

BALTIC RIM ECONOMIES
SAFETY AND SECURITY

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Security in the
Baltic Rim – not just
a military threat



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Fog of war in
Europe



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The concept for
Comprehensive
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**GRY
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NATO-Russia:
Forming a joint
NATO position



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BALTIC RIM ECONOMIES

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**In the BRE review, public and corporate
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demia, as well as several other experts con-
tribute to the discussion.**

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Centrum Balticum

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ECONOMIES**

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PEKKA TOVERI

Security in the Baltic Rim – not just a military threat

Expert article • 3388

Russian aggression in Ukraine has shown that Russia is willing and able to use every possible means to break all existing international agreements and rules to protect its national interests; or rather, to protect the interests of Mr. Putin and his siloviks. Nevertheless, the last 14 months have not been good for Russia. The war in Ukraine is becoming increasingly costly both in manpower and materiel, and the Russian economy is suffering. The West has found unity in supporting Ukraine and although the support is sometimes slow to arrive, it is enough to guarantee that Ukraine will not fall. The geostrategic situation in the Baltic Sea Region became very unfavourable to Russia when Finland joined NATO at the beginning of April, and Sweden will most likely follow within a year.

The Baltic Sea is still a very important maritime trade route for Russia, and the defence of St. Petersburg is vital for the country. With Finland joining NATO, the Baltic Sea is practically becoming NATO's "inner lake", something that is very hard for the Kremlin to swallow. Putin undoubtedly wants to change the situation to one more favourable to Russia in the long term, but Russia's means to change the situation are very few. Because of the attack on Ukraine, Russia has lost practically all means to put diplomatic or economic pressure on the Baltic Rim States. Russia used its energy weapon last winter, which turned out to be a weak tool and did not provide any leverage with the West.

The possibility of using the threat of military force has also been lost, at least for a while. Russia's Army, Airborne Forces and Marines are tied up in Ukraine and suffering huge losses. It will require 5-10 years after the fighting ends to rebuild these forces. Russia's Air Force and Navy are more intact and have suffered light losses, but they have proved to be badly trained and their technology is generally inferior to Western military technology. The loss of cruiser Moskva, the flag ship of Russia's Black Sea Navy, was a painful reminder of the vulnerability of a major Russian warship in a restricted body of water against developed anti-ship missiles. Considering Russia's difficult geostrategic situation and the weakness of its armed forces, the Kremlin probably does not want to have a military confrontation with NATO in the Baltic Sea Region for at least a decade.

Still, Russia has other tricks up its sleeve. Even though it is militarily inferior at the moment, the country has shown great skill in using other methods to put pressure on its adversaries. Russia is skilled in hybrid warfare, and as the latest leaked documents show, it had formulated plans to weaken the Baltic States and undermine NATO's integrity in the Baltic Sea Region before the attack on Ukraine. In the last decade, Russia has conducted several assassinations, info-operations, cyber-attacks and even sabotage attacks against ammunition storage facilities in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. The West has been quite unsuccessful in countering these activities, so it is very probable that Russia will continue to use hybrid warfare and even increase its efforts to weaken the NATO Alliance and interfere with its member states' internal mechanisms.

While Putin's possibilities to weaken NATO and Baltic Rim States are still limited, he seeks to deny Western superiority in the area, destabilize the situation and cause harm to his opponents. In Baltic Sea Region,

maritime traffic is a great vulnerability that Russia can hit. Maritime traffic is critical to all the Baltic Rim States and the region is one of the busiest shipping areas in the world. Disrupting marine transit would very quickly cause great economic losses and harm the security of supply of the Baltic Rim countries.

Russia has a long history of disrupting Ukraine's vessel movement in the Black Sea and the methods it has employed are varied. They have ranged from declaring large shooting areas on trade routes to GPS jamming and spoofing in order to disrupt navigation. Russia has conducted boarding and inspections of Ukrainian ships "in order to prevent terrorism", causing considerable delays to the ships. The Russian Navy has dropped floating mines in shipping routes causing hazards to vessels. A series of cyber-attacks against the IT-networks of harbours and shipping lines was determined to be Russian in origin. Putin has employed these methods and could continue to do so, all while staying under NATO's Article V threshold and causing huge economic losses to the Baltic Rim States.

To prevent these kinds of attacks, the Baltic Rim States need to cooperate very closely with one another as well as with NATO and the EU. We need to recognize the varied possible threats, create plans and capabilities to prevent the attacks, and minimize possible damage. Russia may be militarily weak, but it is still a hybrid threat to all of us. ■



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TERO VAURASTE

Maritime security challenges in the Baltic Sea Region

Expert article • 3389

The security situation in the Baltic Sea has changed significantly during the past few years. Aircraft border started occurring more often and those have been followed by a number of recent major Naval exercises by Russia and NATO.

Once Finland's and Sweden's NATO process started there were discussions about the Baltic Sea being a "NATO"-lake. That is a misinterpretation as Russia has Baltic Sea access through the Saint Petersburg and Kaliningrad areas.

The Åland Islands, Saarenmaa and Gotland create a strategic triangle to control the Baltic Sea. In Estonia, there has been an initiative to establish a contiguous zone in Estonia's maritime area, which would enable the enforcement of Estonian legislation at up to 24 nautical miles from the baseline of the country's territorial sea whereas the current territorial sea boundary is 12 nautical miles with some exceptions. The Estonians have also talked about Finland doing the same and would welcome such an arrangement.

In the beginning of May 2023, Sweden conducted a large maritime exercise, the "Aurora 23" with more than 1000 participants from Finland and a number of other countries. Gotland area was one of the exercise areas whereas Sweden has increased its' military readiness on the island and its' offshore areas. The island lies only 300 kilometres away from Kaliningrad and was also occupied by Russia in 1808. Putin has found his "argumentation" for war from history.

The demilitarisation of the Åland Islands, including the Russian consulate to "monitor the neutrality" includes a huge paradigm. Whereas the idea of the demilitarization is to maintain peace and stability, it actually creates a potential for a conflict, as security and other vacuums tend to be filled. With the same logic, Finland should have stood militarily unpartnered, but the country almost unanimously decided to join the NATO. In the new security situation with a potentially hostile neighbour, the excellent citizen initiative to remove Russian consulate from the Åland Islands hopefully leads to an active decision followed by removing the demilitarization of the area.

The Helsinki dockyard has built close to 200 vessels whereas many of them have been sold to Russian entities. Furthermore, there has been a Russian ownership or practical control for close to ten years now. In March 2023, the Canadian dockyard company Davie announced its' initiative for taking over the ownership. This would potentially change the dockyard's business frame towards a NATO element. The Canadian government has just in April 2023 awarded Davie with a "Minimum of 20 Years of Work as a Long-Term Partner to Canada" with a "Historic agreement with the federal government that includes an initial minimum of \$8.5 billion in shipbuilding programs". So, in practical terms the dockyard lies on the arms of Canadian taxpayers. Chartering Finnish Icebreakers to Canada a few years ago was hindered, when three Swedish Supply vessels were suddenly bought to Davie with a huge overprice compared to market values to provide icebreaking services in the Canadian Arctic. Before any decisions, the interests, political connections and cost effectiveness of Davie have to be

very carefully examined. Finland indeed needs to maintain its' dockyard capabilities to support its' sovereignty on the Baltic Sea with ice capable ships to maintain and develop our national security of supply on the Baltic Sea.

The underwater capabilities of Finnish Defence Forces are currently based on underwater surveillance and surface/land/air - based firepower. A recent media report reveals, that Russia is preparing for sabotage against underwater infrastructure like cables and energy infrastructure with target mapping conducted by civilian vessels. The current lack of Finnish submarines needs to be taken into account whilst developing underwater capabilities to meet current and future threats. Sweden expects new submarines to be operational in 2027 to cover the ageing fleet of a few boats only. Some studies of the submarine needs have been conducted and certainly, there is know-how in the country, and also in Sweden to build submarines. The famous deepwater submarines MIR 1 and MIR 2 were built in Finland with a 6 km diving capability. The vessels caused a small storm as the US considered them as a threat to their underwater surveillance system.

In conclusion, to meet the Maritime security challenges in the Baltic Sea, the Åland Islands demilitarization needs to be lifted, Finnish ice capable shipbuilding capacity needs to be maintained and subsurface capabilities need to be secured. The views presented in the article are representing the author's view and do not represent a view of any of his affiliates. ■



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JYRI RAITASALO

Some implications of the war in Ukraine: A perspective from Finland

Expert article • 3390

Russia started a large-scale war against Ukraine in February 2022 after eight years of low-intensity war of attrition in Eastern Ukraine. Today, this all-out war has lasted for more than a year and has inflicted at least tens of thousands of casualties, most likely hundreds of thousands wounded and dead soldiers, mercenaries and civilians. The economic costs of this war are extremely high - not to mention the enormous scale of human suffering, misery and grief.

Russia's war in Ukraine has highlighted several "new" (read: old) aspects of contemporary security environment. Many of these have direct consequences for the Baltic Sea region. I will touch upon the two major long-term aspects of this war that should influence Western statesmen and public officials in their deliberations about providing security and safety in the Baltic Sea area and throughout Europe

The first of these concerns Russia's military capability and its willingness to use force in order to promote its national interests - however these are defined by Russia's political elite. The second aspect is related to Western states' military capability to deter and defend against a large-scale war and the way that this capability has atrophied since the end of the Cold War.

Russia's war has - once again - showed the perils of launching a large-scale military campaign with faulty assumptions and overtly optimistic expectations related to the feasibility of attaining the goals of war. In addition, a factor facilitating Russia's inability to achieve its military goals was based on over-hyping its military capability that never reached its full potential due to Russia's systemic corruption and inflexible military culture, which conceptualizes soldiers as "war material" that can be expended in long-term operations that have virtually no military utility.

So, this war has demonstrated in the cruelest way Russian political leadership's willingness to use military force to promote its interest. However, Russia's military has lost at least one generation of modern military hardware and tens of thousands of soldiers in the war so far. This will significantly influence its ability to wage war and conduct large-scale military operations during the next decade. Although Russia's Armed Forces still possess a significant number of (old/older) platforms and systems that can cause enormous destruction - even without going nuclear - its ability to achieve meaningful political outcomes with the force of arms is highly degraded. The political and military prestige of Russia has declined.

Concerning Western states' military capabilities for large-scale warfare, the post-Cold era has been a time of atrophy and decay. Most Western states have not developed their militaries for the kind of war we are witnessing today in Ukraine. On the contrary, many European states have transformed (read: cut) their armed forces to participate with small contributions to multinational out-of-area operations - whether in the name of military crisis management, counter-terrorism operations or counter-insurgency operations. After almost 30 years of "warfare light", Europa has shed most of its Cold War era military "overweight". Today this is a problem.

When one combines the lessons from Russia and the West for the Baltic Sea region, it is easy to conclude that in the short to medium term the situation is dangerous and could spin out of control rapidly. On its current path, Russia is going to hit a brick wall eventually. This does not necessarily mean the end of hostilities directed against Ukraine. Desperate actors can resort to desperate means. However, the big picture is that Russia will get weaker economically, politically and militarily the longer this war lasts. In this same period (1-5 years), Western possibilities to support Ukraine militarily - or to bolster their big war military capabilities - will be limited. The shadow of post-Cold War European defence cuts is cast well into the future. It takes at least a decade to significantly increase one's military capability after the decision has been made and additional resources are allocated for capability development.

Over the long run, Western states will have ample possibilities to navigate the dramatically worsened security situation they find themselves in today. If appropriate decisions related to boosting large-scale warfare capabilities is made throughout NATO, and if those decision are executed systematically NATO-wide, conventional Western military capability in the 2030s in Europe and for Europe will most likely overshadow that of Russia. European economic power may be converted into military power, but this takes time. Europe can make it if Russia can effectively start its own process of military transformation and capability development soon - a development that is highly contingent and does not look probable today.

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VYTAUTAS ISODA

Do small states wage proxy wars? The Baltic States' military aid to Ukraine

Expert article • 3391

When we hear the term 'proxy wars' we tend to think of situations where the big 'players' of global politics are moving local 'pawns' to do their bidding across different 'chessboards' in order to avoid direct military confrontation between themselves. That is how the U.S. and the Soviet Union used to get under each other's skin in multiple theatres of the Cold War, the way Pakistan has for years been tormenting India in Kashmir. In summer 2020 when Turkey upgraded its support for the Tripoli-based government to turn the tide of the Libyan civil war, the world held its breath fearing it would spark Ankara's conflict with its NATO ally France which was backing the opposing force of general Khalifa Haftar. Less attention was paid to the fact that the so-called Government of National Accord in Tripoli survived the first several years of the civil war due to significant transfers from a tiny (albeit gas-rich) Gulf state Qatar. Last year when Russia started a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, all eyes turned to the United States (and to a lesser extent, major European powers) that had promised tangible support to the Ukrainian government in the months leading up to this war. One tends to overlook the fact that for the past seven years a small Baltic country Lithuania had been regularly providing Ukraine with training and weapons to fight the Moscow-backed proxies in Donbas. In fact, there were times when the number of Lithuanian military instructors in Ukraine nearly matched those of the British and Polish soldiers and was only three or four times smaller than the number of Americans (note that Lithuania is a nation of 3 million people). If the Ukrainians had not modernized their military with the help and guidance from the NATO countries – not least of them Lithuania – they would not have pushed back against the Russians as effectively as they did in 2022.

Taking these facts into account, two questions stand out in particular: why do the small states increasingly engage in activities best described as proxy warfare and does it really matter if their role in military settings will hardly ever match that of the major powers? Motives for the small states to use proxy interventions vary depending on the context. Sometimes experts refer to economic returns this relatively cheap strategy can bring to the small players. In the case of Qatar's involvement in the Libya, it was mostly control of the Libyan oil and gas reserves they were after; Rwanda's support for the rebel movements in the Eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo has similarly been fueled by abundant coltan and gold resources in those areas. Most small states, however, have too little resources to begin with only to see them wasted on chasing "El Dorados". It would be safe to assume that most of them are willing to intervene in distant conflicts only when and if there is a conflict party with perfectly aligned interests already in fight. This is certainly the case for the three Baltic States that have supported the post-Maidan government in Kiev and supplied it with military equipment since 2014. The Balts themselves have always had tense relations with Russia ever since they gained

independence from the Soviet Union in the 1990s. They had clashed with Moscow on multiple occasions in various diplomatic and economic settings (on energy trade in particular) even before 2014. However, the eight year-long conflict in Donbas and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 were actually the first chance for the Baltic countries to challenge Moscow militarily, even if indirectly – through the Ukrainian military. As a result of Russian advances, their security interests were so perfectly matched with Ukraine's that the Lithuanian National Security Strategy of 2017 actually echoed the corresponding document published by the Ukrainian government in 2015 almost verbatim. The Prime Minister of Estonia Kaja Kallas was probably most blunt about it: "Ukraine is now literally at war with our enemy [...]. It is perfectly clear that Ukraine is fighting on our behalf, while everything we give to Ukraine, actually goes to the defense of Estonia".

What the Baltic countries have actually transferred to Ukraine may look like crumbs in absolute terms (especially when you compare their commitment to that of the U.S. and other major powers), but it is quite impressive relative to their size. According to Ukraine Support Tracker dataset, from 24 January 2022 to 15 January 2023 Estonia donated 308 mln EUR worth of military aid to Kiev, which amounts to almost 1,1% of its GDP; some countries hardly spend as much on their own defence! Estonia is actually leading the list of Ukraine's foreign donors in terms of military aid to GDP ratio with Latvia and Lithuania taking up the second and the third position accordingly (with 0,9% and 0,5% of their GDP committed to arming Ukraine). This brings us to our second question: does it really matter? The government of Ukraine itself seems to think it does. It has described the Baltic military contributions as "timely and important", and has particularly placed emphasis on the example those arms transfers have set for the major NATO powers. If this was in fact the underlying goal of the governments in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius in the first place, one must admit that they made a huge impact on the course of this war and may well have found the most subtle way to wage a proxy war in the history of proxy wars. ■



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MARKO PALOKANGAS

Fog of war in Europe

Expert article • 3392

As we enter the 2020s, warfare has become increasingly widespread and affects us all. The distinctions between state, state-sponsored and non-state actors have become blurred. The diversity of security threats has also increased, as the flood of information, misunderstandings and incorrect presuppositions, unpredictability and countless other factors cause situations that are difficult to manage. However, the development is not linear. In a more complex environment, enemies and threats mix, different means and actors are combined in a new way and in a more multidimensional way than before, using, for example, conventional and non-conventional weapons together in the air, land, sea, space, cyber and information dimensions.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the bipolar world order in the 1990s created a completely new security policy situation in the world. At the same time, there was an opportunity to develop safety systems through mutual commitment and safety agreements. Defensive security solutions, an early warning system, an open inspection system, high-level command and control systems, and various negotiation mechanisms increased transparency and eased military tension between states. As a result, the probability of both a strategic nuclear war and a global war with conventional weapons decreased in the early 2000s.

