integration units (NFIU), small teams staffed to support defense planning and facilitate rapid reinforcement, and deployed them to the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria.⁵² Other adaptation measures included the establishment of a new multinational division for the southeast in Romania, prepositioning, and preparation of infrastructure to support reinforcement.⁵³

NATO's existential deterrence strategy, implemented through the Wales Summit initiatives, relied heavily on the existence of these relatively small spearhead units. While it reduced the arrival time for NATO reinforcements, many judged this limited rapid-reaction capability insufficient to deter Russian aggression, whether large-scale conventional attack or a scenario involving ambiguous hybrid methods, such as those Moscow demonstrated in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Many allied and NATO leaders made it clear that a more significant military response was required, calling for a "sufficiently robust and multinational forward presence backed up by swift reinforcements," to signal to Russia that the cost of breaching NATO borders would be too high.⁵⁴

At the July 2016 Warsaw Summit, the Alliance took that next step by deploying its enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battle groups, a ground combat force, to Eastern and North Central Europe, still the most significant potential flashpoint for a conflict with Russia. Allied leaders agreed to deploy four multinational NATO battle groups to each of the Baltic States and Poland, on a rotational basis. The presence, which became operational in 2017, used the framework-nation model, with the United States leading the battalion in Poland, the United Kingdom leading in Estonia, Germany leading in Lithuania, and Canada leading in Latvia. In early 2018, this presence numbered more than 4,600 troops, with seventeen contributing nations.⁵⁵

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Richard Milne, "Baltics Urge NATO to Base Permanent Force in Region," *Financial Times*, April 9, 2014, <https://www.ft.com/content/86e4a4cc-bfb5-11e3-9513-00144feabdc0>.

50 NATO's Readiness Action Plan, July, 2016, NATO, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Alexander Vershbow, "A Strong NATO for a New Strategic Reality," (keynote address at the Foundation Institute for Strategic Studies, Krakow, March 4, 2016), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_128809.htm.

55 "NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence," NATO, February 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/

This eFP mission transitioned NATO's defense of North Central Europe to a strategy of *deterrence by trip wire*. The location of eFP battalions and their multinational character are intended to make clear to Russia that any aggression would be met immediately—not just by local forces, but by forces from across the Alliance. As the Warsaw Communique states, the battle groups “unambiguously demonstrate, as part of our overall posture, Allies’ solidarity, determination, and ability to act by triggering an immediate Allied response to any aggression.”⁵⁶ In Warsaw, the Alliance also declared cyber an operational domain.⁵⁷ Amid a growing number of cyber incidents and hack-and-release tactics by Russia against the United States and Europe, this empowered the Alliance to coordinate and organize its efforts to protect against cyber threats in more efficient and effective ways, thereby increasing deterrence.

While eFP marked a significant increase in allied force presence in North Central Europe, the combination of these forward-deployed elements and host-nation forces still faced significantly larger, and more heavily armored, combined Russian forces immediately across the border. Thus, defending North Central Europe in a crisis would immediately require substantial reinforcements from elsewhere in Western Europe, or even the United States. These forces would take time to mobilize and deploy, giving Russia a limited window for opportunistic aggression, which could result in a *fait accompli* and require the Alliance to undertake costly offensive action to reacquire territory seized by Moscow.

At its July 2018 Brussels Summit, NATO sought to shorten this time-distance gap.⁵⁸ The NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI), the so-called “Four 30s” plan, requires thirty ground battalions, thirty air squadrons, and thirty major naval combatants ready to deploy and engage an adversary within thirty days. NATO also undertook significant command-structure reform, to help address this problem and ensure the structure was fit for purpose in today's security environment. As part of the more robust command structure, allied leaders agreed to establish a Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) in Germany to facilitate the support and rapid movement of troops and equipment across Europe,

and a Joint Force Command Norfolk to protect crucial sea lines of communication and transport between North America and Europe. In a related effort, NATO and the EU have also collaborated on a “military mobility” initiative, under Dutch leadership, which seeks to facilitate the rapid movement of forces and equipment across the European continent, especially as it relates to border crossings, infrastructure requirements, and legal regulations.⁵⁹ In light of increasingly aggressive cyber incidents perpetrated by Russia, at the Brussels Summit NATO also established a Cyber Operations Center. The center was designed to coordinate NATO's cyber deterrent and nations' capabilities, through a team of experts fed with military intelligence and real-time information on threats in cyberspace. When operational, the center could help boost deterrence by potentially using offensive cyber capabilities provided by nations to take down enemy missiles, air defenses, or computer networks, in appropriate circumstances.

These decisions from the Wales, Warsaw, and Brussels Summits have accumulated and evolved, laying the groundwork for *deterrence by rapid reinforcement*, the Alliance's current strategy for defending its eastern frontier.

To facilitate these efforts, European allies and Canada have also taken steps to halt the drop in defense spending that had undercut allied deterrence. In 2014, only three allies—the United States, the United Kingdom, and Greece—met NATO's 2-percent-of-GDP defense-spending target, and only seven allies spent 20 percent of their defense budgets on major equipment, as required by NATO's benchmark. Since 2014, European allies and Canada have added \$46 billion to their defense budgets.⁶⁰ Eight allies are expected to have met the 2-percent threshold in 2018, and the majority have plans to reach that mark by 2024, as allies pledged to do at the Wales Summit.⁶¹

US FORCE POSTURE IN EUROPE POST-2014

The drawdown of US troop levels in Europe since the end of the Cold War—particularly the 2012 downsizing

pdf_2018_02/20180213_1802-factsheet-efp.pdf.

56 NATO, press release, “Warsaw Summit Communiqué,” July 9, 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

57 Colin Clark, “NATO Declares Cyber a Domain; NATO SecGen Waves Off Trump,” *Breaking Defense*, June 14, 2016, <https://breakingdefense.com/2016/06/nato-declares-cyber-a-domain-nato-secgen-waves-off-trump/>.

58 NATO, press release, “Brussels Summit Declaration,” July 11, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm.

59 Current efforts seek to ensure diplomatic clearance for force movements within five days of their reaching a border.

60 “Secretary General's Annual Report: The Alliance is Stepping Up,” NATO, March 17, 2018, 6, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_152805.htm

61 Ryan Heath, “8 NATO Countries to Hit Defense Spending Target,” *Politico* EU, May 7, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/nato-jens-stoltenberg-donald-trump-8-countries-to-hit-defense-spending-target/>; “Secretary General's Annual Report: The Alliance is Stepping Up,” NATO.

of the US Army presence from four to two BCTs—had raised concerns among commanders at EUCOM and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. However, it was not until the events of 2014 that those views were shared widely in the White House and Pentagon.⁶² In conjunction with the Readiness Action Plan laid out at the 2014 Wales Summit, the United States reacted quickly to reassure Eastern and Central European allies of its dedication to the Alliance’s collective-defense mission.

Immediately after Russian troops entered Crimea, EUCOM deployed company-level elements from army units based in Europe to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland as an immediate reassurance measure.⁶³ The United States also recognized a need for deterrence in the air domain, deploying six F-15s to the Baltic Air Policing mission, along with an aviation detachment of twelve F-16s to Łask, Poland.⁶⁴ This tripwire force, similar in doctrine to NATO’s subsequent eFP deployments, allowed the United States to immediately reinforce the collective defense-and-deterrence mission, while it slowly expanded deployments and funding. Many of these efforts were supported by the FY2015 European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), a watershed military program launched by the Obama administration as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. ERI, which later became the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), has continued to expand under the Trump administration, providing significant funding to support US presence, exercises and training, enhanced prepositioning, and improved infrastructure throughout Europe.

From there, under the auspices of ERI, the United States continued to slowly augment its presence, particularly in North Central Europe which is the focal point of potential confrontation with Russia. Nearly two years after Crimea, the United States had added roughly four thousand additional rotational troops to Europe, in addition to the BCTs already permanently deployed to Europe: the Germany-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment at Vilseck and the Italy-based 173rd Airborne BCT at Vicenza. In Grafenwöhr, the United States also maintains the Grafenwöhr Training Area—its largest training facility in Europe—

which supports US and NATO force qualifications.⁶⁵ Recognizing the longer-term nature of strategic competition with Russia, during the discussion of the 2017 NDAA, the US Congress changed ERI’s name to EDI to reflect the evolution of the mission from reassuring allies to deterring Russia. Acknowledging that current US and allied forces in North Central Europe were insufficient for deterrence purposes, in 2017 the United States also began the nine-month, heel-to-toe armored brigade combat team (ABCT) rotations to Europe, supported by EDI. These continue today in Poland, with detachments deploying regularly throughout Central Europe.⁶⁶ Before the arrival of the first rotational brigade, the US Army filled the gaps with Regionally Allocated Forces (RAF) from the 1st BCT, 3rd Infantry Division, of Fort Stewart, Georgia. Between their rotation cycles, soldiers from 2nd Cavalry Regiment and the 173rd Airborne BCT filled in.⁶⁷ These rotations now provide periods during which US forces are systematically postured closer to the frontline of a potential conflict in North Central Europe, to further reduce the time-distance gap and enhance deterrence in the region.