Unfortunately, the security situation in Europe and partly in the whole world changed significantly at the latest on February 24, 2022, when Russia and its armed forces unlawfully attacked Ukraine. Since 2014, the war in Ukraine took a new turn, when the fog of war descended thickly over Ukraine and all of Europe. We have once again returned to the insecure everyday life marked by wars and other threats. In the light of the events of the beginning of the current century, the future could be characterized as a period of uncertainty after the Cold War, where change is the only certainty.

The Prussian general and war theorist Carl von Clausewitz introduced the world to the idea of the so-called fog of war in the 19th century. It refers to the difficulties of obtaining information and the uncertainty of information in a war situation. He also talked about the friction of war, which is closely related to the fog of war and means many and unexpected difficulties of warfare, which according to him, those who have not been to war cannot understand. Even if the difficulties or inconveniences are known and considered, due to the complexity and chaos of the war and the wider security environment, new and unexpected factors are always encountered that complicate decision-making.

Military threat images are also characterized by an increasing multidimensionality and scope, as well as their interface with each other. When combined with each other, they increase the intensity of the threat, whereby the global nature of threat images forces actors, especially states, to intensify their international cooperation in order to guarantee their own security. In a global world, national security cannot be built alone, nor can threats be fought only within national borders or by the actions of only one security authority. Security, national crisis resilience and citizens' responsibility are inseparable from each other and are therefore our common cause.

A research network consisting of professionals and experts from various fields was established in 2021 at the National Defence University, in connection with the Department of Warfare, to study the wide scope and change of warfare, whose main task is to use scientific research to

try to dispel the haze that characterizes warfare. The overarching theme of the "Fog of War" research network is the integration and development of military theories and strategic thinking and intelligence. The Network forms a forum for the discussion of the implications of the latest results for the development of national military skills and for the analytical examination of changes in warfare.

In 2022, the Fog of War research network published the first book based on research articles called *Fog of War – warfare in transition* (only in Finnish). The new article collection *Fog of War – wide-scale warfare* (only in Finnish), which will be published in the summer of 2023, is a natural continuation of the network's publications, which at the same time serves as an opening for discussion with the topics covered and as a demonstration of the introduction of the research carried out at the National Defence University to a wide audience. ■



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AURIMAS ŠVEDAS

Conflict and security in the Baltic Sea region in historical perspective

Expert article • 3393

When considering the fate of the early Lithuanian state (1253–1795) and the First Republic of Lithuania (1918–1940), historians dramatically summarise it as such: for a state that finds itself in the zone of contact between Western and Eastern civilisation, geopolitical circumstances sometimes act with overpowering force – *force majeure*. This is a trend that has been well illustrated in 20th-century history. The new international system devised in Versailles in 1919 did not manage to create the provisions for maintaining a sustainable peace in Europe. Dangerous tendencies became more apparent in the 1930s, when the Nazis assumed power and turned Germany's foreign policy down the path of aggressive revenge and revisionism, while Stalinist Soviet Russia, which was building itself into an ever greater military power, started searching for ways how to extend tsarist Russia's expansionist imperial policy. All these processes meant one thing for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia (as well as for the rest of Central Eastern Europe) – their space for geopolitical manoeuvring was consistently shrinking, whereas the abolition of Poland's statehood in September 1939 was also *de facto* the beginning of the loss of independence of Lithuania and its northern neighbours. Existing amid the field of tension created between Berlin, the capital of the Third Reich, and Moscow, asserting itself as the Third Rome, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia felt as if they were minor besieged fortresses, whose crews' efforts unfortunately no longer had any significant impact.

The Lithuanian state, restored on March 11, 1990, and its Baltic neighbours exist in a completely different geopolitical reality in the 21st century. Being a member of the European Union and NATO, Lithuania is engaged in partnership and cooperation with more than thirty states, which have an interest in seeing political and economic stability in the Republic of Lithuania, and ensuring its geopolitical security. At the same time, Lithuania's geopolitical, economic and cultural interests extend from Helsinki to Lisbon, and from Washington to Canberra.

In 1994, Lithuania accepted important international commitments when, as part of Denmark's battalion, the first Lithuanian peacekeeping force LITPLA-1 joined in the United Nations Organisation's peacekeeping mission in Croatia. Over the course of 33 years, the geography and nature of such missions has grown extraordinarily broad: Lithuania's soldiers have participated in operations organised by the UN, the *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe* (OSCE), EU, NATO and other international coalitions in some of the most dangerous hotspots in the world. In this context, Lithuania's mission in Afghanistan in 2005–2013 is worthy of a separate mention. This was the first and the largest independent international operation during which Lithuanian Special Operations Forces commanded the NATO international security support forces group for reconstruction in the Ghor Province. Equally important activities have been underway in the political sphere. In 2013, Lithuania chaired the European Council, and from May 1, 2015 it held the rotating Presidency of the UN Security Council. In July 11–12, 2023, the NATO Summit will be taking place in Vilnius for the first time ever.

Thus, being members of the EU, NATO and other international organisations allows the Baltic States, which in the 20th century felt like small, lonely besieged fortresses, make a fundamental contribution to

resolving today's security challenges. What are they exactly? Let us begin from the legacy of the 20th century. One such legacy is the behaviour of so-called spoiler states that do not obey the existing international rules (the People's Republic of China should be mentioned first here) and the transformation of the Russian Federation and Belarus into totalitarian states. Another few security crisis points formed in the 21st century that were created by transnational acts of terror, migration processes, problems in the economy at large and the rise in populism.

Now we are well aware that the challenges discussed earlier were merely a prelude to the fundamental security crisis in Europe, when on February 24, 2022 the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin began the second stage of war against Ukraine, seeking the physical destruction of this state and its society.

What can Lithuania and the other countries of the Baltic Sea region do in this new – war – situation, and how can this action be taken? They will obviously have to take on new responsibilities in the creation and implementation of a strategy to restrain Russia, thereby contributing to the efforts of the United States, Great Britain and Central East European states (Poland, Czechia and Slovakia). Finland's and Sweden's decision to join NATO is also a very important step in the implementation of this strategy.

Why do we need to talk about a strategy for restraining totalitarian Russia today? Well, because this state, whose acts in the 21st century hark back to 19th-century geopolitical categories, is implementing a policy of imperial expansion. The *credo* of this policy: Russia is like an ocean. The purpose of raising waves (information, hybrid and conventional wars) in this ocean is to change the geopolitical landscape in Europe as far and as deeply as Russia can manage. Where will the expansion of this totalitarian state, seeking empire status, stop?

The answer to the latter question depends in part on Lithuania and the other states in the Baltic Sea region. In the 21st century, they are not only members of NATO (making use of the security "umbrella" this organisation provides), but also act as the European Union's external borders, and (just as importantly) are defenders of the values and ideas professed by this Community.

Does a happy ending to history await Lithuania and the other states in the Baltic Sea region this time?

Unfortunately, this is a question we have yet to answer. ■

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The concept for Comprehensive Security

Expert article • 3394

There is an identified need for deeper cross-governmental and whole-of-society cooperation on preparedness. We have faced COVID-19, Russian attack to Ukraine, migration and refugee crisis in Europe, Nord Stream gas pipeline explosions at the Baltic Sea and Europe's energy crisis. Simultaneously the climate change and various hybrid threats are challenging us. Unfortunately operating in world where our society's crisis resilience is tested almost on daily basis has become a norm.

The Finnish model of preparedness is based on the concept of Comprehensive Security, where authorities, businesses, non-governmental organizations and citizens are jointly responsible for safeguarding society's vital functions. The aim is that during crisis, the entirety of Finnish society is able to rapidly focus resources where needed, recover quickly, and adapt its functions based on the lessons learned. The roots of the concept are in the post-WWII doctrine of Total Defence, where the entire society was mobilized to support the military defence, if needed.

Incidents seldom occur alone, but rather as part of a so-called multiple disruption scenario. It is too late to react to an incident when it has already begun. Preparedness planning means identifying society's vital functions, potential threats and weaknesses to these, as well as relevant security actors. Baseline of the Comprehensive Security is described in the Security Strategy for Society. The model is based on society-wide shared responsibilities with actors in all levels. In the core of the strategy are seven deeply intertwined vital functions for Society. These include: 1) Leadership, 2) International and EU-activities, 3) Defence capability, 4) Internal security, 5) Economy, infrastructure and security of supply, 6) Functional capacity of the population and services and 7) Psychological resilience.

In preparedness, everyone has a role. The Government is in charge of overall picture and coordination of efforts in safeguarding the vital functions. Authorities, municipalities and other public organs cooperate in order to ensure continuity of services while NGO's provide services and coordinate the participation of volunteers in the activities supporting authorities. The private sector has increasingly important role in the preparedness process, as businesses operate on infrastructure critical for society. Finland has a lot to offer in comprehensive approach on security and resilience.

Resilience is national responsibility and Finland will strongly rely upon the principles of Comprehensive Security in enhancing society's resilience. NATO has identified seven Baseline Requirements, which are seen as critical enablers for military action. These are ment to improve societal resilience and the institutional structures in member countries and through that in NATO and EU too. Improving resilience takes time. At the current situation, it is more than relevant to be able to resist different kind of threats and stand tall together. We need to be allied and we need to share our best practices.

How do we improve our resilience is a valid question – although the answer is far from simple. One factor, which we have identified in Finland, is working together and bringing all key societal actors around the same table when finding answers to the question on how to prepare and how to build our society more resilient.

This is also the idea behind the Security Committee in Finland. In a way it acts as a national resilience committee where represented are the permanent secretaries from all ministries and the Office of the President of the Republic along with all the heads of key security agencies. The private sector represented by the Chief Executive Officer of National Emergency Supply Agency and Chair of the National Emergency Supply Council. Finnish Red Cross, National Defence Training Association and Finnish National Rescue Association each take turn representing the whole field of NGO's in the Security Committee.

The key element of preparedness is trust. Building trust requires active and sustained effort. Preparedness is never ready, and we constantly need to find ways to improve it. That is why we are currently updating the Security Strategy for Society to better and more comprehensively address changing security environment with its challenges. To be better prepared against hybrid operations and in order to be more resilient, we need to use the best qualities and strengths to counter malign hybrid actors. Preparedness work has to be done in all levels – international, state, regional and local level – as said before, everybody has a role in it – also in being resilient civilian. In sum, the Finnish model aims to combine a rapid, adaptable local response with system-level coordination and learning. Preparedness assures the best possible response no matter the threat. ■



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The revolution in Nordic military affairs

Expert article • 3395

A revolution is taking place in Nordic military affairs. While Finland and Sweden's decision to seek membership in NATO in May 2022 has undoubtedly speed up this development, the momentum and direction of movement began already in the wake of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. The territorial revisionism of President Vladimir Putin's increasingly authoritarian Russia caused a marked deterioration in the external security environment of the Nordic states, and they responded firstly by strengthening their own defence capabilities, secondly by strengthening ties with their allies and partners outside the region, and finally, by developing their own ability to stand together and cooperate 'at home' in the Nordic region if a major crisis or armed conflict should occur. Their purpose was first and foremost to strengthen deterrence, to prevent such a crisis, but secondly to better enable them to defend their countries if needed.

The ambition to develop Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) as something that worked beyond peacetime became an important and recurring theme in NORDEFECO in the post-2014 years. It stood at the centre of the revised 'NORDEFECO Vision 2025' adopted by the Nordic ministers of defence in 2018. The vision looked to improve 'cooperation in peace, crisis and conflict' and sought to strengthen 'interoperability, deterrence and territorial defence in the Nordic region'.

Several large military exercises in the region, involving troops from both the Nordic states as well as from the United States and other NATO-countries, played an important part in these efforts. Exercises developed interoperability among participating forces and signalled to Russia that the Nordic states were able and willing to stand together as neighbours if, at some point, this should become necessary. Aurora 2017 in Sweden and the NATO-led Trident Juncture 2018 in Norway were some of the most important 'high-visibility exercises' undertaken, involving respectively about 20,000 and 50,000 troops.

The Nordic states also began gradually to seek to coordinate their national operational defence plans – i.e., their 'war plans'. Militarily non-aligned Sweden and Finland agreed in 2015 that discussions between their respective armed forces could include how to cooperate in times of crisis and war, and in 2018 the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding allowing Swedish–Finnish military cooperation to cover 'operational planning in all contingencies'. NATO-members Norway and Denmark coordinated their national defence plans closely with NATO plans, as well as with selected allied countries such as the United States.

The most important factor limiting Nordic cooperation 'beyond peacetime' remained the different alignments of the Nordic states, namely Sweden's and Finland's non-membership in NATO. While they intensified ties with NATO and the West since 2014, there were some firm limits on what was possible without being full members of the alliance. Joint defence planning with NATO was one such area.

In 2020, Norway, Sweden and Finland signed a statement of intent with the aim of 'coordinating' their respective national operational plans, followed by Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in 2021. The goal was to 'coordinate' their respective national operational plans, and examine the possibility of developing 'common' plans 'in certain areas'. But any such plans would have remained *options* since none of these agreements contained mutual defence obligations.

With Finland's NATO-membership in April 2023, soon to be followed also by Sweden, the last security policy obstacle to common Nordic defence planning is being swept away. Soon, national operational plans will be closely coordinated with each other, with NATO regional plans, and with the national plans of some of the major NATO-states. Nordic cooperation 'beyond peacetime' is already blossoming in several fields.

The Nordic Chiefs of Defence have advised that the Nordic states should be placed under the same NATO joint operational headquarter and that they develop common plans for receiving allied reinforcements to the region. The Nordic air forces have also signed a declaration of intent to integrate their forces to bolster the regions defence. Most importantly, they aim to coordinate the employment of their 250 modern 4th and 5th generation combat aircraft. A joint Nordic air operations centre may follow, to exercise unified command over their air assets in the region.

For the time being, the Nordic armed forces are focused on preparing for operational military cooperation in crisis and wartime. However, in time, it is possible that the Nordic states will also seek to enhance their defence industrial cooperation and seek to develop some military capabilities together. In short, we are witnessing an ongoing revolution in Nordic military affairs which few would have predicted a decade ago. ■



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Finland's emergent NATO policy

Expert article • 3396

Finland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 4 April 2023, concluding a historically swift ratification process that lasted less than eleven months. NATO membership has now inaugurated a new era in Finnish foreign, security, and defence policy. For the first time in its history, Finland is a member of a formalized, treaty-based military alliance.

Finland's entry into NATO will turn the alliance into one of the most significant multilateral forums for Helsinki. Importantly, the scope of issues that Finland needs to deal with as an ally is much broader than the agenda Finland handled during its time as a NATO partner.

As a full-fledge ally, Finland must now begin to formulate its NATO policy in earnest. Importantly, Finland's NATO policy will not only be determined by national preferences only, but also by NATO's existing policies and the views held by Finland's future allies. Helsinki has clearly expressed that upon entering NATO, it wants to find solutions that optimize Finland's own defence as a part of NATO's collective defence, and that make sense both from the national point of view and from the perspective of the whole alliance.

In practice, the process of national policy formulation will take place rather organically. As a NATO member, Finland must express its views on the broad array of issues that feature on the alliance's agenda, thus building its NATO policy and profile bit by bit. In the longer term, governmental programmes, as well as foreign, security, and defence policy reports, will be the key documents for setting Finland's NATO-related objectives.

One cannot understand Finland's emergent NATO policy without paying attention to geography. Indeed, Finnish interest and objectives in the alliance will be anchored in geostrategic realities. There are four factors that will heavily influence Finnish NATO policy:

1. Finland is a Baltic Sea state, dependent on unhindered maritime traffic and with a vital interest in the territorial integrity of the Baltic states.
2. Finland is an Arctic country, with an important role in defending the High North land domain and, indirectly, the Northern Atlantic sealines.
3. Finland is a frontline state, meaning that building credible deterrence vis-à-vis Russia and ensuring the possibility to receive allied reinforcements will be among its key interests.
4. Finland is peripherally located vis-à-vis the Western reserves of military and industrial power, directing its attention towards military mobility as well as security of supply.

Based on these four factors, once in the alliance, Finland will be a deterrence-oriented ally with a Russia-centric security and defence agenda. Finland's primary objectives within NATO will relate to the alliance's command and force structure and operational planning. From the Finnish viewpoint, NATO should have a functional command structure, as well as sufficient forces and operational plans in order to be capable of reinforcing Northern Europe and Finland if NATO's deterrence were to fail.

To be a credible ally, Finland must decide on its contribution to collective defence. There are several ways how allies are involved in this core purpose of the alliance. For instance, allies earmark troops and capabilities for NATO's disposal. The alliance is currently building a new and ambitious force model, and military capable allies, such as Finland, are expected offer significant contributions.

Furthermore, Finland is likely expected to take part in NATO's peacetime collective defence activities, namely the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroups and its air policing missions in the Baltic States and Iceland. From a military perspective, the most natural eFP battlegroup for Finland would be the United Kingdom-led battalion in Estonia. That said, the decision about the Finnish involvement will first and foremost be political. The alliance may want to see Finnish soldiers serving beyond its immediate security environment, such as in the Black Sea region. NATO air policing demands less resources than contributing to the eFP. Finland's participation in both the Baltic and Icelandic missions will most likely be seen desirable.

Finland has every opportunity to be an influential NATO ally. Firstly, Finland's strategic location as well as the capabilities and strength of its armed forces should enhance the country's political weight and afford it additional bargaining power in alliance decision-making. Secondly, in past decades, Finland's focus has uninterruptedly been on deterrence and defence, duly providing the country with valuable expertise to offer NATO in the alliance's current efforts to rebuild its deterrence and defence posture.

Thirdly, Finland has considerable experience in matters such as resilience, civil preparedness, and Arctic warfare, which are all potential policy areas, or niches, in which Finland can wield influence and in which Finland has already managed to build a good reputation within NATO. Fourthly and lastly, Finland's multilateral diplomacy has traditionally been marked by pragmatism, bridge-building efforts, and the avoidance of bloc building. These characteristics could prove useful in NATO as well. ■



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NATO: A historical moment in the Nordic-Baltic region

Expert article • 3397

Finland's membership in NATO on April 4th 2023 represent a watershed moment in Baltic and Nordic history. By entering into a formal military alliance with its neighbours, Finland will be part of a united front of deterrence against Russia, reaching from the High North to the Black Sea. The Baltic countries, which always have felt vulnerable and exposed given their geopolitical location, now have a new and capable ally next door. But what are the concrete implications for Nordic-Baltic security and defence?

Finland has after all always been a part of the Western family of liberal democracies and since it joined the European Union, also been firmly anchored in European security architecture. Over the last decade it has also strengthened its bilateral defence ties with NATO, the United States and Sweden. It has also participated in the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). As such, nothing is new. Nobody doubted where Finland would stand in case of conflict between Russia and the West. Nonetheless, a formal alliance is not only politically important, it also entails new concrete military solutions which were not possible as a non-aligned country.

As President Niinistö has stated, Finland's NATO-membership is not complete until Sweden also joins. This responsibility lies in the hands of Türkiye, and there is hope that a ratification can take place after the elections there in May, and before NATO Summit in Vilnius at the end of June. For the general security and defence of Sweden, this delay does not matter much. But if NATO is forced to get on with its defence planning with Finland but without Sweden over the next months and years, this becomes increasingly inconvenient over time. A too long delay should therefore be avoided.

Finland's (and Sweden's) NATO-membership implies opportunities to re-think and re-design Nordic-Baltic defence in novel ways, utilizing each others' forces and capacities more efficiently than was possible before. In short, Nordic and Baltic states will now be able to rely on defence systems of its Nordic neighbours – knowing that these resources also will be available in case of conflict and war. This was the major shortcoming in NORDEFECO until now; cooperation could be developed, but not integration and mutual security interdependence.

So what can we expect? The Nordic Chiefs of the Airforces have already agreed to work jointly to develop an 'ability to operate seamlessly together as one force'. They plan joint air command and control, flexible and resilient airbasing, shared air situational awareness and common air education, training and exercises. This plus potentially joint air defence, logistics and maintenance, will not only potentially save costs, but more importantly it will strengthen the military effect of the Nordic air forces significantly. With a future fleet of about 250 modern fighter jets (Denmark, Finland, and Norway with F35, Sweden with Gripen), the combined Nordic Airforce will represent a formidable deterrent towards Russia, and a very potent force in European defence. Given the mobility and long reach of aircrafts, this will strengthen NATO's warfighting capacity in both the Baltic and in the High North.

But this is also a military challenge NATO needs to address. Although the High North and the Baltic Sea in many respects are one common northern front, these two theatres also represent different military threats. In the High North, Russia's strategic submarines as well as its multi-purpose attack submarines are NATO's main concern. The former because they represent a direct threat against the American continent, the latter because they can target Allied sea lines of communications, and thereby reinforcement from America to Europe. In the Baltic region, the main problem is partly to protect the population centres around Helsinki and Stockholm, and partly to reinforce the Baltics in a contested environment. These various tasks require different plans and preparations, which may not be directly interlinked. NATO enlargement certainly makes reinforcement of the Baltic states much easier, as NATO will be in a better place to control the region. Sweden will represent a significant rear area, which can support both the High North and the Baltics with land forces. Finnish and Swedish navies will also be crucial in controlling and securing maritime activity in the Baltic Sea.

But these somewhat diverging tasks between the High North and the Baltic Sea has also triggered a debate over which NATO Joint Headquarters Finland and Sweden should be placed under. Norway is already assigned under JFC Norfolk, Virginia, USA, while Denmark is under JFC Brunssum in the Netherlands. The Nordic Chiefs of defence have stated that they wish to be under a common joint command, but there are arguments in favour of both. The ties to the US and reinforcements from the West speaks in favour of Norfolk, while allied support of the Baltic states may point to Brunssum. This question is already somewhat politicised, but should be left to defence planners to decide based on military assessments. Irrespectively of the outcome, all NATO countries and regions will be under one command (SACEUR) should hostilities break out.

All in all, the Nordic NATO-enlargement will stabilise the Baltic Sea and the High North further, as crisis prevention and management will be enhanced through NATO. The days of "Nordic Balance" are long gone and the northern European democracies are more united than ever before in history. It is truly a historical moment. ■

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Sweden's bumpy road towards NATO membership

Expert article • 3398

On the 16 of May 2022, the Swedish Government declared its intention to apply for membership in NATO, only four days after Finland had announced a similar decision. The decision was announced after a speedy reorientation phase among the Swedish decision-makers, following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the break-down of the European security order. The decision was the next logical step following a report from the Swedish Foreign Ministry on 13 of May, in which a "new" and "changed" threat assessment was presented due to Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. Neither existing bilateral security arrangements nor the EU's security dimensions were deemed adequate in deterring or responding to new threat dynamics. Even though Sweden had gradually increased its military cooperation with NATO and NATO member states ever since the end of the Cold War, the Swedish government had clearly stated over the years that Sweden's long history of non-alignment was valuable, not only for Swedish security, but also for the stability of the security situation in Northern Europe. The Swedish non-alignment had been a fundamental part of Swedish foreign policy identity, but with the decision to apply for membership, this identity was in flux.

In the Swedish attempts to improve its defense capacities several bilateral agreements concerning defense cooperation had been concluded and the bilateral agreement with Finland even took the form of an operative defense cooperation beyond peacetime. Besides the strategic advantages for NATO if Finland and Sweden joined simultaneously, the emphasis on Finland and Sweden 'as a package' underlined that Sweden was not alone in its reorientation towards NATO, and that a NATO membership was necessary if Sweden wanted to keep its close cooperation with a neighboring country. This might be seen as a step towards building a new Swedish-Nordic security identity within NATO.

Simultaneously with the decision-making process in Sweden, security experts as well as stakeholders expressed their strong belief that Sweden (and Finland) would become members in express speed. For example, Anders Fogh Rasmussen NATO's former Secretary General said the application could be ratified overnight, while Jens Stoltenberg, NATO's present Secretary General, believed that the application process would work smooth and quick. The (almost) unanimous support from Western experts confirmed the Swedish politicians in their expectation that NATO's member states looked forward to welcoming Sweden and was accepting Sweden's new Western security identity.

However, the application process has since then encountered several problems. Turkey demanded trilateral negotiations with Finland and Sweden on the fight against terrorism, arms embargoes and mechanisms for a closer dialogue and cooperation. Once the trilateral memorandum was in place, all NATO member states signed the accession protocols for both countries on 5 July 2022 and the next step in the process would be the ratification from each member state.

Even though a memorandum was in place, the problems continued. According to Turkey, Sweden was not doing enough or quickly enough to meet the demands in the memorandum, and even the Swedish Foreign Minister was pointed out as a problem in the relationship between the two countries.

Since the ratification process still has not been solved for Sweden, domestic critique has been raised against the memorandum as such: why should Sweden sign such a document and was it wise to sign a document without a clear timetable also for Turkey's ratification? During the autumn and winter of 2022, the media focus has been on Turkey's resentments against the Swedish application. However, during the spring 2023 signs turned up that Hungary, the second country not yet ratifying the Swedish application, was not pleased with the Swedish critique against Hungary's democratic status. Sweden has been a staunch critic of democratic deficits within the EU, and the question is in what way Sweden can pursue this line of policy in the foreseeable future.

The fact that only Finland, and not yet Sweden, has become a NATO member has affected Swedish self-perception as a coveted country. In March 2023 the Swedish Foreign Minister was confident Sweden would become a member at the NATO meeting in Vilnius in 2023. In April 2023 the confidence had diminished, and the Swedish decision-makers tried to lower the expectations. There are signs that Sweden hopes for more support from other NATO members to put pressure on Turkey and Hungary. Maybe Sweden can hope for a changed focus in the debate; more focus on Sweden's potential military and strategic contributions to NATO as well as how Russia is benefitting from the present situation, might assist Sweden's ratification process. Once the ratification process is ready, Sweden can carve out a new Western identity, within NATO. ■



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NATO-Russia: Forming a joint NATO position

Expert article • 3399

Despite the much-celebrated European unity that emerged at the onset of the Russian war against Ukraine in February 2022, the NATO alliance remains divided or unsettled on how to manage the relationship with Russia, as well as in the future. There appears to be no plan for peace in a second-world-war style where the allies met from the very beginning of the war to discuss the peace and future of Europe. Needless to say, these war-time discussions aided the allies in bringing the war to an end. NATO's agreement on the post-war order in Europe is not only necessary after the end of the armed conflict in Ukraine, but an important aspect of NATO's assistance in bringing the conflict to an end.

Alliance dichotomy

The division among the allies on key issues such as how the alliance should manage Russia is not a new phenomenon in NATO, revealing that the alliance never managed to resolve the issue internally of how the post-Cold War order in Europe should function. This lies at the core of the current disagreements between the allies and crucially stands in the way of preparing the post-war order in Europe.

When looking closer at the developments in the 1990's and early 2000's when first Poland (1999) and later Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (2004) joined NATO, it became clear that the eastward expansion of NATO did not automatically mean a meeting of minds on how NATO should manage Russia. Although very different in their outlook, the North-eastern flank countries had a markedly different perception of Russia, and their intentions, which shaped their security needs differently from their western counterparts. In general terms, the North-eastern flank countries had, and still appear to have a modern or Westphalian understanding of security in contrast to a Western post-modern understanding of security. Thus, while NATO in the post-Cold War years moved NATO closer to the new Russian Federation and moved the Alliance 'out-of-treaty-area' in a number of humanitarian interventions, the North-eastern flank countries attempted to escape the grip of Russia by embedding their political future and security in the Western security architecture.

From a Western perspective, having a closer relationship with Russia was necessary to rebuild Europe after the Cold War, as NATO's 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement explained: 'A stronger NATO-Russia relationship should form another cornerstone of a new, inclusive and comprehensive security structure in Europe. NATO-Russia cooperation can help overcome any lingering distrust from the Cold War period, and help ensure that Europe is never again divided into opposing camps.' NATO thus followed with the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and Russia in 1997 and established the NATO-Russia Council in 2002.

At the same time, the North-eastern flank countries, engulfed by a sense of geopolitical vulnerability, embarked upon building their national defences. Today Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia all spend more than 2% GDP on defence and have announced considerable increases following the armed conflict in Ukraine. Since becoming NATO members,

the North-eastern flank advocated for moving the alliance to territorial defence and increasing the deterrence and force posture along the Eastern flank. In 2014 after the Russian invasion of Crimea, the North-eastern flank succeeded when NATO committed to territorial defence at the 2014 Wales Summit. However, it was not until 2016 at the Warsaw Summit when the flank succeeded in moving NATO towards a credible territorial defence and deterrence posture when NATO adopted the Enhanced Forward Presence to strengthen its presence on the Eastern flank.

Moving beyond alliance dichotomy

Despite the relative success of the North-eastern flank in strengthening NATO's posture on the flank and the war against Ukraine, which has brought NATO closer, the dichotomy continues to exist in NATO. On the North-eastern flank, countries continue to believe there remains distinct Eastern and Western understandings of security and importantly a difference of opinion on how to manage Russia. In the North-eastern flank's perception, Russia can only be managed from a position of strength and this is seen to be at odds with their Western allies. This is evident in the internal debates in the alliance around risk reduction measures, such as de-escalation, transparency and arms control, and perhaps more evident, in statements from the political leaderships in the North-eastern flank countries that they were right in their assessment of Russia.

This means that for NATO to contribute politically (beyond weapons supply) in bringing an end to the armed conflict in Ukraine and be able to provide a meaningful plan for the eventual peace, it must revisit the immediate post-Cold War past. It is long overdue for NATO to arrive at a joint understanding of how the security architecture of a Europe at peace looks and crucially, how Russia fits into this. ■



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Zeitenwende in Baltic Sea area

Expert article • 3400

The Nordic-Baltic region have for a long time been a somewhat diverse region vis-à-vis Russia. The Baltic countries and Poland were, at least in the Nordic countries, often seen as antagonistic in their stance towards Russia, whereas the Nordic countries tended to emphasize dialogue and in general more shades of grey when dealing with Russia.

This all started to change by December 2021, when Russia put forward the highly contentious list of security demands it wanted the west to agree to in order to lower tensions in Europe and defuse the crisis over Ukraine, effectively seeking to create a sphere of interest in Europe for Russia. Since then, and especially since the outbreak of Russia's attack to Ukraine in February 2022 security situation in Europe has deteriorated. What was planned as a short "special military operation" by Russia against an inferior enemy has turned into a large-scale conflict between states, in which prolonged fighting has been at a high intensity and over a wide geographical area. Consequently, there have been vocal calls in Europe for acceleration of defence industries and attention on stronger societal resilience as well as energy security, most notably formulated by the German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz as the European *Zeitenwende*, or watershed moment.

It remains to be seen whether Central European countries – Germany and France in particular – will live up to this talk. What can be said, however, is that with its attack, Russia has managed to unwittingly create a such a watershed moment in the Baltic Sea region. Since 2021/2022, we have witnessed a nearly complete loss of strategic trust to Russia's intentions in Northern Europe – a development that the Russian leadership has initiated and accelerated with its unpredictable behavior. What has come to replace dialogue is an emerging sense of being front-line states. As a consequence, Finland and Sweden, two countries with long-held traditions of neutrality made a rare grand strategy level decision to apply for NATO membership, rendering, once accomplished, the Baltic Sea nearly totally a NATO lake.

Taking into consideration the ongoing NATO enlargement and Russia's apparent mismatch between its imperial ambitions and its actual military, economic and diplomatic capabilities as demonstrated in the prolonged Ukraine war, how can we describe the emerging security setting in the Baltic Sea region? A few immediate findings can already be suggested:

First, the full integration of Finland and Sweden will profoundly change the balance of power in the Baltic Sea region, making Russia a militarily inferior player for the foreseeable future. Indeed, it's been quite a while since NATO last time was joined by new members with significant military capabilities. Already partially integrated at the operational level, through their participation in various NATO and European Union operations, the armed forces of Finland and Sweden will make their contribution to the defence and security of the Euro-Atlantic area in general but in particular in Northern Europe.

Secondly, however, the idea of the Baltic Sea as a NATO lake does not stand up to critical scrutiny. The region is quite vulnerable to non-military interference for a number of reasons, such as its density of commercial shipping routes, pipelines and other undersea infrastructure, and awareness of environmental issues within the coastal states. Below the threshold of direct armed confrontation Russia has thus room for manoeuvre, within which it can put political pressure on the countries of the region. In Northern Europe, Russia's actions have already manifested themselves in many different ways. The country has used the area

hybrid methods, including airspace violations, GPS jamming, cyber activities, oppressive diplomatic communications, energy policy and the manipulation of asylum seeker flows. This being the case, maybe the threats facing the Baltic Sea region tomorrow are more hybrid than military.