While certainly nowhere near its Cold War level, US posture in Europe is markedly different today than it was four years ago, with a strong emphasis on *deterrence by rapid reinforcement* and the rotational presence of forward-deployed combat units. The US Army in Europe (USAREUR) currently maintains thirty-five thousand US soldiers in theater, with twenty-two thousand permanently assigned to USAREUR. The US Army presence in Europe includes the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), USAREUR Headquarters, the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, the 16th Sustainment Brigade, the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command, the 66th Military Intelligence Brigade, and the 5th Signal Command, which provide headquarters and enabler units including rotary-wing assets, command and control, logistics, sustainment, intelligence, and engineering support.⁶⁸ The US Army also employs 12,500 local nationals, eleven thousand civilian officials from the US Department of the Army, and RAF rotating through as part of Atlantic Resolve.⁶⁹ In

62 Hicks et al., *Evaluating Future US Army Posture in Europe*, 15.

63 Jesse Granger, “173rd Conducts Unscheduled Training with Latvian Army,” US Army Europe Public Affairs, April 25, 2014, https://www.army.mil/article/124667/173rd_conducts_unscheduled_training_with_latvian_army.

64 Belkin, et al., “NATO: Response to the Crisis in Ukraine and Security Concerns in Central and Eastern Europe.”

65 7th Army Training Command, <http://www.7atc.army.mil/>.

66 Michelle Tan, “Back-to-Back Rotations to Europe Could Stress the Army’s Armored BCTs,” *Army Times*, February 11, 2016, <https://www.armytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2016/02/11/back-to-back-rotations-to-europe-could-stress-the-army-s-armored-bcts/>.

67 Ibid.

68 “Evaluating Future US Army Posture in Europe,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 29, 2016, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160712_Samp_ArmyForcePostureEurope_Web.pdf.

69 “Fact Sheet: U.S. Army Europe,” US Army Europe Public Affairs Office, November 14, 2018, <http://www.eur.army.mil/Portals/19/documents/20181114USArmyEuropeFactSheet.pdf?ver=2018-11-14-105314-843>.

2018, USAREUR participated in fifty-two exercises to enhance readiness and interoperability of these forces, with approximately twenty-nine thousand US personnel and more than sixty-eight thousand multinational participants from across forty-five countries.⁷⁰

In addition to its major Army units, the United States' European Command (EUCOM) has at its disposal a number of other land, air, and naval assets in its area of operations, totaling more than sixty thousand military and civilian personnel.⁷¹ Significant units are listed below.

- There is a sizeable military presence in Germany, which, alongside the permanently stationed cavalry regiment, includes: a permanently stationed combat aviation brigade (CAB) and a rotational CAB operating in support of Atlantic Resolve; a special-forces battalion; theater-level training, air and missile defense, battlefield-coordination, and theater-sustainment commands; a fighter wing of twenty-eight F-16s; and an airlift wing of fourteen C130s.⁷² The additional rotating CAB, which offers a combination of attack/reconnaissance helicopters (AH-64 Apache), medium-lift helicopters (UH-60 Black Hawk), and heavy-lift helicopters (CH-47 Chinook), provides a significant supplemental capability to the region.
- In the high north in Norway, the US Marine Corps maintains a battalion-sized rotational presence, alongside a brigade-level prepositioning site under the Norway Air-Landed Marine Expeditionary Brigade (NALMEB) program.⁷³
- In the United Kingdom, the US Air Force maintains a supplemented fighter wing of forty-seven F-15s alongside a tanker wing, an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) squadron, and a special-operations

wing composed of CV-22 Ospreys and MC-130 Hercules aircraft.

- In Southern Europe, EUCOM maintains a range of air, land, and sea assets, with a naval station in Rota, Spain, currently supporting: four US Navy Aegis destroyers; a permanently stationed airborne BCT, F-16 fighter wing, and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) squadron in Italy; a naval support facility in Souda Bay, Greece; and attack, tanker, and ISR squadrons stationed at Incirlik, Turkey, used to support operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).
- The Atlantic Resolve BCT and CAB rotations are deployed throughout Central Europe, with company-level detachments rotating through Bulgaria and Hungary, and a battalion from the BCT deploying to Romania, coupled with an aviation detachment and engineer battalion. Romania also hosts a permanent Aegis Ashore missile-defense facility.
- In addition, the United States maintains several prepositioned stock sites in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, which can outfit an armored BCT, whose personnel would be flown in from the continental United States (CONUS).

Over the last four years, EDI has continued to grow, reaching a \$6.5 billion budget request for FY2019.⁷⁴ One major output from the FY2018 EDI was the prepositioning of Air Force equipment and airfield infrastructure improvements to support current operations, exercises, and activities, and to enable a rapid response to contingencies.⁷⁵ The FY2019 budget builds on this, funding European Contingency Air Operations Set (ECAOS) Deployable Airbase System (DABS) prepositioned equipment at various locations throughout Europe.⁷⁶ This provides a basis for implementing the concept of adaptive basing for air forces as an important element of NATO's reinforcement strategy. The

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ "EUCOM Posture Statement 2018," EUCOM, March 8, 2018, <https://www.eucom.mil/mission/eucom-posture-statement-2018>.

⁷² "Fact Sheet: U.S. Army Europe," US Army Europe Public Affairs Office.

⁷³ Ryan Browne, "US to Double Number of Marines in Norway Amid Russia Tensions," CNN, June 12, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/12/politics/us-marines-norway-russia-tensions/index.html>.

⁷⁴ US Department of Defense, "Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, European Deterrence Initiative," https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2019/fy2019_EDI_JBook.pdf.

⁷⁵ "2018 European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) Fact Sheet," EUCOM, October 2, 2017, <https://www.eucom.mil/media-library/document/36100/2018-european-deterrence-initiative-edi-fact-sheet>.

⁷⁶ US Department of Defense, "Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, European Deterrence Initiative.

PERMANENT DETERRENCE

FY2019 EDI also supports “the continued buildup of a division-sized set of prepositioned equipment that is planned to contain two armored BCTs (one of which is modernized), two Fires Brigades, air defense, engineer, movement control, sustainment and medical units.”⁷⁷ USAREUR has identified Powidz Air Base, Poland, as

a brigade-level prepositioning site.⁷⁸ Additional EDI funding is also designated for ammunition and bulk fuel storage, rail extensions and railheads, a staging area in Poland, and ammunition infrastructure in Bulgaria and Romania, which is a welcome development.⁷⁹

77 Ibid., 11.

78 “Fact Sheet: Army Prepositioned Stock,” US Army Europe Public Affairs Office, September 13, 2018 <http://www.eur.army.mil/Portals/19/Fact%20Sheets/FactSheet-APS.pdf?ver=2019-01-22-110643-650>.

79 US Department of Defense, “Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, European Deterrence Initiative,” 25.



Current US Force Posture in Poland

- ★ ★ Armored Brigade Combat Team (BCT): four maneuver battalions totaling about 3500 soldiers at 4-6 training sites (HQ at **Żagań**, elements at **Skwierzyna**, **Bolusławiec**, and **Świętoszów**)
- ★ Leadership of NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) Battle Group: 550 soldiers from 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment (**Orzysz**)
- ★ Battalion of 4th Combat Aviation Brigade and Air Base (**Powidz**)
- ★ ★ US Command personnel at NATO's MNC NE (**Szczecin**) and MND NE (**Elbląg**)
- ★ US Mission Command Element: about 90 rotational personnel from 1st Infantry Division (**Poznań**), serves as HQ for US rotational deployments under Operation Atlantic Resolve.
- ★ Aegis Ashore: about 100 US military and civilian personnel at construction site (**Redzikowo**)
- ★ US Aviation detachment to support US Air Force flights via Air Base (**Łask**)
- ★ US Aviation detachment for MQ9 ISR reconnaissance unit (**Mirosławiec**)
- ★ 10th Special Forces detachment (**Kraków**)
- ★ Reserve transportation battalion and combat service support unit (**Powidz**)
- ★ US personnel at NATO Force Integration Unit (**Bydgoszcz**)
- ★ Defense Attaché Office at US Embassy (**Warsaw**)

Additional facilities under construction

- Building storage to preposition one Army brigade set
- Building fuel and ammunition storage sites
- ★ Enlarging runway (**Powidz**) and building up railheads



S-400 missile system in Syria. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

ASSESSING THE RESPONSE

The United States and NATO have taken significant steps to respond to Russia's significant military build-up and aggression, by first implementing a *deterrence by tripwire* strategy and then a *deterrence by rapid reinforcement* strategy. Still, the evolution and implementation of these responses have been incremental, temporal, and reactive. Most importantly, the forces deployed under these strategies have not sufficiently addressed time, space, and mass advantages currently leveraged by Russia. Given the enduring nature of the Russian challenge, the United States, along with its NATO allies, must reassess its approach to account for long-term strategic competition with Russia.

Certainly, the United States and NATO have made strides toward responding to Russia's provocative behavior, including when it comes to hybrid and cyber activities. But, overall, allied retaliatory measures have not been sufficient to change Putin's calculus in Ukraine or elsewhere. Going forward, the United States and NATO must implement a more strategic and long-term approach toward Russia, using the full range of political, economic, military, and other responses.

THE NEED FOR AN ENHANCED FORCE POSTURE

The conventional military pillar of this approach remains fundamental to deterring Russia. The United States and NATO face a pressing need to adjust their posture to strengthen defense and deterrence, given the vulnerability of North Central Europe. NATO's current defense-and-deterrence posture relies on the certainty that the Alliance would respond to any aggression quickly, and that all allies would respond forcefully to an armed attack. However, deterrence may still lack sufficient credibility given Russia's and the Alliance's respective force postures in the region.

Overall, Russia's military forces would be at a distinct disadvantage in a protracted conflict with the United States and NATO. In the long term, with the requisite political will, the United States and NATO could leverage their advantages in military and economic power to prevail. Nevertheless, the reality remains that Russia's force posture in North Central Europe, where current US and allied force posture is comparatively lacking, gives Russia a short-term advantage locally. A notable RAND study from 2016

underscored these challenges, concluding that a “force of about seven brigades, including three heavy armored brigades—adequately supported by airpower, land-based fires, and other enablers on the ground and ready to fight at the onset of hostilities” was needed to effectively defend the Baltic States.⁸⁰

Despite the important decisions and progress of allied leaders across the past three major summits—particularly Warsaw and Brussels, which addressed some of the weaknesses identified in the RAND report—a determined Russian conventional attack, especially if mounted with little warning, could still defeat current forward-deployed NATO forces in a relatively short period of time. For example, the often-cited nightmare scenario of a limited Russian land grab of territory in the Baltic States could take place well before US and allied reinforcements from Germany, Western Europe, or the continental United States could be brought to bear. Such a *fait accompli* could ultimately break the Alliance’s will and determination to live up to its Article 5 commitments. While the Baltic States present a different context than Russia’s last land grab in Crimea, and the likelihood of a Russian incursion into NATO territory is low, the United States and NATO must be prepared for any contingency. The United States and its allies can only do this through advance planning and preparation, including the deployment of the proper force mix in North Central Europe.

A first step must be to identify and rectify current gaps in the Alliance’s force posture in North Central Europe.

GAPS IN US AND ALLIED FORCE POSTURE

First, the Alliance faces readiness challenges that inhibit its ability to get forces to North Central Europe in time to mitigate opportunistic Russian aggression. In some cases, the national forces that would serve as reinforcements as part of the NRF are not adequately ready, nor clearly designated. While NATO has made great strides toward improving readiness, command and control, notifications mechanisms, and targeted exercise regimes—including through linking the NRF and the “Four 30s” Readiness Initiative—there is more work to be done to reduce the time-distance gap.

Second, even after the NRI has been implemented, there could be a gap of up to thirty days between an

initial attack with little warning on the Alliance and the time when major reinforcements arrive. Closing this gap would rely heavily on airpower to prevent or slow advances by enemy ground forces until allied reinforcements could arrive. A major challenge for US and allied air forces will be Russia’s A2AD capabilities in the region, particularly in Kaliningrad. As discussed earlier, Russia’s current capabilities allow it to create a denied environment that covers significant parts of Poland and the Baltic States. Though not impossible, penetrating the A2AD cover to reinforce the Baltics increases the risk of escalating the crisis. Russia’s mobile S-400 units mean it would take longer for US and allied forces to disable Russian air defenses, making it more difficult for NATO to hold the line from the air until reinforcements could arrive. Defeating Russian air defenses may also require defeating targets inside Russian territory (such as Kaliningrad), which could risk a retaliatory attack on the United States and its NATO allies—potentially escalating to a nuclear confrontation.

Third, military mobility infrastructure in Europe is not what it was during Cold War days. NATO’s inattention to the issue meant that its newer members now lack standardized or uniform infrastructure, while Western allies have not modernized infrastructure to support large-scale reinforcements to the east. As such, it remains difficult to move forces and equipment from across the continent to the frontline in North Central Europe. In addition to border-crossing delays and legal issues, there are also challenges with mapping routes and ensuring there are standardized bridges, roads, and rails that can support the transport of troops and heavy equipment.⁸¹ Once in the region, larger and more advanced reception facilities, training ranges, and other logistical requirements are required to support ingress, egress, and warfighting by US and allied forces. The FY2019 EDI seeks to support some of this development with prepositioned equipment, improved infrastructure of airfields and other facilities, and additional storage sites for ammunition and bulk fuel.⁸² Nevertheless, there is a subsequent need to protect this critical infrastructure from electronic warfare and cyberattacks from Russia. While the establishment of the JSEC and the NATO-EU military mobility initiative are all positive steps toward addressing these issues, implementation will take years.

Fourth, the NATO battle groups and the US rotational BCT in Poland lack the enablers necessary for

80 David A. Shlapak and Michael Johnson, “Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO’s Eastern Flank,” RAND, 2016, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1253.html.

81 Marta Kepe, “Military Mobility Returns to the Forefront in Europe,” *Defense News*, June 25, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/smr/nato-priorities/2018/06/25/military-mobility-returns-to-the-forefront-in-europe/>.

82 US Department of Defense, “Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, European Deterrence Initiative.”

confident mission accomplishment, including: early warning and ISR assets; air and missile defense; and long-range fires to create the counter-fire capability needed for a foreseeable contingency. The Baltic States also lack critical frontline requirements—in particular, ammunition, anti-tank weapons, short- and medium-range air defense, and long-range artillery. The naval component of US and allied presence in the region could also be increased to protect freedom of navigation, strengthen maritime domain awareness, counter Russian anti-A2AD capabilities, and assist with potential air- and missile-defense gaps.

Fifth, while notable progress has been made toward developing coordinated battle plans and clear rules of engagement for NATO forces in North Central Europe, the Alliance also must address several political decision-making issues. One key issue will be identifying and agreeing upon key indicators and thresholds that

would authorize military commanders to begin mobilizing, and then deploying, assets and forces. These actions would also require clearly articulated authorities delegated to SACEUR to execute, if not also streamline, these actions. A related issue is intelligence sharing, which helps lay the groundwork for leaders to act. While the Alliance is making strides toward enhancing intelligence sharing and decision-making processes, more work must be done to help prepare the Alliance to respond to emerging crises in a timely manner.

All these factors inhibit the Alliance's ability to effectively carry out its agreed strategy of *deterrence by rapid reinforcement* in North Central Europe. They underscore the need to rethink how US forces are deployed to the region, particularly because they stand as part of the Alliance and the most capable, and the US flag sends the strongest deterrent message in a region that is NATO's frontline.



Port operations are underway unloading US Army combat vehicles assigned to the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) in preparation of training in support of Atlantic Resolve in Antwerp, Belgium, May 20, 2018. *Photo: RP Images*

POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC, AND MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS

The transatlantic community has begun to recognize that, notwithstanding its progress to date, the Alliance's deterrence posture could be improved further, especially in North Central Europe. Additional steps can, and should, be taken to reduce the thirty-day readiness gap and enhance US and NATO capacity to deter, defend, and, if necessary, retake Alliance territory. Given the US role in the Alliance, a significant part of this response will rely on US force posture. While the United States has the authority to bilaterally negotiate its force posture agreements with potential host nations, any decision about an enhanced US presence in the region would have serious implications for neighboring states and for the Alliance as a whole. It is in the United States' interest to make these decisions in a way that bolsters, rather than diminishes, allied cohesion. As a result, the United States must account for a range of political, diplomatic, and military considerations when deciding how to adapt its force posture in Europe.

A primary consideration is how to address competing demands on limited US resources. In the evolving European security environment, some of the United States' closest, and most vulnerable, allies in Europe have made requests for further US presence. Ahead of the 2018 Brussels Summit, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia all called for NATO to discuss an increased military presence in their region.⁸³ The Baltic States and Poland, in particular, have called for US boots on the ground, ideally permanently, to actively deter Russia, in addition to critical air and naval units to reinforce the limited NATO eFP battalions already in their countries. In 2018, Norway and the United States agreed to double the rotational presence of US Marines in the country and deploy them closer to the border with Russia, extending the current six-month renewable rotation periods to five years.⁸⁴ In Europe's southeast, Romania and Bulgaria—which host rota-

83 "Norway Wants to Double US Troops and Deploy Them Closer to Russia," AFP, June 13, 2018, <https://www.thelocal.no/20180613/norway-wants-to-double-us-troops-and-deploy-them-closer-to-russia>.