Third, NATO is not a silver bullet in terms of security. Many of the above hybrid issues can be tackled more efficiently through the means that are at the European Union's disposal. While NATO holds the key military assets, it still lacks sufficient operational speed. Therefore, NATO may serve best as the platform for defence cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. Smaller coalitions within NATO could achieve more effective solutions at the regional level, as opposed to trying to achieve full commitment by all members. The UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, NORDEFCO and various bi and trilateral defence arrangements are promising developments in this regard.

In sum, the Russian leadership has with its actions created a block of determined front-line states in the Baltic Sea region, unified by willingness to invest on defence, to increase mutual security cooperation and to robustly support Ukraine in the ongoing war. The longevity of this block as a unified voice in Europe remains to be seen, but as a whole, it is difficult to foresee a return to the past. ■



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A European Defence Union by 2025?

Expert article • 3401

The war in Ukraine has turbocharged the Commission's professed ambition to create a European Defence Union by 2025.

Some 18 bn euro have been spent by the EU and its member states on providing Ukraine with the weaponry it needs to defend itself against the Russian aggression. Through the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM) 30,000 Ukrainian soldiers will be trained. A special task force has been set up with NATO to protect European critical infrastructure, such as the pipelines providing the European Union with the natural gas from its main source Norway.

These are but a few examples of how a perceived existential threat to European security has reinforced the defence dimension of the Union. At the same time, cooperation with NATO is stronger than ever. While complementarity is the buzzword used to describe the relationship between the EU and NATO, it can also be described in terms of organic fusion.

The war forces Europeans to live on a war footing in the sense that, regardless of the outcome of the current war, uncertainty regarding Russia's long-term ambitions will remain for the foreseeable future. Hence the need to continue to invest in the defence of not only Ukraine but also of the EU and individual member states.

A sense of vulnerability was felt already with the onslaught of covid as 30 happy years of globalisation were replaced by the perceived need to reinforce the resilience of European societies. The Ukraine war added an urgency to protect also against the hostile intent of foreign powers. Much of the efforts in this regard form part of the ambition to create a Security Union, a twin to the Defence Union. Internal security falls under the policy area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) while defence pertains to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In terms of legal basis, the former is based on article 222 in the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), and the latter on article 42(7) in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU). Both articles profess solidarity in case of threats, in the first instance against internal security, in the latter in the form of armed aggression.

While legally two different things, in reality they are intertwined, as recognized in NATO's new Strategic Concept, where hybrid and cyber threats, if they reach a certain level, can activate article V in the Atlantic Treaty about solidarity in case of armed attack. These are areas where the EU offers some comparative advantage and exercises have been carried out jointly, testing the ability of the two institutions to withstand a common threat.

In the same vein, the EU has recently passed the so-called Critical Entities Resilience Directive (CER). Among entities listed are energy, transport, health, drinking water, waste water, space and central public administrations. They shall, according to the Directive, prepare for, cope with, protect against, respond to and recover from natural disasters, terrorist threats, health emergencies or hybrid attacks. In addition, the NIS 2 Directive aims to reinforce the resilience and protection of information technologies and structures.

The EU's financial muscles have been useful in funding the military resources provided by member states to Ukraine. Since the Union's common budget cannot be used to finance lethal external aid, a so-called off-budget and intergovernmental fund, the European Peace Facility (EPF) of 5 bn euro was created. Almost 4 bn euro have been spent on reimbursing member states for the deliveries to Ukraine and the fund was recently topped up with another 2 bn. However, the EU's budget can

be used for boosting industrial capacity, essential for the medium-term ability to produce the materiel necessary for the Ukrainian war effort. To this avail, a new instrument has been proposed by the Commission's Directorate General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) in the form of the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), with the aim to have member states jointly procure defence materiel. An initial 500 million euro would provide the financial incentive for doing so. Deliberations on the proposal is ongoing in the European institutions.

In parallel to recent initiatives caused by the war, previous programs for defence materiel cooperation, such as the European Defence Fund (EDF) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), have gained a new impetus from the sense of existential threat caused by the war. The total funding for defence purposes of some 10 new bn euro in the EU's multiannual budget will be revisited through the mid-term review of the budget this coming summer. It will be interesting to see if additional resources for defence will be allocated.

By 2025, the EU's Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) of 5,000 troops will be put in place, supported by the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC).

The EU's Strategic Compass, coordinated with NATO's Strategic Concept, provides an overview of the EU's combined effort in the areas of both internal and external security. As such, it reflects a concept reminiscent of the Nordic concept of 'total defence', encompassing both military and civilian aspects. The Ukraine war provides daily illustrations of the importance of mobilizing all of society in the resistance against foreign aggression. The concept has not yet matured fully into a full-blown understanding of the need to merge the twin ambitions to create a Security and a Defence Union. However, the continued pressure of the war will likely contribute to this process in the years ahead.

In a medium-term perspective, the EU through the gradual integration of Ukraine, will share a border with Russia, ranging from the Baltic to the Black Sea. This will add another transformational element to the EU's defence dimension.

Article 42(7) states that the solidarity clause in case of armed aggression against a member of the EU shall be consistent with commitments under NATO that, for those states which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation. The Ukraine war has proven the importance of NATO for collective defence while, at the same time, reinforcing the EU's defence dimension. It is thus not a question of either NATO or EU, but of both and.

A proclamation of a European Defence Union in 2025 would amount to more than a formal exercise but confirm realities created by the Ukraine war. ■

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The European Commission's role in developing the EU's security and defence policy

Expert article • 3402

Russia's illegal war of aggression on Ukraine has forever changed Europe. Therefore, the EU and its member states need – and have started – to adopt and transform its security and defence policies. And as a consequence of the war, the EU institutions – and in particular the European Commission as well as the diplomatic service the European External Action Service (EEAS) – has also strengthened their roles in EU security and defence policy making. This is a noticeable development as security and defence is traditionally seen as a national prerogative and a 'taboo' at the European level for EU institutions such as the Commission.

Firstly, the Commission leadership has thus far been instrumental in putting in place the hardest ever sanctions packages on Russia after their full-scale invasion and war on Ukraine. The Commission president von der Leyen and her team has also been in very close contact with the US administration to coordinate the transatlantic response towards Russia and for the support to Ukraine. The EU and its institutions have also stepped-up the financial support for Ukraine.

On the defence side several taboos have fallen in Europe. This includes the support of weapons to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility (EPF). Thus far, the EU – by April 2023 – has provided €3.6 billion through the EPF and the total amount of military support from EU and its member states lies around €12 billions in arms and ammunition. In March 2023 the EU also took a ground-breaking decision on joint procurement of ammunition to support Ukraine. Moreover, at the time of writing this *Baltic Rim Economies review* analysis, the EU member states and the European Parliament is negotiating the Commission's proposal on the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the common Procurement Act (EDIRPA). An initiative that could be seen as breaking another taboo on EU joint procurement and as an important stepping stone for future initiatives. And in 2023 the Commission is also expected to present further new initiatives on joint procurement of defence equipment as well as initiatives to enhance the defence-industries production capacity in Europe.

The EU's new Strategic Compass in security and defence (a 'white book' for EU security and defence policy developments) adopted by the EU leaders in March 2022 moreover outlines that the EU "will make a quantum leap to become a more assertive and decisive security provider, better prepared to tackle present and future threats and challenges". This new strategy outlines the EU and its member states ambitions in security and defence for the coming decade. Some of the elements in the Compass that the Commission is working on include investment in defence-industrial capacity, cyber and hybrid defence issues, the strengthening of Military Mobility in Europe as well as a new EU maritime security strategy and an EU strategy for space and defence. These developments only underscore the new and enhanced role for the Commission in EU security

and defence policy. Moreover, the work on the Strategic Compass also inclined a stronger working relationship between the EU institutions on defence matters.

However, these new developments also follow a longer trend, starting particularly under the tenure of the former Commission president Juncker (2014-2019). One of the most noticeable developments was the launch of the European Defence Fund (EDF) – an instrument to support defence-industrial cooperation in Europe in order to strengthen the EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). And the EDF was arguably a gamechanger for the role of the European Commission in EU defence policy. Moreover, in his 2017 State of the Union address, President Jean Claude Juncker, also outlined the ambition of the European Union to establish a full-fledged European Defence Union by 2025 – a goal that was later echoed by President von der Leyen.

Moreover, the Commission is also strengthening its role and policies in regard to the geo-economic field. Today we are seeing the blurring of policy fields, where security and defence policy issues are becoming increasingly entangled with for instance trade, technology, and economic issues. Thus, the Commission has outlined and launched new EU initiatives on among others a foreign direct investment (FDI) screening mechanism, export control measures, and trade defence instruments such as an instrument to counter economic coercion against EU member states.

Russia's illegal war of aggression has only underscored the current geopolitical tensions in the world. Just as the EU Strategic Compass underlines that "in this era of growing strategic competition, complex security threats and the direct attack on the European security order, the security of our citizens and our Union is at stake" and that thus "the EU and its Member States must invest more in their security and defence to be a stronger political and security actor". Hence we need the EU institutions – together with the member states – to continue to improve and strengthen European defences in the coming years ahead. ■



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Norway-EU relations in security and defence after the outbreak of war in Ukraine

Expert article • 3403

Norway is not a member of the European Union, but it seeks close security and defence ties with Brussels. Its set up through the EEA agreement, bilateral agreements and ad hoc cooperation has previously worked well for the small Arctic nation, but the war in Ukraine has provided a monumental stress test for the Norwegian outsider-position in European integration. This text takes stock of Norway-EU relations in light of the prolonged war on European soil and reflects on the potential for future developments.

Norway-EU relations at a glance

The EU does not operate with first and second tier third countries. Despite this fact, there is a perception in Norway that the EEA agreement has given Norway a range of benefits. One example to support this is how creative thinking by the Swedish health authorities helped Norway join the EU's vaccination scheme during COVID-19. Another is the friendly political signaling following the increased energy dependence on Norway after the cut-off from Russian energy sources after the war.

As part of the EEA agreement Norway holds a biannual dialogue with the EU on foreign policy. There are also frequent expert-level meetings with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and yearly meetings on the Middle East, Balkan, OSSE, Russia/Central Asia and Africa. Norway participates in EU declarations and sanctions and can be part of the EU's statements in international organisations. Norway is part of the European Defence Fund and has joined the PESCO project on military mobility. There is an agreement in place on contribution to civil and military crisis management operations and Norway has contributed to the EU's Battlegroups. The country is furthermore associated member in the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC). Finally, Norway participates in programs that reduce mutual vulnerabilities and increase resilience: Horizon Europe, Galileo, Copernicus, Digital, Cise, and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

The set-up above is probably the closest cooperation that a third country has with the EU on security and defence. However, given that Norway was previously a contributor to the Battlegroups and civilian and military EU operations, defence cooperation has been scaled down in recent years, especially on the operative side.

The Norwegian debate – no *Zeitenwende* in sight

Norway currently has the Eurosceptic Centre Party in government, which caused concern that cooperation with the EU would be de-prioritized from 2021. However, the opposite has happened. Centre Party representatives stay away from most EU related debates, and Labour Party ministers have mostly dealt with questions related to security and defence coordination with the EU regarding the war in Ukraine.

The Finnish and Swedish applications to join NATO also set a new standard for the Norwegian debate on security and defence cooperation with the EU. Whereas a marginal proportion of EU friendly voices in the country have argued that the EU's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine shows that security considerations should push Norway to applying for full membership, others fear duplication with NATO and

argue that the Nordic bids to join NATO once and for all proves that the EU is an economic union, *not* a security and defence union. The fear of NATO-EU duplication is arguably stronger in Norway than in most NATO countries. Considering that Denmark ended its opt-out from the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in 2022, Norway is the least responsive Nordic state in light of the war in Europe.

At the same time, where you stand depends on where you sit. I have written a book on Norway-EU relations in security and defence where I labeled Norway a 'willing outsider'. This has been an apt description since around 2000 when the EU's efforts in this area increased. EU membership is unrealistic in the foreseeable future given the low support for such negotiations. Therefore, Norway continues to seek solutions to problems as they arise, including after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Norway-EU relations on the Ukraine war

Being a third country limits the scope for action. When the EU decided on its initial package of sanctions against Russia, Norway waited in the corridors, eventually having to implement the sanctions that the member states decided on. In addition, Norway has sent national experts to the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), contributed with medical evacuation through UCPM, and provided a range of equipment through the same mechanism. Most other Norwegian contributions have been bilateral and in cooperation with specific member states and the US and UK. As such, not being a member of the EU has not limited Norway's ability to support Ukraine, and where possible it has used EU channels to provide aid.

Conclusions

The case of Norway is well-suited to highlight the political dynamics between the EU and third countries in security and defence. There are ambitions on both sides to cooperate, but the outsider-position places clear limitations on what is possible. From the Norwegian perspective, a limiting factor is that the discourse around EU security and defence policy is based on *potential* developments. On the other hand, the EU's response to the war in Ukraine shows that it can develop quickly, and as an outsider Norway can only chase these developments. Essentially, the EU could dictate Norwegian security and defence policy much more explicitly, but it would demand more energy in terms of integrating third states and taking a genuine interest in having them onboard. A start would be more comprehensive frameworks for third country association. ■



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The Nordic-Baltic group and Security Council membership

Expert article • 3404

The Security Council is frequently understood – dismissed even – as entirely in the control of the five permanent members (P5). The keen interest for an elected (or nonpermanent) seat among the remaining members of the United Nations suggests that this is an oversimplification, as they judge the Council sufficiently relevant for turning a candidature into a foreign policy priority. Persistent work by the ten elected members (E10) may also possibly nudge the processes and decisions of the Council away from the most extreme outcomes associated with the advantages held by the P5. To accomplish such persistence requires both 1) representation at regular intervals to establish sufficient knowledge and skills to ‘play the game’ for individual states and 2) ambitious coordination between in- and outgoing members to maintain coherence and efficiency. Among small states, the Nordic Baltic group (NB8) is ideally situated to meet these basic conditions for meaningful presence around the table of the world’s most powerful.

On every single occasion, a successful candidature for an elected seat in the Security Council is a prestigious accomplishment with a two-years access to global political authority as the result. For the appointments, the UN Charter instructs member states to pay special attention to contributions ‘to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization...’ (Article 23, 1). Winning an elected seat on the Security Council requires two thirds of the votes from the member states in the General Assembly. Each term lasts for two years, and there is a rotation of five seats on each occasion. Since 2015, the elections take place in June each year. The nomination of candidatures occurs within five regional groups, with the following distribution: three for the African Group (AG), two for Asia and the Pacific Group, one from Eastern European Group (EEG), two from Latin American and the Caribbean (GRULAC), and two from the Western Europe and Others group (WEOG). On even calendar years, there are elections for one seat from the African group, one from the Asia-Pacific group, one from the Latin America and Caribbean group, and two from the WEOG. On odd calendar years, there are elections for two seats from the African group, one from the Asia-Pacific group, one from the Latin America and Caribbean group, and one from the EEG. The Nordic states, all members of the WEOG, have agreed on a turn-taking order with a Nordic state candidature on every second election. After a disappointing two electoral losses in a row – Iceland in 2008 and Finland in 2012 – the negative trend was broken through a Swedish win in the 2016 election, and a positive path established through a Norwegian win in 2020. Currently, there is a Danish candidature for the 2024 election. The Baltic states are members of the EEG. Lithuania served in the Security Council during the 2014-15 term and Estonia during the 2020-21 term. Currently, there is a Latvian candidature for the 2025 election.

Over time, the Security Council elections reflect the asymmetries in access to influence and status acquired between states. After more than 70 years of elections, there is a team of four top players who have served eight times or more, while 58 states are still awaiting the opportunity. The top players are all regional powers: India (8), Argentina (9), Brazil (11) and

Japan (12). At least half of the never elected states qualify as small states on basis of population and/or territory, and many of them are members of the coalition of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). States who are elected on frequent intervals get the advantage in terms of accumulated knowledges and skills, which improves their capacity to match the institutionalized competences the P5 enjoy from their permanent presence in the Council. In contrast, countries never yet elected face the challenge of a very first forthcoming term without previous experience from this international office.