84 Browne, "US to Double Number of Marines in Norway Amid Russia Tensions."

tional deployments as part of NATO’s tailored Forward Presence (tFP) and the Multinational Divisional Headquarters South East (HQ MND-SE) in Bucharest—have also recently requested additional US presence.⁸⁵ After the rotational US Marines were moved from Romania to Norway, Bucharest has stressed rising concerns over growing Russian force posture and activity in the Black Sea.⁸⁶ This hardly exhaustive list only adds to pressing demands for US presence in hotspots in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, and around the world.

The United States must balance these competing demands and strategically deploy its limited resources. As described above, the current and anticipated threat environment suggests North Central Europe as a priority, especially given geographic and historical concerns and the enduring nature of the Russian challenge. Still, it is important to note that adapting US posture in Europe is about more than North Central Europe. Fundamentally, it is about defending all of Europe, while preserving US capacity to defend American interests globally. Any deployments of additional US forces or capabilities to the region would need to allow the United States to maintain maximum flexibility for their use, while taking into account both political signals and military needs for US presence.

THE POLISH PROPOSAL

Against this backdrop, the Republic of Poland submitted a proposal in April 2018, offering \$2 billion to support a permanent US presence in the country.⁸⁷ The offer reflects Poland’s view of the need for an enhanced US posture in the region and called for a US armored division in Poland on dedicated US military installations, though this was later reduced to an armored brigade. The offer also allocates significant Polish resources to support required infrastructure and facilitate more flexible movement of US forces.

The offer, seen as underscoring Poland’s challenge in facing the Russian threat—as well as its commitment to contribute to regional stability, burden sharing, and making the concept cost-effective for the US government—was met with high interest in the United States. The US Congress, in the National Defense Authoriza-

tion Act (NDAA) for FY2019 signed into law in August 2018, tasked the US Department of Defense with producing a report on the feasibility and advisability of establishing a more permanent presence in Poland, due March 1, 2019. The report is required to include “an assessment of the types of permanently stationed United States forces in Poland required to deter aggression by the Russian Federation and execute Department of Defense contingency plans” and “an assessment of the international political considerations of permanently stationing such a brigade combat team in Poland, including within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.”⁸⁸

The Polish proposal quickly evolved into negotiations between the US and Polish governments in the fall and winter of 2018. This included a September 2018 summit between US President Donald Trump and Polish President Andrzej Duda, during which the US president emphasized that his administration was carefully considering the Polish offer and exploring concrete options.⁸⁹ While the original Polish proposal sought a permanently stationed US armored division, the negotiations—still ongoing at the time of this writing—have suggested a shift, with discussions moving away from one major base toward a lighter US footprint, with rotational US personnel based in existing infrastructure across the country.

Throughout this process, Poland’s offer has elicited a mixed reaction among European allies. While some conceded that the proposal raised legitimate questions about the adequacy of the US and NATO force posture, others questioned whether a large increase in US forces in one eastern-flank country would upset the political balance within NATO and provoke a Russian overreaction. Critics asked whether Poland was starting a zero-sum competition to host US troops, in which boots on the ground would go to the highest bidder, while bypassing consultations within NATO. Some wondered whether the Polish government was using the issue to deflect EU pressure on rule-of-law issues.

Nevertheless, the task force members were more inclined to see the Polish offer as an important opportunity to further strengthen the US and NATO deterrence posture, in light of the weaknesses and gaps that

85 “Romania’s Multi-National Brigade Bolstering NATO’s Tailored Forward Presence,” NATO Supreme Allied Headquarters, February 26, 2018, <https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2018/romaniias-multinational-brigade-bolstering-natos-tailored-forward-presence->.

86 “NATO Member Romania Warns of Increased Russian Activity in Black Sea,” Reuters, October 10, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-romania-russia/nato-member-romania-warns-of-increased-russian-activity-in-black-sea-idUSKCN1MK2EP>.

87 “U.S. Permanent Presence in Poland,” Ministry of National Defence, Republic of Poland, 2018, <https://g8fip1kplyr33r3krz5b97d1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Proposal-for-a-U.S.-Permanent-Presence-in-Poland-2018.pdf>.

88 H.R. 5515, John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, (2018).

89 White House, press release, “Remarks by President Trump and President Duda of the Republic of Poland in Joint Press Conference,” September 18, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-president-duda-republic-poland-joint-press-conference/>.

remain. While negotiations continue, the United States should consider these important questions and other related issues below—both for bilateral purposes, and in the interest of maintaining a broader transatlantic approach toward Russia. Each of these considerations was weighed by the task force, as explained below.

LOCATION OF FORCES

One significant question is whether Poland should be the central host nation of an enhanced US presence designed to strengthen NATO's eastern flank. Some argue that the United States should be postured forward, in the Baltic States, to deter Moscow from attempting a *fait accompli* on NATO's eastern frontier. This is based on the premise that the Kremlin would not engage in such an attack on or so close to US forces, as it would provoke a swift and decisive US response that would be extremely costly for Russia. However, such a posture would mean a shift away from the current allied strategy of *deterrence by rapid reinforcement* toward forward defense, and could create divisions within the Alliance. Furthermore, in addition to lacking the geographic space needed to help minimize the vulnerability of deployed forces to Russian strikes, the Baltic States do not have the required infrastructure or space to support such an enhanced presence. Previous rotations of US forces have needed to travel back to US facilities in Grafenwöhr in order to mass, train, and exercise effectively, and to maintain readiness, which is demanding and costly. Yet, building sufficient infrastructure in the Baltics would take a great amount of time and resources, and space remains limited.

Still, modest rotations of US troops to the Baltic States on a regular basis (e.g., quarterly) would send an important political signal to enhance deterrence in this critical region. This would be much more feasible with additional forces deployed in Europe. In part, this is due to the military requirements necessary to support rotations, which, in practice, demand triple the forces—one unit preparing for the rotation, one executing the rotation, and one transitioning away from the rotation. Additionally, rotational forces would help to ensure that currently deployed forces were not reallocated from Germany or other allied territory, which could have negative political and military consequences for the transatlantic partnership amid already-tenuous dynamics.

There is great value to placing some additional enhancements to the US force posture in Germany. Existing infrastructure and logistical capabilities would easily support additional forces or assets, and make operations and activities cost-effective. On top of that, an enhanced posture in Germany is far less likely to be

perceived as strictly Russia-focused. In some ways, this would reduce the risk of escalating tensions with Russia, while also preserving US flexibility to deploy the forces elsewhere—e.g., to the Black Sea or the Middle East—without undercutting deterrence in Europe's north-east. Forces in Germany would also be less vulnerable to Russian attack, but they would also be farther from the frontline, which would do little to reduce the critical time-distance reinforcement gap. The longer the delay in reinforcement during a crisis, the greater opportunity there is for Russia to cement any gains, creating a *fait accompli* and requiring NATO forces to undertake significant operations to recapture allied territory.

By comparison, Poland provides an attractive middle ground for US efforts for a variety of reasons. First, its size and geographic location make it a key staging area for most NATO efforts to defend the three Baltic allies. Using Poland as a staging area will facilitate greater engagement in the region, including in the Baltic States. Poland already hosts a US presence and maintains some useful infrastructure, reception facilities, training ranges, and prepositioned equipment that could support an enhanced US force posture. It is also physically large enough to receive more, and is poised to do so through EDI and the additional Polish resources offered. Geographically, it provides a way for the United States to expand its presence near the frontline and reduce the critical time-distance reinforcement gap, without being so far forward that assets and equipment may be considered too vulnerable, especially given Russia's A2AD capabilities in the region. Poland's proximity also facilitates more frequent and visible rotations to the Baltic States.

Nevertheless, any enhancements to US force posture in Poland should come with clear expectations of the host nation. In addition to investing in infrastructure and upgrading its facilities to meet US standards, Poland should use any additional US presence as an opportunity to do more to contribute to security and stability in the region. This could include deepening and encouraging more cooperation with other allies and partners, including the Nordic and Baltic States. The Polish government should also emphasize the value of a strengthened US force posture as a political and military deterrent for all of Europe. Poland should stress that an enhanced US presence symbolizes the values and principles for which the NATO Alliance stands. Poland should state publicly that this military effort is in defense of democracy in Europe and as a catalyst for stronger cohesion within the continent, including inside the EU.

PERMANENT VS. ROTATIONAL PRESENCE

A further consideration is the level of forces that should be deployed to Europe, and whether those forces should be permanent or rotational. While the initial Polish request for a division-level presence was overambitious both politically and in terms of availability of forces, an additional armored BCT in Europe would significantly enhance US and NATO force posture in North Central Europe against the gaps outlined above. These additional forces, along with sufficient key enablers, would strengthen rapid-reinforcement capabilities and support additional deterrence-building activities throughout the wider region. The task force underscored that multinational contributions from allies, whether in the form of additional troops or enabling elements, would be useful to help fulfill this requirement and enhance burden sharing, while simultaneously boosting deterrence by demonstrating Alliance solidarity.