The Nordic-Baltic group has the chance of representation at regular intervals as well as to assist each other ahead of and during a (first) membership. Even if each candidature is solely on behalf of the state who has launched it, the Nordic and Baltic states do also collaborate and support each other’s candidatures and memberships. Since they belong to different regional groups, who rotate seats on different calendar years, NB8 collaboration comes with the rare opportunity to maintain a more enduring representation on behalf of the group in the Council. Between 2017 and 2022, there was a Nordic or a Baltic state in the Council in 5 out of 6 years. In 2021, both Estonia and Norway were present in the Council. Should the two current candidatures, Denmark for 2025-26 and Latvia for 2026-27, also succeed, this Nordic-Baltic presence will be repeated in 2026. The Nordic-Baltic group can work strategically on Security Council representation to make the most possible out of the opportunities established from their close relationship and collaboration. ■

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European economic self-defense in the face of authoritarianism

Expert article • 3405

Economic coercion by states has always been present in one form or the other, but the challenges have escalated to an unprecedented level in today's globalized economy. Most notably, as China's economy has strengthened its global leverage and Russia has weaponized its energy exports, authoritarian states have increased their coercive capabilities. This has been especially apparent for Europe in its relations with both China and Russia, but also Australia and South Korea, among others, have all experienced extensive economic coercion, according to reports from the [Australian Foreign Policy Institute](#) and [European Council on Foreign Relations](#). Norway and Sweden, among several states, have been in the freezer for having the audacity to have opinions on China and have subsequently been targeted with economic sanctions and threats. Most recently, Lithuania has been exposed to [Chinese coercion](#) for asserting its sovereign right to make independent decisions on diplomatic matters. Russia has, of course, been utilizing its large deposits of fossil energy as a way of weaponizing its economy, something that has led to robust and necessary responses from the European economies, but also to immediate costs.

The backdrop to the current situation has been self-inflicted damage due to the diffuse hopes from the West that [China and Russia would transition](#) into more liberal and democratic societies if we trade with authoritarian states and encourage them to open up as they integrate with liberal economies. The hopes have ended in the self-evident realization that this has been nothing but a pipe dream. Instead, many liberal states have become dependent on authoritarian states in all segments of the supply chain, including extraction and refinement of energy and minerals, but also innovation and transport. This was possible as many companies and governments have assumed that they could successfully balance reliance on authoritarian-controlled politicized economies and cheap production. Now, their supply lines are indirectly or even directly in the hands of Beijing and, to some extent, Moscow. Unrestricted liberalization of economies, and subsequent outsourcing of the supply chains and energy imports, have put liberal economies in a difficult situation. This said, blame must not only be placed on the authoritarian states who have acted as could be expected. The blame should also be directed to the naivety of politicians and companies in the West, as well as consumers' constant search for cheap consumer goods and short-term gains in exchange for long-term insecurity. This points to the need for a major rehaul of the economic strategy in Europe, both to make it more independent and to respond appropriately to threats to our own economic and political security.

Realizing that the ability to successfully resist economic coercion relies on a strong domestic economy, the ability to react swiftly and consistently and build international networks amongst like-minded nations, there is a need to look at this challenge more holistically. Considering the internal deficits with the EU shortly. To state the obvious, a reliable defense against economic coercion is a strong and independent European economy. European companies, consumers, and politicians will have to be ready to accept economic costs, sometimes substantial, in this transition to

break critical dependencies on authoritarian states. This is not to say that a complete halt of trade with China is possible, or even desirable, but it is necessary to end dependencies in critical and sensitive industries. If states adhere to international rights and freedoms, fair and free trade and accepts that economic coercion is an illegal act there will be no reason not to engage in free trade. Russia is a different matter as the full-scale invasion of Ukraine should only be met with full economic isolation, and this until Russian troops have left Ukrainian territory and the Russian government has taken responsibility for its actions.

Reducing, and eventually marginalizing, the energy dependencies from Russia and supply chain dependencies on authoritarian states overall has been costly, and it will continue to be costly, at least in the short term. This is even more true in the case of China. Still, no change would be devastating for the economic and, ultimately, political independence of Europe. There is no such thing as a free lunch, and short-term economic gains have proven to have long-term challenges to our independence.

Unrestricted free trade is, if not dead, severely damaged and to regain free trade worth its name, international institutions need to be reworked, transparency improved, and government manipulations of "private" companies stopped. This is only considering the political and economic impact on EU. Breaches against human rights, intellectual thefts, invasion of foreign states will just add more arguments to the need to distance ourselves from economics controlled by authoritarian leaders, no case is better than Russia to underline this

The necessary transformation will not be possible for some economies, as they are too closely associated with kleptocratic or authoritarian regimes, a case in point being Putin and Russia's war economy. Until a more transparent and fair system exists, restrictive trade must be enforced against states manipulating the economic system. This will come at a high cost, and to decrease the short and long-term costs, there is a need to remove internal trade restrictions, improve investment opportunities, and significantly increase research and development within Europe and the U.S., but also among likeminded nations, i.e., democracies, to balance the costs of the economic shift. Without a doubt, a polarization of the economic system will follow from the economic coercion that is underway, and we should not expect authoritarian states to adhere to international norms and values based on democracy and freedom. Giving in to pressure is not an option, as the stakes will increase as the economic dependency increases.

The EU needs to develop a way of dealing with authoritarian states from a position of strength, and Europe's strength primarily stems from its economy. The question that arises is, does Europe have enough political and economic cohesion to rise to the occasion? The Russian invasion of Ukraine has forced Europe to cooperate and coordinate to an unprecedented degree, even if both Germany and France have shown tendencies to bulge under pressure from China and Russia on occasion. The most recent being [French President Emmanuel Macron](#) buying into the Chinese narrative, and threaten to weakening the transatlantic link, a link that is absolutely essential for Europe. This for populist reasons



related to his own dwindling popularity and fear of China. Despite this, the European unity following the invasion of Ukraine shows promise for Europe, even if President Macron made the European split on China painfully apparent. There is always a risk for political populism that not only centrist politicians use but also left- and right-wing populist parties tend to use the increased costs of living as a reason for their political rise, as they argue for compromises with authoritarian regimes for their individual political benefits. That said, there are no alternatives if economic self-determination is to be secured.

It is beyond doubt that China's coercive economic measures directed towards Europe have escalated. Such measures could be described as "wolf warrior trade" and have included, for example, sudden tariff hikes, restrictions in agricultural imports, refusal of export or import, and sanctions against individual countries – and Russia is not far from following suit with energy black-mail. Neither Beijing's nor Moscow's objectives tend to be economical; instead, they seek to influence the policies of other states by instrumentalizing economic relations. As a result, China's and Russia's coercive economic actions pose a threat to all segments of society and is on no small part economic warfare. With this in mind, the EU and its democratic allies should be able to reply with collective defensive economic measures at all institutional levels.

An attack on an individual within the EU needs to be considered an attack on the community at large. A case in point is the Chinese attack on the Lithuanian economy through its sanctions of Lithuanian companies and products, but also Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the impact on the energy sector. Unless the EU can produce a coherent and consistent response against foreign attacks, the Union is only as strong as its individual members. A coordinated European economic response is a good start but there is a need to develop an extended collective economic self-defense among like-minded states in addition to Europe. The EU is only one part of the economic equation, the U.S. South Korea, Japan, India, Taiwan, and other democracies around the world need to be engaged to strengthen the free and transparent trade that would benefit all, but also supporting states that experience economic coercion on their end, but are economically weak, or dependent on international trade. Contrary to Macron's belief Europe is dependent on our allies, and then particularly on the U.S. that share our norms and values, by distancing ourselves from Washington we are only strengthening the grip of the authoritarian states even if it could entail short-term political gains for individual leaders.

The EU, along with its democratic allies, needs to enforce trade restrictions against states that utilize economic warfare as a policy instrument, but also against states that assist rouge states in their economic activities. This could be targeting banking systems and international payments, but also weakening economic coercion measures by assisting the targeted sectors, such as the energy sector. International institutions are essential components in this policy, this is not only referring to the need to strengthening democratic institutions but also institutions that guarantee transparency, judicial independence, innovation, and competitiveness. By strengthening our own, and our allies' institutions

we ensure resilience, but it is also ensuring that international trade with Europe is adhering to high international standards. There is much to be gained in terms of transparency and genuine free trade, and EU should be in the forefront of this development.

Economic self-defence is not only limited to the case of direct trade, but also about its impact on the security of the whole supply chain. Currently supply lines are to a concerning degree controlled by companies that are closely associated to, or directly controlled, by authoritarian regimes and there is a need to decrease such influence on the supply chain. It is not sufficient to only develop measures against economic coercion when it happens, but also to ensure that the situation never occurs in the first place. This can partly be accomplished by home shoring of critical industries, near-shoring or alliance shoring of necessary industries and create a blue supply line that could revoke the dependency on the current red supply chain controlled by China. This is not necessarily arguing for halting all trade with China and other authoritarian regimes, but it must be a more conscious decision and when it comes to critical and sensitive industries the shift has been initiated but would need to be strengthened, and supply chains that could create dependencies in long-run.

In short, there is not only a need to develop an ability to stand up as one against foreign economic coercion, but maybe more importantly strengthen the European, and allied, economies to the extent that economic coercion is no longer possible. This is made possible by not only reducing dependencies on authoritarian economies, but also home-shoring critical industries to safeguard our economic independence and develop a blue supply line that is based on transparency and democratic and legal institutions. We are entering a new age where economic, political, and military warfare are closely integrated, and Europe needs to wake up to the new reality and see the value of its allies and friends. ■

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Adding legitimacy to EU crisis politics

Expert article • 3406

In a volume published by the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS, 2022:1op), Astrid Séville notes that crises may have become a routine part of modern politics, with one crisis simply replacing another. Ironically, these crises are often generated by the global interdependence of today's world structure that also helps to stabilize regions and strengthen them economically. Managing this dilemma is not only an EU challenge but one that faces all states that are active on the global trade arena. Nonetheless, the European Union seems particularly vulnerable to criticism towards how it manages these crises. This could of course be explained by the presence of particularly strong democracies in Europe – most of them with high ambitions for democratic governance. But in addition to this, EU crisis governance is particularly difficult due to the complex political multi-level system that characterizes the European Union. In the EU, Member States tend to seek instant responses to protect national citizens in times of emergencies while at the same time risking to miss out on how national measures impact European interests – also of concern for them. On the contrary, when the EU acts in the EU's collective interest, it risks losing touch with national vulnerabilities that – without proper attention – risk deepening European crises.

How can the EU govern effectively and democratically under extraordinary circumstances, i.e. when the EU Member States need prompt solutions for often very complex and globally intertwined challenges? How should the EU decision-makers deal with the fact that some Member States may be better off than others in particular crises that hit European states in an asymmetric way (such as the financial crisis) while in others, states are challenged in a similar way but nonetheless disagree on the political response (as initially in the case of the Next Generation EU recovery plan, responding to COVID-19)? What is the most democratic and policy-effective decision in these situations? Based on lessons learnt from previous crises, there is good reason to reconsider how the EU governs in the crises.

The financial crisis with its roots in the US, is a reflection of a crisis that became a common concern for the interdependent euro-zone, but that also hit the EU Member States in an asymmetric way. EU leaders rhetorically described the challenge as one of “behavioural”, i.e. one that was triggered by Member States that did not abide with the rules. At the time, there was no discussion on structural challenges relating to the design of the euro (Schmidt, SIEPS 2022:1op) but the EU instead responded by harsh austerity and structural reform demands in the most damaged member states. The technocratic European leadership, reflected not least in the role taken by/given to the European Central Bank in the financial crisis expressed things like we must “do whatever it takes to save the euro” (Mario Draghi, Financial Times, 2012). The financial crisis also led to the creation of ad hoc lending facilities (the European Financial Stability Facility and the European Stability Mechanism), allowing states to avoid the constraints posed by EU Treaties while also avoiding the constitutional challenges of revising them. The European austerity politics during this period have raised concerns not only relating to perceived counterproductive economic effects of rapid fiscal consolidation and ineffective structural reforms but also for illegitimate decision-making.

The COVID-19 pandemic is instead an example of an external shock with symmetric effects on EU Member States. Nonetheless, the EU Member States were faced with different challenges mainly due to the fact that they are different kinds of Member States. While some were badly prepared in terms of poorly financed health care systems, others were severely hit by the closing down of industries and tourism damaging their economies and not least labour markets.

And so the story continues... The Russian invasion of Ukraine is yet another example of an external shock hitting the EU Member States symmetrically but causing varying stress to national systems. This crisis also indicates that even strong European economies, such as the German, are vulnerable to external shocks and may be in need of concerted EU action. In this case, Germany was particularly vulnerable considering Russia had for decades provided the raw material to fuel German industry. The Russian invasion put immediate pressure to find new producers and Germany was suddenly exposed to the solidarity of the other EU Member States. To make things even more complicated, it can also be difficult to know at national level which politics may be best as in the case of Sweden during the ongoing energy crisis. It is clear that even though Swedish producers currently export electricity at higher prices than they would have received in a closed Swedish market (also a socio-economic gain for Sweden as a country), the electricity consumers (i.e. most of the voters) are affected by higher prices (Flam, SIEPS, 2021).

Against this background, the EU decision maker must act responsibly and often under political pressure. Many researchers who study the EU's institutional and democratic design share similar concerns for EU crisis politics, highlighting not least how emergency measures; 1) are often adopted swiftly in secret or informal contexts with few opportunities for public debate, 2) challenge accountability structures, (who is in control and responsible?), 3) risk misaligning constitutionally and democratically established arrangements with how things are done in practice 4) tend to get “locked in” – in a way that could have long-lasting effects even outside the state of emergency.

The researchers are however not in full agreement on what should be done to add democratic legitimacy to European crisis politics. In the following I will focus on two proposals: The first model, a European *emergency constitution* (see e.g. Kreuder-Sonnen, SIEPS, 2022:1op), reflects an idea also visible among European elite leaders. Former senior Commission official Martin Selmayr has expressed that “it would be useful to have in the EU a mechanism, ready to be activated in times of crisis, that temporarily allow it to make decisions in a simpler and faster way to respond to crisis situations with determination”. Researchers underline the importance of ensuring that the “emergency constitution” is codified in advance to rule out abuse of power. They also highlight that such a constitution must give clear instructions on who should do what, under which clearly demarked situations the emergency mandate could be exercised, which checks should be in place to prevent abuse of power and how and when the emergency situation should be brought to an end. The second model argues that the lack of democratic input in EU crisis responses, should be resolved by simplifying and democratizing the EU's



executive structures (see e.g. White, SIEPS, 2022:1op). One crucial element is to tie the EU executive closer to the critical public. This proposal also responds to the democratic challenge caused by the fact that supranational authority (such as the European Commission) tends to accord a prominent role to technocracy. Proponents of the emergency constitution rather see a role for the European Court of Justice (also a technocratic institution) to secure that the emergency constitution is complied with.

Clearly, there is no easy way to decide which way to move forward. However, since EU crisis politics tend to lead to further EU integration, it is clear that the European citizens should get more insight into these decisions. What is also clear is that the decisions must be adopted with respect paid to democratic principles - preferably clearly spelled out in the EU Treaties. ■



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P. TERRENCE HOPMANN

The future of the OSCE after the War in Ukraine

Expert article • 3407

As the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reaches the 50th anniversary of the opening of negotiations on the Helsinki Final Act, it faces the most serious crisis in its history due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. That action violated all of the fundamental principles of the CSCE/OSCE, including especially the provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act that recognized the sovereignty of all participating states and banned the threat or use of force against all other signatories. Furthermore, it violated the 1990 OSCE Charter of Paris that affirmed the right of all states to choose their own security arrangements, as well as the UN Charter, which in 1945 included the Ukrainian SSR as one of the original 51 UN member states. Furthermore, Russian aggression has undermined confidence throughout the region in cooperative security and led to a strengthening of military security structures within Europe, especially the NATO alliance.

Throughout its 50-year history the OSCE has witnessed many conflicts between and within its 57 participating states, but none, even during the Cold War, have paralyzed its work as much as the Russian invasion of Ukraine. During the Cold War, the CSCE provided a framework for dialogue about shared security interests in Europe that eventually laid the foundation for bringing the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion. After 1990, the OSCE created a comprehensive set of institutions to prevent violent conflicts and to enhance mutual security across the continent. Presently, however the OSCE lacks a working budget and has been unable to agree on a Chairperson-in-Office for 2024, although Finland is scheduled to assume that position in 2025. As a consensus organization, decisions require the consent of all 57 participating states; since the war in Ukraine began in February 2022, Russia has blocked numerous decisions in the Permanent Council (PC), limiting the OSCE's ability to perform major functions.

Whether Russia should be suspended or dismissed from the OSCE due to its flagrant violations of the foundational principles established during the past 50 years has become a topic of debate. Although important OSCE activities are limited by Russia, the key dilemma is that without Russia it loses much of its *raison d'être*. Except for the remaining neutral and non-aligned states that continue to be relevant, the OSCE without Russia increasingly looks more like NATO or the EU, and it is not clear what functions it could perform that cannot be managed in other institutions, including the UN. Furthermore, Russian behavior will have important consequences for European security well into the future, and its exclusion from the OSCE may well do more harm than good over the long run.

The OSCE continues to serve important functions in spite of the present stalemate. Among the most important are its field missions under the Conflict Prevention Centre in potential conflict regions, most notably in Moldova (Transnistria), Azerbaijan and Armenia (Nagorno-Karabakh), Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and all five Central Asian participants; the escalation of any conflicts where OSCE missions are currently engaged could exacerbate the security of the region. However the war in Ukraine ends, the OSCE's long experience in that country will be important for managing any postwar scenario. Similarly, the Office for Democratic

Institutions and Human Rights monitors elections in most states, playing an important role in preventing democratic "backsliding," while also monitoring and reporting on human rights violations in the region. The office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in the Hague can continue to play a valuable role to prevent discrimination against ethnic minorities from becoming a source of future violent conflict. The Secretariat performs important tasks *inter alia* in border security and preventing trafficking in human beings.

Therefore, a case can be made for maintaining the less well-known but important OSCE functions, keeping the OSCE alive, even if on "life support" for the immediate future. It is still important to maintain the structures that are not now being blocked and that will be needed for the OSCE potentially to recreate itself after the war in Ukraine ends; at that time, a functioning European security organization will be more relevant than ever. Given the extensive Russian violations of OSCE principles, it will be challenging to rebuild trust in Russia's future behavior, but without Russian participation in a multilateral security institution rebuilding a stable foundation for regional security will likely be an insurmountable task. In conclusion, the way in which the Russian war in Ukraine ends, and how that impacts Russian foreign policy, will significantly affect whether or not the OSCE survives, and if so, what functions it can maintain and develop to strengthen security cooperation after the war in Ukraine as it did during and after the Cold War. ■

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Which way could the OSCE go next?

Expert article • 3408

The OSCE is currently experiencing an existential crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. There are two significant issues facing the Organization. Firstly, the OSCE lacks the ability to effectively punish Russia for violating its long-standing concept of comprehensive, cooperative, and indivisible security. Secondly, the ongoing war has put many essential organizational functions at risk, such as adopting budgets and extending the mandates of field operations. Many observers and practitioners question the OSCE's ability to handle this immense pressure and are uncertain about its future if it survives. One potential way forward that is being discussed is to put renewed emphasis on the OSCE's role as a forum for promoting cooperation and dialogue among participating states.

Throughout its history, the OSCE has performed a function of an inter-state forum, but its purpose has changed to align with the changing geopolitical landscape in Europe. During the Cold War, CSCE-participating states aimed to establish so-called plural peace—peace based on mutual recognition of differences in political systems and the acceptance of the resulting geostrategic reality. After the Cold War, this orientation changed significantly, as participating states focused on creating a liberal peace that prioritized cooperation between states committed to liberal-democratic principles. By adopting a series of high-level documents in the early 1990s, they established that human rights can only thrive in democratic societies and that true peace can only be achieved among democratic states. However, the initial excitement for these principles did not endure. Russia soon expressed concern about NATO and the EU's eastward expansion, claiming that the OSCE's efforts to promote democracy and human rights were, in fact, a way for the West to interfere in states' internal affairs for their own strategic gain. This assertion, as we know, has played a significant role in Russia's justification for the invasion of Ukraine.

Based on this historical context, there are a few key lessons that the OSCE can apply if its forum function becomes more significant as the war in Ukraine evolves. The goal should be to use the OSCE as a platform to keep the participating states engaged, discover ways to alleviate tensions, and plan for the future.

For the time being, the participating states will likely continue using the OSCE for mutual accusations. Yet, the ongoing conflict with Ukraine also gives Western countries an opportunity to move beyond the usual finger-pointing and take a more proactive approach. By engaging in "normative deterrence", these countries can send Russia a clear message that they will not compromise on the OSCE's fundamental principles. This means making it clear that discussions on zones of influence or any such retrograde notion of security will not be up for negotiation, including if Russia succeeds in keeping parts of Ukraine under prolonged occupation. The goal of this approach would be to dissuade Russia from using violence to achieve its objectives and ensure that such actions do not become a norm.

However, as Western states pursue their strategy, they should be cautious not to isolate Russia completely. After all, Russia's sense of marginalization amid the EU's and NATO's eastward expansion might have played a role in its decision to invade Ukraine. In order to avoid falling into this trap again, one solution would be to signal to Russia that the OSCE's liberal purpose has diminished. The Russian leadership has long seen this purpose as a threat rather than a solution to lasting peace in Europe. Accordingly, for the time being, it might be advantageous for Western

countries to tone down their focus on human rights and democracy in the context of the OSCE. This does not mean abandoning these values but using them less to blame and shame Russia and other authoritarian member states. By taking this approach, the West could avoid treating Russia's authoritarian regime as an equal partner in European security while simultaneously alleviating some of its anxieties about the OSCE being a Western tool for regime change. This could be the beginning of establishing a reserve of trust necessary for tension de-escalation and future cooperation.

Finally, to prepare for the future, the West could also utilize the OSCE's forum function to establish stronger connections with participating states that are neither EU nor NATO members. These states, primarily located in the Western Balkans, Southern Caucasus, and Central Asia, have historically been susceptible to Russian influence and may have hesitated to condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine due to energy and other dependencies. By strengthening security ties with these regions through the OSCE, Western states can prevent them from falling further under Russian influence and invite them to collaborate on shaping European security. ■



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Deterrence and risk reduction are two sides of the same coin

Expert article • 3409

Russia's unjustified war on Ukraine has unleashed much suffering, displaced millions, and wrecked any prospects of cooperative security for the foreseeable future. Moscow's revisionist actions have hastened shifts in the broader European security order, and inevitably, the threat perceptions that held it together. Because of this, NATO as an alliance and its member states face the challenge of designing a strategy and posture that can improve stability and enhance deterrence while lowering the temperature of the overall standoff. As a result, the Allies should invest in improved lines of communication with adversaries.

Russia's war on Ukraine [showed](#) that Russia is willing to launch a full-scale attack on its neighbor despite the risks and costs this endeavor may pose. Moscow's decision prompted its neighbors to rethink their own defense gaps, and the limits of NATO's security assistance when it comes to non-NATO members. Perhaps the best example is Finland's accession to NATO and Sweden's NATO bid after years of non-aligned status, which will undoubtedly change the balance of forces in the Euro-Atlantic region. In addition, NATO members have asserted their shifting threat perceptions. *"The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace. [Russia] has violated the norms and principles that contributed to a stable and predictable security order,"* NATO's new strategic concept states.

New force postures fixed on these new threat perceptions are also emerging. Guided by the new strategic concept, the new force plans of NATO members include deployment of a brigade-level military presence on NATO's eastern flank and an increase in its high-readiness joint task force from 40,000 troops to 300,000 troops by 2023. NATO members have strengthened their Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic Sea by upgrading them to brigades, and established four more multinational battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, essentially doubling the number of troops on the ground from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

Meanwhile, Moscow claims that it is at war with the West. *"The Western elite make no secret of their goal, which is, I quote, "Russia's strategic defeat." What does this mean to us? This means they plan to finish us once and for all,"* [said](#) President Vladimir Putin on February 21. Russia also announced impressive plans to beef up its own force posture short after in response to Sweden and Finland's prospective NATO accession.

Prior to Russia's war on Ukraine, the anemic and less developed 6th Combined Arms Army was located opposite to the Baltic [states](#) tasked with protecting "ground approaches" to St. Petersburg and northern approaches to Moscow. Russia's lofty plans include the establishment of an army corps in Karelia, new military districts in the Moscow, and Leningrad region carved out from the Western Military district among [other](#) announcements. However, the feasibility and how these changes will be implemented despite the decimation of Russia's ground forces in Ukraine is to be seen.

If anything, the emerging security environment is [likely](#) to be shaped by force build-ups, and more coercive threats. Especially as Russia's conventional forces further degrade in Ukraine, seeing as President Putin has resorted to [using](#) the specter of nuclear annihilation to prevent the West from interfering in its war on Ukraine. Moscow also seems intent on camouflaging its military and political weaknesses with secrecy.

Understandably, some will assert that Russia is not a good faith actor, and that Moscow can only be held back through conventional force deterrence and strength. Nonetheless, improved communication via quiet diplomacy with military backing can [result](#) in more credible threats and clarify the rules of the game. To ease risks, policy maker must invest in improved channels of communication as they continue to support Ukraine. As the security situation in the Euro-Atlantic region stabilizes, restarting low-level military to military contacts with the aim of managing an adversarial relationship could be helpful. If governments refuse to talk to each other, track 2 discussions will strengthen communication about threat perceptions.

After guns fall silent in Ukraine, Europe will likely need to establish or re-establish shared principles to guide relations between states in the Euro-Atlantic region. From this, new risk reduction mechanisms will arise. New short-term and long-term risk reduction measures could bolster deterrence through diplomacy, including negotiated limits on military deployments and activities. New agreements could include viable provisions of old agreements. But until then, arms control is back to basics.

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FRANZISKA STÄRK & ULRICH KÜHN

Navigating unjust nuclear legacies

Expert article • 3410

Russian nuclear threats have facilitated its conventional war of aggression against neighboring Ukraine. Moscow's actions serve as a stark reminder of the different spheres of (in)security created by nuclear weapons possession. They underscore the need for critically questioning past, present, and future injustices entrenched in the global nuclear order. Especially NATO's new Baltic Rim members have a role to play here.

Joining an alliance

Sweden and Finland are on the cusp of NATO membership. Soon, all Baltic Rim countries – with the obvious exception of Russia – will enjoy U.S. extended nuclear deterrence guarantees. Although there are currently no plans in Helsinki or Stockholm to host U.S. nuclear weapons, their accession to NATO explicitly requires them to accept the nuclear dimension of the alliance, at least in political terms.

While not yet a primary focus of the northern NATO accession debate, it is crucial to highlight the broader implications of these countries' nuclear choices, not only as regards the evolving regional security landscape but also within the global nuclear order.

Sharing a legacy

Joining a nuclear alliance comes with legacy costs. Nuclear weapons states and their allies have constructed hierarchical spheres of (in)security and therewith contributed to a global system of nuclear injustice. The war in Ukraine is the most recent example. Russia's nuclear threats have, thus far, deterred direct external intervention. Despite military, financial, and intelligence support from the West, it is still Ukraine that has to fight the Russian aggressor, mostly on its own. Meanwhile, neighboring NATO member states are safe behind the threat of nuclear deterrence – at least 'safe' until the day that nuclear deterrence might fail.

Conversely, the nuclear periphery – Ukraine and other non-aligned states – lacks not only access to nuclear deterrence, but also pays the costs of nuclear exploitation. Russia, for example, exploits directly the unequal nonproliferation and disarmament obligations enshrined in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The NPT not only treats states unequally – some are allowed to have nuclear weapons, all others are not – it also deprives them of the same means to claim consequences in case of misconduct. Were Ukraine to pursue the bomb, it would rightfully face stark international consequences, in line with the NPT's nonproliferation goal. Meanwhile, Russia's and all other nuclear weapons states' procrastinating on their NPT disarmament commitments triggers no fine. Even when Russia violated its direct security guarantees to Ukraine, it faced no serious consequences within the NPT framework.

When it comes to systemic nuclear injustice, however, Russia is not an outlier. Be it the United States, the Soviet Union, China or France, nuclear weapons have caused historic justice grievances stemming from uranium mining and nuclear testing, which continue to impact marginalized communities and the environment to this day.

Making a choice

Thus far, nuclear weapons states and their deterrence protégés have done little to rectify the injustice costs their arsenals have caused in the past and continue to do so up until today. For NATO's new members, acknowledging this legacy and their future role in dealing with it, therefore, comes with a choice.

In light of Russia's reckless behavior in the nuclear realm, they could either simply revert to the Cold War logic of renuclearizing Europe, effectively extending and aggravating nuclear injustice. A still nascent debate in the alliance about countering increased Russian reliance on sub-strategic nuclear weapons is already ongoing, and it will become more pressing in the next years. Instead, new NATO member states could lead an effort for a renewed dual track approach, one that balances deterrence with arms control.

Such a message, conveyed by the Baltic Rim countries with their close geographic proximity to Russia, would carry significant weight and could have a considerable external effect beyond the alliance. Instead of simply prolonging an unjust nuclear order, these states could provide future generations with a vision for possible nuclear disarmament, thereby reducing the intergenerational injustice bill of nuclear weapons.

Short of acknowledging the legacy of nuclear injustice, this is the bare minimum that NATO and its new Baltic Rim members should do to build a more just and sustainable security architecture for future generations. ■



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Russian nuclear challenges and the Ukraine War

Expert article • 3411

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has substantially worsened global nuclear security. A major consequence of the Ukraine war has been to intensify Western fears of nuclear war. Russian leaders have made frequent threats, some explicit, to use nuclear weapons due to Ukraine-related developments.

When announcing the invasion in February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned countries considering military intervention on Ukraine's behalf that they would face "consequences ... such as you have never seen in your entire history." At the end of September, Putin menacingly observed that the United States had created a "precedent" by dropping atomic bombs on Japan in 1945 to end a war. Earlier this year, Putin stated that Russia and Belarus would establish conditions for the potential return of Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus.

Challenges to NATO security

NATO governments have denounced Russian rhetoric as recklessly provocative and criticized Russian actions for raising the risk of nuclear escalation and war. In their view, Russia has violated the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty through its threats, disregarded the assurances provided to Ukraine in the Budapest Memorandum, and elevated the prospects of an accident at Ukraine's nuclear power plants by conducting military actions in their vicinity. Western leaders have warned that Russian use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine would be "a game changer" that would fundamentally alienate Russia from the world.

Still, Russian policymakers may have plausibly concluded that their threats of nuclear use will limit the U.S. and allied response to their aggression. Western governments have augmented military deployments in front-line NATO countries, applied economic and diplomatic sanctions on Russia, and provided substantial military training, arms deliveries, and non-military assistance to Ukraine. They have declined, however, to intervene directly in the fighting with their combat forces. For example, fears of nuclear escalation weighed against Ukrainian requests that NATO enforce a no-fly zone over Ukraine or provide sophisticated long-range strike weapons.

Growing nuclear proliferation risks

From the perspective of further nuclear weapons proliferation, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has potentially incentivized other countries to seek nuclear arsenals. The war has highlighted the limited value of vague security guarantees given to states, like Ukraine, that have abstained from pursuing their nuclear weapons in return for general pledges of support from other countries—in Ukraine's case, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. Due partly to Russian aggression against Ukraine, the most recent NPT Review Conference was exceedingly contentious. Russian diplomats blocked the draft final outcome document due to its critical wording regarding Russia's disregard for nuclear safety principles at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

Russian policies regarding the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs have changed due to their governments supporting Russian military operations against Ukraine, along with the deterioration in Russian-U.S. relations. Before the Ukraine crisis, Russia and Western governments regularly cooperated bilaterally and in multilateral structures to prevent Iran and North Korea from pursuing nuclear weapons. Such collaboration has decreased since the Russian invasion. For example, the Russian government has declined to support additional sanctions on either country despite their violating their nonproliferation obligations and UN Security Council resolutions limiting their nuclear-related activities.

Nuclear arms control implications

Furthermore, the Russian invasion has impeded near-term opportunities for strategic arms control. Russian and U.S. officials have held no formal arms control discussions since the war began. In late November, the Russian government abruptly canceled a scheduled Russian-U.S. meeting in Cairo to discuss resuming inspections under the New START, which U.S. officials saw as a critical first step toward discussing future measures. The poor performance of Russia's conventional forces in Ukraine could plausibly elevate Russian interest in non-conventional military capabilities and delivery systems, both for warfighting and as tools of coercion.

The outcome of the Ukraine War might also affect China's views of nuclear arms control. Chinese leaders might interpret the Ukraine conflict as confirming the importance of having sufficient nuclear forces to negate U.S. deterrence and defense measures protecting Taiwan. Even before the Ukraine conflict, the Chinese government adamantly refused to participate in trilateral strategic arms limitation talks with Russia and the United States or accept other international legal limits on Chinese nuclear forces.