The task force acknowledged the sentiment reflected in the Polish request that permanently stationed forces send a strong message of deterrence and an enduring US commitment to the Alliance’s collective defense. However, these forces could pose unnecessary political and military costs, especially if stationed too far east. Despite producing more interoperable and culturally familiar forces in a critical region in the long term, a permanent presence in Poland would reduce the flexibility of the US deterrent posture. It also introduces the factor of dependents—families that come overseas with US soldiers—who present an added safety risk and could present deterrence challenges. For example, if the United States decided to evacuate dependents in a crisis, it could send an inadvertent signal to Russia and lead to a miscalculation. Dependents also drive up costs, including for required infrastructure for schools, hospitals, commissaries, etc. These expenses, in addition to the sustainment costs associated with a permanent presence, could not be covered with the \$2 billion allocated by Poland in its proposal.

Adding more rotational forces, on the other hand, would maintain the current US emphasis on rotational deployments as a way to visibly deter Russia and reassure allies, while preserving more flexibility for the United States to carry out its commitments in the broader region and globally. This would also be consistent with the US concept of “dynamic force em-

ployment,” as outlined in the National Defense Strategy, which seeks to provide “proactive and scalable options for priority missions” and “use ready forces to shape proactively the strategic environment while maintaining readiness to respond to contingencies and ensure long-term warfighting readiness.”⁹⁰ The infrastructure and enabling elements required to support additional rotational forces would provide serious assurances of the US commitment to collective defense in the region. US commitment to the mission is also underscored by all the US efforts that have been, and will be, undertaken in North Central Europe through the EDI, especially in Poland, to support defense and deterrence in the region. Deploying these additional forces rotationally would also more firmly support the current allied consensus on the framework of *deterrence by rapid reinforcement*.

Rotational units also have other advantages. Despite higher-than-anticipated costs and, in some cases, lower morale rates than permanently stationed forces, rotational units still tend to be more cost-effective and sustainable than large-scale permanent basing. Rotational forces also tend to arrive with higher readiness levels.⁹¹ Their high operational tempo enables them to undertake quick and decisive action, and to maintain a heightened level of readiness throughout their deployments. Rotating these units from the United States also allows the forces to become familiar with the terrain in more than one place, which can be beneficial, especially given Russia’s hybrid activities throughout in the region.

THE NATO-RUSSIA FOUNDING ACT

The scale and location of forces also need to take into account larger, fundamental concerns stemming from debates within the Alliance over the NATO-Russia Founding Act. In 1997, seeking to reassure Russia that NATO enlargement would not pose a military threat, allies agreed that “in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.”⁹² The Alliance has not explicitly renounced the Founding Act, despite Russia’s repeated violations of its commitments under the agreement. Allies have deployed eFP battlegroups and other enhancements to NATO’s deterrence posture, on the understanding that “additional permanent

90 Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*.

91 John R. Deni, *Rotational Deployments vs. Forward Stationing: How Can the Army Achieve Assurance and Deterrence Efficiently and Effectively?* (Carlisle, PA: Army War College, 2017), <http://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/3359.pdf>.

92 NATO, “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation,” May 27, 1997, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25470.htm?selectedLocale=en.

stationing” of forces up to the level of a brigade per country is consistent with any reasonable definition of the limits implied by “substantial combat forces.”⁹³ Permanently stationing a whole division or brigade in Poland, on top of the eFP battle groups and other US capabilities already in Poland, could cause a divisive fight among allies, thereby undermining deterrence. Such a move could also provoke a Russian overreaction; Moscow has hinted it may try to build a military base in Belarus in response to a US base in Poland.

Broadly speaking, it is in the United States’ interest to ensure its deployments remain within the broad allied consensus on this issue. If, however, Russia increased its threat to the Baltic States and Poland, the task force believes the United States and NATO should be prepared to move beyond the Founding Act, whose limits were based on the “current and foreseeable security environment” when the document was signed in 1997.

⁹³ The United States and NATO, in order to maintain flexibility, never agreed to a precise definition of “substantial combat forces” (SCF). However, during NATO deliberations on an enhanced Forward Presence in 2016, they referred to Russian proposals during negotiations in the late 1990s on the Adapted CFE Treaty as providing a reasonable benchmark. In those negotiations, Russia sought to set a limit of one army brigade per country as the definition of SCF. See William Alberque, “Substantial Combat Forces” in the Context of NATO-Russia Relations (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2016), <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=962>



A US Air Force McDonnell Douglas F-15C Eagle from the 12th Fighter Squadron at Elmendorf Air Force Base flies next to a Russian Tupolev Tu-95MS Bear bomber. *Photo: Wikicommons*

PRINCIPLES FOR ENHANCED DETERRENCE

Bearing the aforementioned in mind, when considering how to enhance the current deployment of US military forces into North Central Europe, Washington should be guided by the following principles.

The deployment should

- enhance the United States' and NATO's deterrent posture for the broader region—not just for the nation hosting the US deployment—including strengthening readiness and capacity for reinforcement;
- reinforce NATO cohesion;
- promote stability with respect to Russian military deployments to avoid an action-reaction cycle;
- be consistent with the US National Defense Strategy and its concept of dynamic force employment;
- include increased naval and air deployments in the region, alongside additional ground forces and enablers;
- promote training and operational readiness of US deployed forces and interoperability with host-nation and other allied forces;
- ensure maximum operational flexibility to employ US deployed forces to other regions of the Alliance and globally;
- expand opportunities for allied burden sharing, including multilateral deployments in the region and beyond; and
- ensure adequate host-nation support for US deployments.

In addition, US and NATO decisions should be made in a way that strengthens the foundation of shared values and interests on which the Alliance rests.



US Army Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, fire the first shot from a M109 Paladin during their fire mission during Combined Resolve XI phase II at Camp Aachen training area, Germany. Photo: US Army National Guard: Sgt. Lisa Vines, 382nd Public Affairs Detachment, 1st ABCT, 1st CD/Released

RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS TO US FORCE POSTURE IN NORTH CENTRAL EUROPE

Within these parameters, significant enhancements to the existing US presence in North Central Europe should be undertaken to increase defense and deterrence for the United States and NATO in the region. The following recommended enhancements to the current US force posture would be consistent with the nine principles articulated, and take into account the various political and military considerations weighed above.

A major driver of this set of proposed enhancements is the need to reduce the time-distance gap between a possible initial attack and the arrival of reinforcements, especially in short-warning and “hybrid” scenarios—even after implementation of the new “Four 30s” initiative. In looking at ways to close the gaps, these recommendations seek to broaden the focus beyond Poland and look at North Central Europe as a region; it is the part of the eastern flank where the Al-

liance faces the greatest vulnerability and the greatest reinforcement challenge, and where NATO itself has taken a holistic approach. Indeed, many of the recommended enhancements would take place in Poland because of its size and geographic location, which make it a key staging area for most NATO efforts to defend allied territory in the three Baltic States, while limiting vulnerability risks of being too far forward. Yet the recommended enhancements would also increase the US presence in the Baltic States, where US troops have not deployed on a regular basis since the deployment of the NATO eFP Battle Groups in 2017. The recommendations would not relocate the basing sites of US forces from another NATO ally to locations in Poland.

At the same time, in the interest of bolstering Alliance cohesion, these recommendations support the agreed NATO framework of *deterrence by rapid re-*

inforcement, acknowledging there is no market for a paradigm shift back toward Cold War-style forward defense. The proposed enhancements, to a large extent, also stay within the NATO consensus regarding the scale of any permanent stationing of substantial combat forces that would be consistent with allies' commitments under the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Moreover, these enhancements can, and should, be complemented by capabilities and contributions from other NATO allies, to underscore Alliance solidarity and enhance burden sharing in a meaningful way.

In a nutshell, the package comprises a carefully calibrated mix of permanent and rotational deployments in Poland and the wider region that can bolster deterrence and reinforce Alliance cohesion. Building on the significant US capabilities already in Poland, the recommendations would make certain elements of this deployment permanent. This also adds to previous permanent elements that the United States has maintained in the country, such as the Aegis Ashore site.⁹⁴ The enhancements would also strengthen the ability of US forces currently deployed in Poland to defend themselves, by reinforcing the BCT there with various enablers designed to address critical capability gaps and frontline requirements. The package would also assign another BCT to Germany, on a permanent or rotational basis, with battalions deploying regularly to the Baltic States and Poland, to further reduce the time-distance gap and provide visible deterrence in vulnerable areas. It would also expand the US naval and special operations forces (SOF) presence to reinforce the impact of US forces on defense and deterrence for the Baltic States, and do so while maintaining NATO cohesion.

These recommendations would maintain a more continuous US rotational military presence in North Central Europe at permanent installations by

- upgrading and making permanent several headquarters units, to provide continuity for command elements;
- making rotational units in Poland and the Baltic States more predictable, continuous, and enduring;
- deploying more enablers to the region;
- strengthening other US forces in Europe for training and rapid reinforcement to the

northeastern region, and making Poland a key staging area for forward operations; and

- ensuring and accelerating European Defense Initiative funding and focusing Polish financial contributions for installations on training facilities.