Glimmers of hope

Still, under some scenarios, the Ukraine War might lead Russian and Chinese policymakers to perceive value in pursuing select strategic risk reduction and confidence-building measures with the United States and its allies. These proposals might include making some nuclear weapons activities more transparent or eschewing military operations that threaten civilian nuclear plants in war zones. Additionally, a Ukrainian victory over a nuclear-armed power like Russia could demonstrate to the world that countries do not require nuclear weapons for their defense. ■



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The state of nuclear disarmament and future challenges

Expert article • 3412

Anyone who might be coming in fresh to the issue of nuclear weapons would likely struggle to understand how the world has arrived in the situation it finds itself today. In a post-cold war environment, Russia – a founding member of the UN, a permanent member of the UN security council and depositary state of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – is threatening to use nuclear weapons in a war that is entirely of its own making. In the meantime, Iran seems to have all but given up on any confidence-building restraints through the JCPOA. North Korea is fast increasing its nuclear weapons capability with long-range, solid-fuel ballistic missiles and the claim of miniaturised nuclear warheads for short-range use. China too, is steadily expanding its nuclear capability and France, the US and UK are all modernizing their nuclear forces with no prospect of further, multilateral nuclear negotiations on the cards.

To understand how we got here and work out where we might be going, we need to know where we came from. But where to start? As far back as 1945 and the horrendous first use of nuclear weapons by the US in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Or in the Cuban missile crisis where the US and the USSR so nearly tipped the world into a nuclear exchange? Or the subsequent push for nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament that formed the equation for the concept of a so-called strategic stability? Or the beginning of the end (1999-2003) of the arms control period, during which the US Senate failed to ratify the nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), India and Pakistan came out of the nuclear closet, as did North Korea (no surprises there of course), the US and the UK broke with Allies and the UN Security Council to invade Iraq ostensibly over the issue of missing weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the US withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) Treaty.

Let's start with the weapons themselves. Nuclear weapons are militarily not particularly useful. Even so-called small nuclear weapons – short-range battlefield types for example – create massive explosions with huge blasts, fires, prompt radiation, mass deaths and casualties, and long-term radioactive debris that spreads to neighbouring countries in the atmosphere via weather systems and deposits on territories hampering any would-be occupying forces. Nuclear weapons are the opposite of modern-day conventional weapons, where the trend has been towards increased accuracy, lower yield, and lower risks to civilians – this is why the concept of 'humanitarian disarmament' has found so much traction and has led to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Mine Ban Convention, Cluster Munitions Convention, Arms Trade Treaty and the Small Arms and Light Weapons Programme of Action. Nuclear weapons are by any definition inhumane and indiscriminate. There are no small mistakes with nuclear weapons, and their use would create impossible situations for militaries, humanitarian organizations and civilian populations alike. Only authoritarian leaders seem crazy enough to threaten to use nuclear weapons. Democratic leaders who put human rights and human security at the centre of their decision-making cannot use – or credibly threaten to use – such inhumane, horrific weapons even in retaliation.

The theory behind nuclear deterrence is rooted in the belief that because nuclear weapons use would be so devastating and could unleash catastrophic global effects of radioactive debris and climate disaster, resulting in famine and destruction of species, including our own, then the threat of use would stay the hand of war between nuclear weapons possessors and their allies. However, human behaviour is not always so rational as we are now witnessing in Russia's war against Ukraine.

Nuclear arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation have formed a framework to help create a degree of 'strategic stability' by providing a significant amount of transparency and predictability. A somewhat stable nuclear 'order', in which the concepts of mutually understood deterrence signalling and a gradual build-down of nuclear weapons via a managed arms control, verification and confidence-building process was created throughout and post the cold war. All well and good in theory. But, over the long-term, these situations and relationships form a highly dynamic, complex system set in an unstable environment. Managing such a system is more like managing the response to the weather: easy to do when conditions are calm but preparing for extreme weather events – such as war between nuclear armed states – is where we need to focus. And this is where we have gone wrong; in good times, leaders reduced the urgency and forgot the need for arms control and disarmament measures. And now we have reached a stage with very few well-functioning arms control treaties – we have lost the ABM Treaty, INF Treaty, CFE Treaty and the CTBT still has not entered into force and fissile material negotiations remain paralysed in Geneva. Russia has suspended its participation in New START and the treaty has an expiry date of early 2026. The NPT is in increasing distress and the only new attempt to address the problem – the 2017 TPNW – is dismissed by the nuclear weapons possessors.

The US decision to publish the information required under New START for all the world to see, despite Russia suspending its cooperation is smart and similar transparency and predictability measures could be given a boost by others such as the UK, France and China. This would help keep some stability in the system and could help set the scene for future initiatives in better times.

Most important is the focus on preventing the use of nuclear weapons now and in the long term. A new dialogue is beginning under the auspices of the NPT that address the risks of nuclear weapons and, since 2014, the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons conferences have developed a body of material that explores nuclear risk reduction and catastrophe prevention. UK Secretary of Defence, Ben Wallace, said at the 2023 Munich Security Conference that the use of a nuclear weapon would be totally unacceptable, would elicit a strong response and maintaining the taboo against nuclear weapons use is paramount. The next phase of nuclear disarmament should focus on how to prevent use, either by accident or design.

Indeed, it is important to stress that nuclear compellence has not worked for Russia; Ukraine has not caved in, and European populations have not fearfully demanded that their governments stop their support



Expert article • 3412

for Ukraine. To stave off another wave of authoritarian leaders seeking to proliferate, Russia's nuclear threats must lead to a renewed emphasis on arms control and disarmament.

Bilateral and multilateral nuclear disarmament for the future needs to be embedded in an integrated approach to security, one that addresses conventional forces, space security and cyber security and places emphasis on preventing nuclear war. ■

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ANNA WIESLANDER

Swedish Security and Defence Policy after the Russian annexation of Crimea

Expert article • 3413

The past decade has proven historically transformative for Sweden's security policy. In 2013, when Russian aircraft simulated a nuclear bomb strike close to the Swedish border, the Swedish Armed Forces had no jet fighters ready to scramble due to low levels of readiness for territorial incidents. The incident reflected the perceived Russian threat level at the time. A year later, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and war in Eastern Ukraine drastically altered the perception of Russia. For Sweden, this was a rude awakening, triggering rapid adaptation to the worsened security situation in the Baltic Sea region.

Sweden's decision to join NATO may seem like an abrupt change after more than 200 years of military non-alignment. However, already because of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Sweden positioned itself, alongside Finland, as informal allies to NATO in the Baltic Sea region, cooperating extensively within the sphere of collective defense and preparing to "plug in" to the Alliance's operations if necessary. Not until Russia's aggression reached unprecedented levels through its full-scale invasion of Ukraine did Sweden formally apply for NATO membership.

For many years after the Cold War, the Baltic Sea region was one of the most peaceful areas in the world. Facing no state threats, Sweden's national defence was to a large extent dismantled. Conscription abandoned as was total defence planning. The Armed Forces re-oriented towards smaller expeditionary forces for international missions and the renewal of defence equipment put on hold.

The deteriorated security situation in the Baltic Sea region in 2014 abruptly brought antagonistic state threats back to the core of security and defence policy. Suddenly, at the frontline of systemic competition between Russia and the West, the Baltic Sea region was characterized by tensions and uncertainty. This caused a shift in Swedish security and defence doctrine in three dimensions: national defence, international defence cooperation, and emphasis on the international rules-based order.

First, on national defence, it was central to reactivate conscription to exercise in larger formations and more often and to re-establish permanent military presence on the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea. Sweden heavily invested in defence equipment, including new next-generation submarines, Gripen fighter aircrafts, and the Patriot missile defence system. Increased investments occurred from an albeit low level. The report of the Swedish Defence Commission in May 2019 outspokenly concluded that the Armed Forces would not be able to meet an armed attack against Sweden.

Secondly, on international defence cooperation, Sweden indulged in shaping a patchwork of bilateral, peacetime collaborative agreements with its neighbors, most notably with Finland, with whom arrangements also encompassed joint planning in crisis or war. The bilateral relationship

with the US was crucial for Sweden's security, and in 2016 Sweden signed a defence agreement with the Americans. In addition, the UK played a prominent role through the engagement of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) in the Baltic Sea region, which Sweden joined in 2017. There was also a trilateral format between Sweden, Finland, and the US, and in 2020, Sweden, Finland, and Norway signed an agreement to establish coordinated operational planning for parts of the three Nordic territories. Sweden's relationship to NATO also took on a new dimension after 2014, as NATO returned to its core task of collective defence and gradually turned its strategic gaze towards the Baltic Sea region. Through the Enhanced Opportunity Partners Program, Sweden and Finland became closest partners to NATO, participating in various advanced exercises with wartime scenarios, ready to "plug in" to NATO's response planning if needed.

Thirdly, Sweden took a strong and outspoken stance against Russia's breach of the international rules-based order. Sweden openly and transparently signaled that it stood in solidarity with others and would not hesitate to take sides in times of crisis and war. Stockholm cited Russia's assertive behavior and military build-up as the need to strengthen its defence efforts and its deterrence posture.

On February 24, 2022, the foundation for Sweden's security and defence doctrine shook. A full-scale invasion by Russia on a neighboring country caused public opinion to skyrocket in support for joining NATO, and the political parties followed suite. It became clear that there was no substitute for article 5 guarantees in such a severe situation. In May 2022, Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership and hopefully, Sweden will be a full member by the Vilnius summit in mid-July 2023, benefiting the security of the whole Alliance. ■

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JANNE KUUSELA

Northern European security and defence in the new era

Expert article • 3414

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has profound effects on the security in Europe. The situation is more serious and more difficult to predict than at any time since the Cold War, and this change in the security landscape is likely to be long lasting. As a response to the new circumstances, Finland and Sweden chose to leave behind a long period of military non-alliance and applied for NATO membership. This is a historic change, which strengthens the defence of Finland and Sweden, and the security and stability of the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe.

Finland became member of NATO in April 2023 and Sweden will join the Alliance after remaining ratifications by Türkiye and Hungary take place. Sweden is Finland's closest partner in security and defence policy. Our geographical location dictates that we have a clear mutual interest to cooperate as closely as possible in defence matters. New member nations bring to NATO highly capable defence forces, which are used to work with other NATO nations' militaries. We also bring our expertise in crisis management, the Arctic region and new technologies, among others, to the Alliance.

The integration of Finnish defence into NATO's collective defence system will no doubt entail new effects and features for both NATO and Finland. However, a number of key features in our security and defence will also remain. The "Finnish receipt" is built on issues such as high level of trust and equality within the society, strong democracy, focus on education and technological edge, as well as and strategic culture for stable long-term planning. We firmly believe that they will remain vital ingredients for security and defence of a small nation, who wants to be security provider.

Joining NATO does not change the fact that Finland's defence continues to rely on Finnish citizens' strong will to defend their country, society and democracy. General conscription and large well-trained reserves, as well as voluntary defence activities and comprehensive whole-of-society security system will remain among the main elements in Finnish defence. Finland will continue to promote the development of cooperation between the European Union and NATO, and to advocate the strengthening of EU's defence cooperation.

Finland's NATO membership will not affect the status of the Åland Islands, which is based on international treaties. The Åland Islands are part of Finland's sovereign territory and, in accordance with the provisions of the treaties, defending its neutrality is the responsibility of Finland. The treaties are not in conflict with the obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty, including Article 5. Finland respects the demilitarisation of Åland and is prepared to take the necessary measures to defend Åland's neutrality.

The five Nordic countries share fundamental values and security interests. We have a tradition of close defence cooperation, which is being developed further with the perspective of all five becoming also NATO Allies. The Nordic countries' defence forces are prepared and able to conduct combined joint military operations to manage both present and future challenges together and with other Allies. Nordic

defence cooperation will be aligned with NATO planning and concepts. Strengthening Nordic defence cooperation will also complement and add value to the European Union, bilateral defence arrangements and regional cooperation formats.

All Nordic countries have strong transatlantic connections. The transatlantic dimension brings benefit to the Nordic and Baltic Sea security and defence cooperation. The United States' commitment to Europe through both bilateral arrangements and NATO is of central importance to security in Europe and to Finland. The United States is an important and close partner of Finland, and defence cooperation with the United States improves Finland's defence capability. Finland and the United States have introduced further measures to deepen their bilateral defence cooperation.

The United Kingdom is another major military player in Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea region. All Nordic and Baltic countries participate in the work of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). JEF nations combine their strengths by planning, training, and operating together continuously. This allows the JEF to counter threats wherever and whenever they arise in its core regions (the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea), and quickly and effectively respond to military aggression as part of a broader response.

Finland is a country that has always taken her defence very seriously and keeps on investing in defence. From now on, we will do this together with our Allies. Finland shares NATO's "360 degrees" approach to security. Global security developments increasingly affect our security and call on us to enhance security in the neighbourhood and to support those areas that face conflicts and instability. Finland's defence capability and resilience will strengthen NATO's collective defence throughout the territory of the Alliance, and continue contributing to the stability of Northern Europe. ■



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New preconditions for Nordic security and defence cooperation

Expert article • 3415

Russia's war in Ukraine marks the ultimate step in a deteriorating security situation in Europe over the last decade and is the key driver of a number of security-related developments. Among the most definitive changes in the Baltic Sea context is the decision of Finland and Sweden to apply for membership in NATO. Assuming that Sweden will be admitted in due course following Finland's entry into the alliance in April 2023, the institutional landscape and level of defence integration in the Baltic Sea region is changing fundamentally, with implications not only for the new member-states but also for NATO internal dynamics and future relations with Russia.

This changing security landscape also has implications for security and defence cooperation among the Nordic countries. Nordic cooperation has a long history and has advanced quite far in a number of areas including labour market, education, social security and mobility. In contrast, and following the onset of the Cold War and the different security political paths chosen by of the Nordics, cooperation in security and defence matters has been very limited.

This situation began to change following the end of the Cold War. On the military side, limited cooperation between Norway and Sweden and shortly thereafter Finland began in the areas of exercises, armaments and coordinated peace support operations. Bringing these efforts under the same umbrella, NORDEFCO (Nordic defence cooperation) was established in 2009. The primary driver for this development was economic. It is to be noted that Denmark was not involved initially (due to its somewhat different defence orientation), nor was Iceland, lacking defence forces of its own. Certain common projects were swiftly realized, such as air force exercises and coordinated transports to Afghanistan, but more fundamental joint projects, such as materiel acquisition, proved harder to realize. After a few years, interest in the project vanished. Russian annexation of Crimea and entry into Eastern Ukraine fundamentally changed the logic – Nordic defence cooperation reappeared on the scene, but as a solution to a different problem. Cooperation, including Denmark and to a degree also Iceland, has developed in five areas: capabilities, armaments, human resources and education, training and exercises, and operations. Notable examples include a crisis consultation mechanism, an alternate landing bases arrangement, air surveillance, enhanced cross-border mobility for military personnel, and a number of large-scale exercises. Furthermore, in 2018, the Nordic defence ministers agreed on "NORDEFCO Vision 2025" with the ambition to transfer the peace-time framework into something that would also apply during crisis and conflict.

When it comes to non-military security and defence cooperation, 2009 again marks an important year, both with the release of the Stoltenberg report that sketched a number of cooperative proposals for Nordic joint action in foreign policy and security matters, some of which have later, at least partially, materialized. The same year, the so-called Haga process was set in motion, covering cooperation on civil security and crisis preparedness, involving for instance projects on search and rescue, crisis communication and strategic air support. The initially sketchy pattern of cooperation has subsequently been institutionalized at the Nordic level

through the Haga II declaration in 2013 and been further developed in various bilateral and trilateral agreements, notably between Finland, Norway and Sweden.

It can be concluded that on both the military and the civilian side security and defence interaction among the Nordic countries takes place in a multilayered setting, where certain things are done at the Nordic level and others in more limited constellations. The bilateral relationship between Sweden and Finland stands out, explained in large part by the non-membership in NATO.