The task force recommends the following specific changes.

HEADQUARTERS

- Upgrade the existing US Mission Command Element in Poznan to a US Division HQ to serve as the hub for ensuring the mobility and rapid flow of US reinforcements from Europe and CONUS to Poland and the Baltic States in time of crisis. This headquarters would drive the planning, exercises, and operations essential to making division-level operations a credible and effective element of the Alliance's defense and deterrence posture across North Central Europe. Make the HQ a permanent deployment without dependents. Maintain close coordination between this HQ, MNC-NE (Szczecin), and MND-NE (Elblag).
- Deploy a forward element of this US Division HQ in one of the Baltic States to coordinate US permanent or continuous rotational ground, air, and SOF deployments and ensure connectivity with the NFIUs and eFP battalions in contingency planning for integration of US reinforcements during a crisis. This provides a coordination function for planning, exercises, and operations in times of crisis in the region. This forward element would also reduce any perception in Russia that Moscow can cut the Baltic States off from the rest of NATO.

GROUND FORCES

- Commit to maintaining a continuous rotational presence of one BCT in Poland, centered at Żagań, along the Polish-German border, with some elements deploying for exercises throughout North Central Europe and, as necessary, to other regions. This might be

⁹⁴ The ground-based interceptor and Aegis Ashore site, as part of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) for ballistic missile defense, as well as the presence at the JFTC in Bydgoszcz, Poland, represent permanent elements the United States has maintained in Poland. NATO, "About the JFTC," <http://www.jftc.nato.int/index.php/organization/who-we-are>.

called a “continuous rotational presence based at a permanent Polish installation.” To fill a major gap for existing US forces in Poland, the BCT should be accompanied by enablers to strengthen the ability of US forces currently in Poland, as well as allied forces in eFP battle groups in the broader region, to defend themselves.

- The US rotational armored BCT currently operates out of several training sites near Żagań. US troops are housed in Polish barracks, or sometimes in tents. The Polish government has indicated a willingness to upgrade these facilities if the United States plans to stay. With a US commitment to a continuous rotational presence of one reinforced BCT, the Polish government should undertake providing the funds needed to upgrade and expand these facilities and, more importantly, to modernize and expand associated training areas to meet US standards. The upgraded training facilities should be made available for allied, as well as US, use.
- Under the EDI, the United States will enlarge the runway at Powidz, build up railheads to offload equipment, build a prepositioning site to store a brigade set by 2023, create new fuel-storage sites, and build new ammunition-storage sites. As part of a package of enhancements, the United States should accelerate these plans as much as possible.
- Deploy some of the short-range Avenger air-defense systems and multiple-launch rocket systems now slated for stationing in Germany (to be completed by 2020) to Poland, on a rotational basis. This is necessary to counter Russian fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft.
- Station a mid-range air-defense capability in Poland to protect US forces, to train with Polish Patriot units, and to reinforce the Baltic States in a crisis.
- Station enablers such as ISR and engineers in Poland on a continuous basis. ISR assets are essential to minimize the risk of a

surprise attack, particularly in times of crisis short of conflict.

- Commit to maintaining the US lead for the NATO eFP Battle Group at Orzysz, near the Suwalki Gap, for the indefinite future. (The battle group currently consists of about five hundred and fifty US soldiers from an armored unit, together with troops and equipment from Croatia, Poland, Romania, and the UK). This battle group, along with Polish forces, regularly exercises movements across the Suwalki Gap to underscore the Alliance’s readiness to block any effort by aggressor forces to cut the Baltic States off from the rest of NATO. These exercises and preparations should be sustained, and complemented by the participation of other allied forces.
- Deploy a new armored BCT to Germany on a permanent or rotational basis, and deploy one battalion of that BCT to Poland and one to the Baltic States on a regular basis for training/exercises. These additional forces would help to reduce the time-distance gap for reinforcements in the region, while also supporting more manageable rotations to key vulnerable areas in the Baltic States and Poland. These systematic rotations would provide more continuous US presence and, therefore, greater confidence, continuity, and much-needed visible deterrence—particularly in the Baltic States, which currently lack any frequent presence of US forces.

ARMY COMBAT AVIATION

- Establish a new HQ for one Army CAB in Poland to coordinate helicopter support for ground forces throughout the region. This presence would expand aviation combat support and mobility options, including rotary-wing, defensive, and strike capabilities, for US forces deployed in North Central Europe. A CAB HQ would invigorate the role of Army combat aviation in related NATO and US planning and exercises, and facilitate a rapid-response posture for US forces in Poland and the Baltic States.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (SOF)

- Make the US 10th Special Forces Group deployed near Kraków a permanent platform for regional training and operations. It should include Polish SOF, and expand to support US SOF training in the Baltic States, and facilitate high-intensity operations in tandem with Polish SOF. Increasing SOF activities and presence is critical for rapidly countering hybrid threats and facilitating high-intensity operations in the region. Making Poland a hub for these US efforts would also provide additional opportunities for Poland to engage with the broader region and build up this crucial capacity alongside Baltic allies.

AVIATION

- Enlarge and make permanent the USAF aviation detachment at Łask Air Base, to facilitate rotational deployments of US fighter and cargo aircraft, as well as possible aviation deployments by other allies and partners. Expanding the focus of the aviation detachment—beyond bilateral exercises to the air forces of NATO allies and partners—would increase training opportunities and contingency-planning options. It would also complicate Russian military planning.
- Make permanent the US aviation detachment at Miroslawiec Air Base in support of the US squadron of MQ-9 reconnaissance drones. A sustained ISR presence is essential while Russia remains a long-term military threat to the Alliance.
- Commit to a higher level of Air Force exercises in the region, including the Baltic States, to ensure a more rapid transition from air policing to air defense in a crisis.

NAVAL

- Establish a new, small naval detachment in Gdynia, Poland, to facilitate more frequent US naval visits to Poland and to other Baltic Sea ports, such as Klaipeda, Gdansk, Riga, and Liepaja. These visits could also include exercises to enhance anti-submarine warfare,

anti-air warfare maneuvers, and air defense, maritime interdiction, amphibious operations, and mine-countermeasure capabilities to secure key Baltic Sea routes.

- Home-port US destroyers in Denmark, with continuous patrols in the Baltic and Norwegian Seas and port visits to allied ports in the region. The mission might include anti-submarine warfare, air defense (including missile defense), maritime domain awareness, amphibious operations, and counter-A2AD, both in the Danish Straits and in the Greenland-Iceland-UK gap. Enhanced US naval presence could preserve operational flexibility, help bolster deterrence, and fill air- and missile-defense gaps in the broader Northern European region.

MISSILE DEFENSE

- Continue and accelerate development of the NATO Aegis Ashore missile-defense site at Redzikowo, which is already considered a permanent site, despite contractor delays in construction.

NATO COORDINATION AND MULTINATIONAL PARTICIPATION

- As the plans for enhanced US deployments develop, there should be close consultations and full transparency with NATO allies. While these are US bilateral efforts, they affect the security interests of all allies and need to be compatible with NATO decisions.
- The enhanced deployments would not exceed the agreed understanding of “substantial combat forces” mentioned in the NATO-Russia Founding Act, since the deployment remains a reinforced brigade plus some enablers. While the division HQ might be in Poland, most of the division itself would not be deployed there.
- The supreme allied commander Europe (SACEUR) should be delegated standing authority by the North Atlantic Council to prepare and stage US and other allied forces to mitigate the risk of decision-making delays in Brussels.

- The United States and Poland should seek a few European partners to participate beyond their contributions to the US-led NATO eFP battle group in Poland, and in US rotational deployments to the Baltic States and other parts of the European theater.
 - Allies could contribute in several ways: increased rotational presence (e.g., the UK, Germany, or another ally could deploy forces to Poland with the current US rotational BCT), deployment of enablers, deployment of SOF units to Krakow to participate in US SOF training in the Baltic States, and deployment of their own aviation and naval detachments to support exercises and training throughout the region. Short- and medium-range air defense are key areas where smaller allies in the region could make meaningful contributions.
 - The eFP framework nations should be encouraged to preposition supplies and equipment with their own forces in the Baltic States, or alongside US prepositioned stock in Poland, to increase capacity and support reinforcement.
- Poland could also fund some, or all, of the cost of facilities for the proposed division headquarters and naval detachment, the Combat Aviation Brigade HQ, the MQ-9 squadron, and the rotating mid-level air-defense unit.
- Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania could help fund new facilities or sustainment costs associated with increased US-led SOF training and other rotational deployments in the Baltic States.
- This would mirror the host-nation support provided by other US allies in Europe and Northeast Asia.

FUNDING OF NEW INFRASTRUCTURE AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINMENT

- While some of the deployments and facilities proposed above will be funded by the US EDI or the NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP), the United States should look to Poland and other host nations to shoulder a share of the burden—both upfront construction costs and long-term sustainment.
 - The Polish offer of \$2 billion is a good starting point. As noted above, it could be used to construct more permanent facilities for the US rotational BCT and upgrade associated training facilities to US standards. The overall cost of the required construction, however, is likely to exceed \$2 billion. Poland should take into account that the additional sustainment costs for existing permanent US facilities in Germany and South Korea are generally shared by the host nation.

CONCLUSION

Measures along the lines proposed by the task force would build on the existing US presence in Poland and strengthen deterrence for the wider region, by increasing the US naval presence, reestablishing a continuous rotational US presence in the Baltic States, and promoting greater burden sharing among allies. While adding important military capabilities and increasing NATO's capacity for rapid reinforcement, the

scale of the proposed measures should remain within the NATO consensus, thereby ensuring continued NATO cohesion and solidarity. The task force strongly recommends that the United States, Poland, and the rest of the Alliance move forward on this basis.

Appendix 1: Chart of US Force Posture in Europe

Baltics

Country / Total Troops	Key Capabilities ■ Rotational ■ Permanent
Poland ~4,400	<div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <p>1 armored BCT (15+ Paladins, 85+ Abrams, 130+ AFVs)¹ 1 eFP armored battalion² Transportation battalion and combat service-support unit³</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>Army aviation detachment—8 Black Hawks, 4 Apaches⁴ Operation Atlantic Resolve Mission Command Element⁵ Special Forces Group detachment</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>Personnel at NATO Force Integration Unit⁶ Personnel at NATO MNC NE and MND NE 2 aviation-support detachments for ISR and Air Force flights⁷</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>Aegis Ashore missile-defense facility (ready 2020) Prepositioned brigade-level armor and artillery (ready 2021)⁸</p> </div>

Central / Eastern Europe

Country / Total Troops	Key Capabilities ■ Rotational ■ Permanent
Bulgaria ~300	2 armored cavalry companies ⁹
Hungary ~100	1 armored cavalry company ¹⁰
Kosovo ~675	1 infantry battalion ¹¹ 1 helicopter fleet—UH-60 Black Hawks¹²
Romania ~1,000	<div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <p>1 armored cavalry battalion¹³ Black Sea rotational force¹⁴</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>1 Army aviation detachment—8 Black Hawks¹⁵ 1 engineer battalion¹⁶</p> </div> <div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>Aegis Ashore missile-defense facility¹⁷</p> </div>
Ukraine ~300	1 armored cavalry detachment ¹⁸

Western Europe / Turkey

Country / Total Troops	Key Capabilities ■ Rotational ■ Permanent
Belgium ~900	Strategic signals battalion ¹⁹ ■ Prepositioned brigade-level sustainment equipment ²⁰ ■
Germany ~37,500	<div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px;">2 armored cavalry battalions²¹ ■ 1 combat aviation brigade²² ■</div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ 1 cavalry regiment²³ ■ 1 infantry battalion²⁴ ■ 1 combat aviation brigade²⁵ ■ 1 special-forces battalion²⁶ ■ 1 fighter wing—28 F-16s²⁷ ■ 1 airlift wing—14 C130s²⁸ ■ EUCOM </div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ US Army Europe ■ 1 theater logistics command²⁹ ■ 1 signals brigade³⁰ ■ 1 military-intelligence brigade³¹ ■ 1 missile-defense command³² ■ Prepositioned munitions center—25,000 tons and 400 vehicles </div>
Greece ~400	<div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px;">MQ-9 Reaper drones³³ ■</div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ Naval support facility </div>
Italy ~12,000	<div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ 1 airborne brigade combat team³⁴ ■ 1 fighter wing—21 F-16s³⁵ ■ 1 ASW squadron—4 P-8A Poseidons³⁶ </div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ Southern European task force HQ ■ US Navy Europe HQ </div>
Netherlands ~400	<div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ Prepositioned field-support-brigade equipment </div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ (M1 Abrams tanks, M109 Paladins, and additional armored and support vehicles)³⁷ </div>
Norway ~700	<div style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white; padding: 5px;">Marine Rotational Force—700 Marines³⁸ ■</div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ NALMEB prepositioned equipment and 30 days' supply for a Marine expeditionary brigade³⁹ </div>
Spain ~3,200	<div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ Naval station Rota ■ 4 US Navy destroyers </div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ USMC SPMAGTF—crisis-response unit⁴⁰ </div>
Turkey ~2,700	<div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ 1 attack squadron—12 A-10 Thunderbolts⁴¹ ■ 1 tanker squadron—14 KC-135s⁴² ■ 1 CISR squadron—MQ-1B Predator⁴³ </div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ 1 ELINT fleet—EP3 Aries II⁴⁴ ■ 1 AN/TPY-2 X-band radar station⁴⁵ </div>
United Kingdom ~8,300	<div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ 1 fighter wing—47 F-15s⁴⁶ ■ 1 ISR squadron—OC-135s⁴⁷ ■ 1 tanker wing—15 KC-135s⁴⁸ </div> <div style="padding: 5px;"> ■ 1 special-operations group—8 CV-22 Ospreys and 8 MC-130s⁴⁹ ■ 1 early warning and spacetrack radar facility </div>

Notes, Appendix 1

1. US Army Europe Public Affairs, "Atlantic Resolve Armored Rotation Fact Sheet," July 19, 2008, <http://www.eur.army.mil/Portals/19/Fact%20Sheets/Armored%20Rotation%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf?ver=2018-06-22-114238-593>.
2. Sgt. Sarah Kirby, "U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John Gronski Visits Battle Group Poland," US Army Public Affairs Office, November 2, 2018, https://www.army.mil/article/213325/us_army_maj_gen_john_gronski_visits_battle_group_poland.
3. Kelby Wingert, "49th Transportation Cases Colors for OAR Poland Deployment," Fort Hood Sentinel, August 9, 2018, http://www.forthoodsentinel.com/news/th-transportation-cases-colors-for-oar-poland-deployment/article_332ed-f9c-9b24-11e8-9e35-c352686cbdec.html.
4. Joshua L. Wick, "Quick Facts: Aviation Brigade Rotations in Europe," US Army, June 20, 2018, <http://www.eur.army.mil/Portals/19/Infographics/Aviation%20Rotation%20Infographic.pdf?ver=2018-07-10-030945-860>.
5. "NFIU Poland," NATO Allied Joint Force Command, <https://jfcbs.nato.int/page5725819/nato-force-integration-units/nfiu-poland>.
6. Dan Stoutamire, "Small Air Force Detachment Playing Pivotal Role in New 'Center of Gravity' Poland," Stars and Stripes, July 7, 2017, <https://www.stripes.com/news/europe/small-air-force-detachment-playing-pivotal-role-in-new-center-of-gravity-poland-1.477100>.
7. Master Sgt. Nathan Hoskins, "4ID Transfers Authority of Atlantic Resolve Mission Command Element to 1ID," DVIDS, February 28, 2018, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/267562/4id-transfers-authority-atlantic-resolve-mission-command-element-1id>.
8. Dan Stoutamire, "Army to Move Brigade's Worth of Firepower to Poland," Stars and Stripes, April 26, 2017, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/04/26/army-to-move-brigades-worth-of-firepower-into-poland.html>.
9. "About Us," 2nd Signal Brigade, <http://www.2sigbde.army.mil/About-Us/Units/39th-SSB/>.
10. US Army Europe Public Affairs, "Atlantic Resolve Armored Rotation Fact Sheet."
11. Ibid.
12. Staff Sgt. David Overson, "JMRC Prepares Units for Kosovo Mission," US Army, March 8, 2018, https://www.army.mil/article/201778/jmrc_prepares_units_for_kosovo_mission.
13. Spc. Jarel Chugg, "3-61 Cav Assumes New Role in Kosovo," Fort Carson Mountaineer, March 22, 2018, <http://www.fortcarsonmountaineer.com/2018/03/3-61-cav-assumes-new-role-in-kosovo/>.
14. US Army Europe Public Affairs, "Atlantic Resolve Armored Rotation Fact Sheet."
15. "Black Sea Rotational Force," DVIDS, <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/BlackSeaRotationalForce>.
16. Wick, "Quick Facts: Aviation Brigade Rotations in Europe."
17. Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler, "Romanian, U.S. Army Engineers Celebrate Four Years of Combined Construction Efforts," US Army, July 20, 2018, https://www.army.mil/article/208827/romanian_us_army_engineers_celebrate_four_years_of_combined_construction_efforts.
18. US Naval Forces Europe-Africa, <http://www.c6f.navy.mil/tags/deveselu>.
19. "Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine," 7th Army Training Command, <http://www.7atc.army.mil/JMTGU/>.
20. Rabia Coombs, "APS-2 Zutendaal Talks Support Equipment with Belgium Land Support Section," US Army, September 10, 2018, https://www.army.mil/article/210936/aps_2_zutendaal_talks_support_equipment_with_belgium_land_system_section.
21. US Army Europe Public Affairs, "Atlantic Resolve Armored Rotation Fact Sheet."
22. Hoskins, "4ID Transfers Authority of Atlantic Resolve Mission Command Element to 1ID."
23. "2nd Cavalry Regiment," US Army, <https://www.army.mil/2cr>.
24. "The 173rd Airborne Brigade History," 173rd Airborne Brigade, <https://www.skysoldiers.army.mil/About-Us/Our-History/>.
25. "12th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) and Mission Partners," USAG Ansbach, <http://www.ansbach.army.mil/12CAB.html>.
26. "U.S. Special Operations Command Europe," DVIDS, <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/SOCEUR>.
27. "52nd Fighter Wing," Spangdahlem Air Base, January 30, 2018, <https://www.spangdahlem.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/293554/52nd-fighter-wing/>.
28. "86th Airlift Wing," Ramstein Air Base, June 20, 2013, <https://www.ramstein.af.mil/About/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/303604/86th-airlift-wing/>.
29. 21st Theater Sustainment Command, <http://www.21tsc.army.mil/>.
30. "About Us," 2nd Signal Brigade.
31. "Welcome to the 66th MI Brigade Public Web Site," 66th Military Intelligence Brigade, last updated July 26, 2018, www.incom.army.mil/MS/66MIB/index.html.
32. "About Us," 10th Army and Missile Defense Command, <http://www.10thamdc.army.mil/>.
33. Nancy A. Youssef, "U.S. Eyes Military Expansion in Greece Amid Strains with Turkey," Wall Street Journal, September 11, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-military-looks-toward-greece-amid-strains-with-turkey-1536696318>.
34. "The 173rd Airborne Brigade History," 173rd Airborne Brigade.
35. "Europe," The Military Balance 2018 (Washington DC: International Institute for Strategic Studies), p. 122, <https://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance/the-military-balance-2018/mb2018-04-europe>.
36. Ibid.
37. Sgt. 1st Class Jacob McDonald, "Prepositioned Equipment Site Officially Opens in Netherlands," US Army, December 16, 2016, https://www.army.mil/article/179831/prepositioned_equipment_site_officially_opens_in_netherlands.
38. Ryan Browne, "US to Double Number of Marines in Norway Amid Russia Tensions," CNN, June 12, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/12/politics/us-marines-norway-russia-tensions/index.html>.
39. "Marines May Move Even More Combat Gear to Norway," Military.com, June 16, 2017, <https://www.military.com/defensetech/2017/06/16/marines-combat-gear-norwegian-caves>.
40. "Europe," The Military Balance 2018, p. 152.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. "Europe," The Military Balance 2018, p. 165.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.

Appendix 2: Index of Acronyms

A2AD - Anti-access/area denial	ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
ABCT - Armored brigade combat team	ISR - Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
AFV - Armored fighting vehicle	JFTC - Joint Force Training Center
AN/TPY-2 - Army Navy Transportable Radar Surveillance	JSEC - Joint Support and Enabling Command
ASW - Anti-submarine warfare	MENA - Middle East and North Africa
AWACS - Airborne Warning and Control System	MNC-NE - Multinational Corps Northeast
BCT - Brigade combat team	MND-NE - Multinational Division Northeast
BRAC - Base Realignment and Closure	NALMEB - Norway Air-Landed Marine Expeditionary Brigade
CAA - Combined-Arms Army	NDAA - National Defense Authorization Act
CAB - Combat aviation brigade	NFIU - NATO Force Integration Units
CISR - Combat intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance	NRF - NATO Response Force
COE - Center of Excellence	NRI - NATO Readiness Initiative
CONUS - Continental United States	NSIP - NATO Security Investment Program
DABS - Deployable Airbase System	OSCE - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
ECAOS - European Contingency Air Operations Set	REFORGER - Return of Forces to Germany Exercise
EDI - European Deterrence Initiative	SACEUR - Supreme allied commander Europe
eFP - enhanced Forward Presence	SAP - Strategic Armament Program
ELINT - Electronic intelligence	SOF - Special operations forces
ERI - European Reassurance Initiative	SPMAGTF - Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force
EU - European Union	tFP - tailored Forward Presence
EUCOM - European Command	USAREUR - US Army Europe
GEC - Global Engagement Center	USMC - United States Marine Corps
HQ - Headquarters	VJTF - Very High Readiness Joint Task Force
INF - Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty	
ISAF - International Security Assistant Force	



CHAIRMAN

*John F.W. Rogers

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

*James L. Jones

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Brent Scowcroft

PRESIDENT AND CEO

*Frederick Kempe

EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRS

*Adrienne Arsht

*Stephen J. Hadley

VICE CHAIRS

*Robert J. Abernethy

*Richard W. Edelman

*C. Boyden Gray

*Alexander V. Mirtchey

*Virginia A. Mulberger

*W. DeVier Pierson

*John J. Studzinski

TREASURER

*George Lund

SECRETARY

*Walter B. Slocombe

DIRECTORS

Stéphane Abrial

Odeh Aburdene

*Peter Ackerman

Timothy D. Adams

Bertrand-Marc Allen

*Michael Andersson

David D. Aufhauser

Matthew C. Bernstein

*Rafic A. Bizri

Dennis C. Blair

Thomas L. Blair

Philip M. Breedlove

Reuben E. Brigety II

Myron Brilliant

*Esther Brimmer

R. Nicholas Burns

*Richard R. Burt

Michael Calvey

James E. Cartwright

John E. Chapoton

Ahmed Charai

Melanie Chen

Michael Chertoff

*George Chopivsky

Wesley K. Clark

Helima Croft

Ralph D. Crosby, Jr.

Nelson W. Cunningham

Ivo H. Daalder

*Ankit N. Desai

*Paula J. Dobriansky

Thomas J. Egan, Jr.

*Stuart E. Eizenstat

Thomas R. Eldridge

*Alan H. Fleischmann

Jendayi E. Frazer

Ronald M. Freeman

Courtney Geduldig

*Robert S. Gelbard

Gianni Di Giovanni

Thomas H. Glocer

Murathan Günal

John B. Goodman

*Sherri W. Goodman

Amir A. Handjani

Katie Harbath

John D. Harris, II

Frank Haun

Michael V. Hayden

Brian C. McK. Henderson

Annette Heuser

Amos Hochstein

*Karl V. Hopkins

Robert D. Hormats

Mary L. Howell

Ian Ichnatowycz

Wolfgang F. Ischinger

Deborah Lee James

Reuben Jeffery, III

Joia M. Johnson

Stephen R. Kappes

*Maria Pica Karp

Andre Kelleners

Sean Kevelighan

Henry A. Kissinger

*C. Jeffrey Knittel

Franklin D. Kramer

Laura Lane

Richard L. Lawson

*Jan M. Lodal

Douglas Lute

*Jane Holl Lute

William J. Lynn

Wendy W. Makins

Zaza Mamulaishvili

Mian M. Mansha

Chris Marlin

Gerardo Mato

Timothy McBride

John M. McHugh

H.R. McMaster

Eric D.K. Melby

Franklin C. Miller

*Judith A. Miller

Susan Molinari

Michael J. Morell

Richard Morningstar

Edward J. Newberry

Thomas R. Nides

Franco Nuschese

Joseph S. Nye

Hilda Ochoa-Brillembourg

Ahmet M. Oren

Sally A. Painter

*Ana I. Palacio

Carlos Pascual

Alan Pellegrini

David H. Petraeus

Thomas R. Pickering

Daniel B. Poneman

Dina H. Powell

Robert Rangel

Thomas J. Ridge

Michael J. Rogers

Charles O. Rossotti

Robert O. Rowland

Harry Sachinis

Rajiv Shah

Stephen Shapiro

Wendy Sherman

Kris Singh

Christopher Smith

James G. Stavridis

Richard J.A. Steele

Paula Stern

Robert J. Stevens

Mary Streett

Ellen O. Tauscher

Nathan D. Tibbits

Frances M. Townsend

Clyde C. Tuggle

Melanne Verveer

Charles F. Wald

Michael F. Walsh

Geir Westgaard

Maciej Witucki

Neal S. Wolin

Guang Yang

Mary C. Yates

Dov S. Zakheim

HONORARY DIRECTORS

James A. Baker, III

Harold Brown

Ashton B. Carter

Robert M. Gates

Michael G. Mullen

Leon E. Panetta

William J. Perry

Colin L. Powell

Condoleezza Rice

George P. Shultz

Horst Teltschik

John W. Warner

William H. Webster

**Executive Committee Members*

List as of January 1, 2019



The Atlantic Council is a nonpartisan organization that promotes constructive US leadership and engagement in international affairs based on the central role of the Atlantic community in meeting today's global challenges.

© 2019 The Atlantic Council of the United States. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the Atlantic Council, except in the case of brief quotations in news articles, critical articles, or reviews. Please direct inquiries to:

Atlantic Council

1030 15th Street, NW, 12th Floor,
Washington, DC 20005

(202) 463-7226, www.AtlanticCouncil.org