Having said that, Nordic cooperation in whatever format is taking place in a European and transatlantic context institutionally centered around the EU and NATO. Finland's and Sweden's membership in NATO can be expected to impact on military, and to a degree, civilian cooperation. With integration into NATO's military structures it is hard to envisage projects that are decoupled from NATO processes. Also on the civilian side, NATO's Resilience Committee may prove to be a natural reference point and arena for Nordic cooperation on societal resilience, just as elements of EU civil protection and resilience cooperation are central to most (and often all) Nordic states. This need not in any way imply that Nordic cooperation will vanish in the areas of security and defence (there are numerous projects in NATO as well as the EU that include a limited number of member-states), but it is likely that these institutions increasingly will be the natural reference point for such initiatives, in turn giving new preconditions for Nordic cooperation. ■



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Security in the Baltic Sea Region: A Danish perspective

Expert article • 3416

Perceptions of the Baltic Sea security environment

Perceptions of the Baltic Sea security environment 'In the coming years, Russia will become increasingly threatening and aggressive both in its political behaviour and rhetoric and in its military posture.' That is how the Baltic Sea security environment is described in the latest unclassified risk assessment by the Danish Defence Intelligence Service. An intentional conventional military attack on NATO member states is still considered 'highly unlikely'. But Russia is perceived to be willing to escalate the conflict with the West to just below the threshold of direct military conflict thus blurring the boundaries between peace, crisis and war. A concern is that misconceptions and errors in a tense situation could spiral out of control and lead to military conflict.

Accordingly, a key Danish priority is to avoid any Russian misinterpretation of NATO's determination to counter Russian aggressions. Europe needs to take a larger responsibility for European security but deterring Russia must be handled within the transatlantic alliance. This view is profound and has strengthened the belief in the need for a transatlantic bond that is as close as possible, affected Danish security and defence policy, and improved the perspectives for increased regional cooperation.

Transatlantic relations

The security guarantee provided by the US has been vital to Denmark's security since joining NATO in 1949. But it arguably became more fragile after the end of the Cold War as US priorities gradually drifted away from Europe. Among other things, this led to Denmark prioritising contributions to international military operations led by the US or NATO. Following these efforts, Denmark has been labelled as a 'super atlantist' in the early 2000's. Nonetheless, these types of contributions are no longer in high demand.

In pursuing a close relationship with the US, Denmark has historically strived to take a role as bridge-builder between North America and Europe. In the last few years, however, Denmark has moved away from bridge-building, now siding more unequivocally with the US, which, for instance, became visible during the controversy regarding the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, AUKUS. In recent years, this has also been demonstrated through a more outspoken critical attitude towards China and especially Russia. Besides an even stronger emphasis on the unity with the US, a wish for the closed possible relations has also manifested itself in more concrete terms. In 2022, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen announced the beginning of US-Danish negotiations of a bilateral defence cooperation agreement. Although the content of the agreement remains unknown, it was politically emphasised as a departure from the Danish policy since the 1950's of not allowing permanent military presence of allies in Denmark (Greenland excluded).

Security and defence policy

An aggressive Russia has increased Denmark's desire for a credible deterrence through the security alliance with the US and the transatlantic alliance. Denmark is hoping to appear as a credible ally in order to have its security guaranteed. This has influenced Danish decision-makers traditional unwillingness to increase defence spending to the level demanded by NATO and the US. Danish defence spending currently amounts to 1.5% of GDP. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the political parties struck a so-called 'national compromise' agreeing to reach the NATO target of 2% by 2033 – later adjusted to 2030. Compared to its neighbouring countries the current level and pace may appear unambitious. Yet, from a Danish perspective, it is significant. Increased budgets in neighbouring countries arguably gave impetus to the policy-shift. Denmark had to react to maintain its proclaimed core ally status. The implementation of the 2% target awaits upcoming negotiations on a new defence agreement. However, the new agreement will most likely result in a new balance between expeditionary forces and territorial deterrence with an increased focus on the Baltic Sea Region and the Arctic.

Denmark has also re-evaluated its position within the EU. After a referendum in June 2022, the Danish electorate abolished Denmark's defence opt-out, which, since 1993, had prevented Danish participation in EU cooperation on defence matters. Russia's invasion of Ukraine was imperative in changing the popular opinion.

Improved perspectives for regional cooperation

The accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO means that all countries in the Baltic Sea Region except Russia are NATO and EU members. With Russia predicted to become increasingly threatening and aggressive in the region and with a need for an increased European responsibility for security in Europe, perspectives for Nordic cooperation have greatly improved. The Nordic Prime Ministers have already stated an ambition for enhanced cooperation regarding defence and security which until now has been confined by divergent alliance status among the Nordic countries. The Nordic Air Commanders' intent to establish a de facto joint Nordic air force is an early indication of the improved opportunities for deepened cooperation and a blueprint for Denmark's approach to regional cooperation. ■



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German Defence Policy in the Baltic Sea Region

Expert article • 3417

On September 26, both Nordstream pipelines were damaged to such an extent that they had to be taken out of service immediately. The investigation by Denmark and Sweden is still ongoing, with no further details having been released so far - at least officially. Germany, as a former user, is having an own investigation, but is still waiting for the results of the survey. In the meantime, there are diverse discussions about who the mastermind of this attack was. This incident is a good example of how vulnerable critical infrastructure is in parts of Europe, and how difficult it is to pinpoint the offender.

New security architecture

From now on many stakeholders in the Baltic Sea are looking for solutions to protect pipelines, data cables and other infrastructure that are currently not sufficiently secured. There is a huge need to analyse what future threats might look like and what the best idea is for a joint plan to secure their the infrastructure in this region. This is necessary to prevent unwanted surprises from occurring again. In order to have a better answer to this question and to the security issues of the future, Germany feels the need to have its own [National Security Strategy \(NSS\)](#). The initiative for this was launched at the beginning in the coalition agreement. Having passed the set release date, the document is now expected to appear in the summer or thereafter. It will define the concept of security across all ministries and functions as a point of orientation for foreign and security policy. This may be one possible approach to better protect infrastructure from a national perspective and in a transnational context. In addition, a draft is currently being prepared with a focus on critical infrastructure protection. The idea of thinking about security in a comprehensive and holistic way is an important step for Germany's return to strategic action and taking into account that security cannot be established by military means alone. With the NATO accession of Sweden and Finland, the spatial order in the Baltic Sea will change. NATO will get two very reliable and committed partners, but the division of space and responsibility will have to be worked on. Germany would like to take leadership with the offer to establish a Regional Maritime Headquarter. There is no agreement on this yet because Poland and Great Britain have also offered this. An agreement and a final decision on this is still pending.

With his speech on 27 of February 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has launched a [100 billion Euro special fund](#) for the Bundeswehr.

Military capabilities

The aim is to restore the country's military capabilities after years of austerity. This attempt of implementing a peace dividend affected the entire armed forces, led to declining numbers and low operational readiness. This special fund needs to have an effect on all domains. For the Baltic Sea region, Germany's renewed focus on defence could mean that more robust forces can be available in the area. This special fund has not had much of an impact on the maritime capabilities. Essentially the special fund will enable the modernization and the runtime extension

of maritime units but all other investments have come from the regular defence budget so far. The first visible sign of "Zeitenwende" in the military sector is the decision to buy f-35 fighter jets from the USA. A total of 35 aircraft will be purchased. These are intended to expand the capabilities of the German Air Force and, among other things, ensure nuclear deterrence. In the Baltic Sea Region there are several users of this aircraft. With its very sufficient capabilities and the growing numbers it could have a real impact on the deterrence against aggressions from the east, and other directions as well. After the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine there have been a lot of concerns about each countries' own security especially by nations in the eastern part of Europe. Germany is trying to dissipate these fears against threats from the air and has launched the European Sky Shield Initiative. The idea is to have a joint approach for air defence with common procurement and operating more systems of the same kind. 17 European countries so far have signed the initiative to participate in the German idea. Most recently, Denmark and Sweden joined the initiative.

Way ahead

But all this is to repair the damage caused by Russia to the European security architecture without means of war. More thought needs to be given to what plan for the future can overcome the problems that have caused all these current problems, not just a return to the day before 24 February 2022. Firstly, the main challenge in the Baltic Sea is to link defence concepts in a meaningful way in order to provide the best possible deterrent and to be able to act in the event of a crisis or war, what is done by NATO at the moment. A great overarching task is demanded of Germany with all these points to be considered and serious issues to be addressed. Many European partners are taking a closer look at how Germany is reacting and are adjusting their course accordingly. ■



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Domestic contestations in Lithuania's foreign and security policy: The issue of German brigade to Lithuania

Expert article • 3418

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, Lithuania and the other Baltic States have been asking NATO to increase allied forces in their territory. At NATO Summit in Madrid, NATO leaders decided to change multinational battalions on NATO's eastern flank into brigade structures with the plan for Germany to lead the brigade for Lithuania. In June 2022, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz signed a joint communique stating that "in addition to the current and reinforced enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group already in place, Germany is ready to lead a robust and combat-ready brigade in Lithuania dedicated to deter and defend against Russian aggression".

Despite the signed document, the German brigade issue in Lithuania caused heated discussions among foreign and security policy decision-makers and other actors. Lithuania's officials have consistently stressed the need to have an entire German brigade deployed in Lithuania permanently. Meanwhile, according to German Defense Minister, the German brigade assigned to Lithuania would be moved to the country within ten days if needed. Lithuanian politicians disagreed on how the communiqué between Germany and Lithuania on the deployment of the brigade should be interpreted, as well as whether Germany's decision not to deploy troops in Lithuania is compatible with foreign and security policy interests of Lithuania.

Lithuania's Minister of National Defense Arvydas Anušauskas, initially seeming somewhat satisfied with the communique citing ten days as a sufficient time limit for the arrival of the German brigade, later adjusted his interpretations of the document between Germany and Lithuania, claiming that Lithuania and Germany are moving "step by step" towards a common goal. As a result of his initial position, which seemed not to be in line with the official position of Lithuania, Lithuania's Minister of National Defense was criticized by both members of the opposition and his political party. For instance, the Head of the National Security and Defence Committee (NSDC), Laurynas Kasčiūnas, pointed out that Lithuania's Minister of National Defense made a mistake and stressed that Lithuanian officials should not make ambiguous statements.

Meanwhile, Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gabrielius Landsbergis, suggested that Lithuanian and German leaders refined the agreement and pointed out that the main interest of Lithuania was to have a permanent deployment of the German brigade in Lithuania's territory. However, he also voiced concerns that the German troops arriving after ten days were not fast enough.

Former Vice-minister of National Defense Vilius Semeška declared that the joint communique was not enough for Lithuania's interests. Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (members of the same political party) encouraged the President of Lithuania, a key figure in Lithuania's foreign policy decision-making according to the country's constitution, to elaborate on the communique's content. Meanwhile, former diplomat Albinas Januška, for instance, highlighted the importance of the communique claiming that this document is an important step forward.

The Presidential Palace, on the other hand, criticized the above-mentioned domestic contestations claiming that currently, in the security context, such contestations are irresponsible steps to take and urged Lithuanian politicians not to send "ambiguous signals" to Lithuania's allies. President Gitanas Nausėda also emphasized that he did not see "any drama" in the situation. Moreover, the president pointed out the importance of Lithuania's commitments and homework that Lithuania has to do (referring to sound investments and building a suitable infrastructure). According to the President of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda, Germany, "is not the kind of girl you can invite for a good evening by the lake in the open air. It is a serious army that needs to be offered a marriage contract." Thus, the presidential institution, one of the most important institutions in Lithuania's foreign and security policy decision-making, attempted to smooth domestic contestations about the German brigade. Other actors shared a similar position in Lithuania's foreign policy process: some academics called Lithuania's position too "combative", suggested a more cautious posture and highlighted that Lithuania needs Germany, not vice versa.

However, despite different interpretations of Germany's commitments, the bottom line is that Lithuania's foreign and security policy decision-makers want German troops permanently stationed in Lithuania territory.

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Internal security of Poland in 2023

Expert article • 3419

The lack of a clear definition of internal security in the Polish legal system and constitution has led to numerous definitions and descriptions by government officials, politicians, and officers of internal security institutions, researchers, and media. These definitions are often subjective, relative, and emotional. In a broad sense, internal security assures conditions for the survival and development of society. In a narrow sense, it relates to safeguarding the constitutional order and the very institution of the state. As of spring 2023, a basic delineation of actions for maintenance of internal security includes upholding of the rule of law and providing for public security, civil protection, and protection of the constitutional order.

Upholding the rule of law and providing for public security is essential to protect citizens and state institutions against criminal and hybrid threats. As of spring 2023, Poland remains a safe country with a level of violent crime well below the EU average. At the same time, thefts caused by soaring inflation and a cost-of-living crisis is on the rise. However, there is a noticeable increase in cybercrime, while detection remains low. Economic crime remains a problem, especially VAT fraud, as well as corruption involving politicians and healthcare professionals. Despite the elimination of large domestic criminal groups, Poland is a place of drug production and human trafficking. The terrorist threat in Poland remains low, although activities supporting terrorism and radicalization have been detected in recent years. Lone-wolf attacks motivated by religious, ethnic, or political hatred cannot be ruled out in the long term. Hate crimes in Poland should be monitored, particularly those motivated by xenophobia, anti-Muslim sentiments, and anti-LGBT rhetoric. The ruling political coalition has frequently used anti-LGBT rhetoric, which may hinder effective protection of the LGBT community against hate speech and crime. With increasing support for extreme right-wing ideologies, hate crime may become a more significant security issue for Poland in the future.

In recent years, hybrid threats have become more apparent. Russian espionage and hostile information activities against Poland have intensified. Malicious narratives capitalize on Polish socio-political polarization. As of spring 2023, the lack of systemic preparations to fight hostile information influence makes Poland vulnerable to hybrid attacks. Instrumentalized migration from Belarus has remained an issue for Poland's internal security since 2021. The pushbacks and restricting access of NGOs and media to the border sparked discussions about violating human rights not only against irregular migrants but also against Polish citizen. While migration from Belarus is not intense in spring 2023, it still poses a threat to Poland's internal security. Conversely, the reception of millions of Ukrainian refugees did not affect internal security. In both cases, the protection of the state border and internal security proved effective.

Civil protection in Poland remains fragmented and underfunded in spring 2023. Responsibility for the protection of life and health of citizens and national property against the effects of natural and technical disasters remains divided between the government and territorial self-government authorities. There is a lack of coherent legal regulations and works on the civil protection act have been ongoing for dozens of years. Regulations regarding tasks and structures are currently dispersed in various legal acts, and responsibilities to protect are not fully delineated. The underfunding of crisis management and civil protection structures subordinated to

territorial self-government is noticeable. There are neither integrated structures for civil protection nor the necessary resources for proper management in the event of a crisis. There is still no integration of crisis management and civil defence structures, despite a noticeable trend in other European Union countries.

An area of concern is the state of protection of the constitutional order in Poland. Since 2015, the ruling party (PiS) has systematically eliminated or reduced the effectiveness of the democratic oversight of the constitutional order. Government actions have limited the independence of the judiciary. The effectiveness of parliamentary control over the executive has diminished. Civil supervision over Polish secret services is assessed by experts as illusory. Recent personnel changes in the internal security services have strengthened the influence of PiS ministers on the activities of these services. Allegations that the special services used the Pegasus software to spy on opposition politicians have still not been clarified. Potential threats to constitutional order may result from the involvement of secret services or their representatives in activities that may affect the results of the 2023 parliamentary elections. Attempts to protect representatives of the ruling coalition who commit corruption crimes from criminal liability is also a possibility.

The outlook for internal security in Poland does not look promising. Attempts to consolidate executive power will impact internal security. Most likely, the transparency of policies and activities related to internal security will suffer further. The prospects for the effective democratic control of government, special services, and judiciary systems look grim. In summation, the security and fundamental rights of Poland's citizen may suffer due to the erosion of democratic institutions and challenges to the constitutional order. ■

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Is TikTok a threat to Norway's security?

Expert article • 3420

Commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MoJ), the National Security Authority (NSM) presented an assessment in early March 2023 that discourages public sector employees from downloading the Chinese social media app TikTok. This includes all mobile devices connected to internal digital infrastructures or services of the public sector as well as employees of private companies that are partly or fully subject to the National Security Act. In this regard, questions should be raised as to why TikTok is considered an imperative security threat in the Norwegian context compared to other apps that harvest the equivalent volume of data through similar methods.

NSM's recommendation to avoid TikTok (and the Russian-owned app Telegram) is based on the yearly [risk report from 2022](#) which states that 'a large part of Chinese-produced technology can be used as a platform for obtaining illegal intelligence'. The timing of the assessment was in part due to the discovery that several ministers in Norway had TikTok downloaded on their work devices, raising concerns and considerable media attention. This accelerated when the US and Taiwan banned the app on the phones of government officials in late 2022. Since then, other states and institutions have discouraged public sector employees from downloading TikTok, including the UK, France, Australia, and the European Commission. NSM warns that having TikTok on work devices poses a 'high risk' to national security, owing to the fact that the China's Intelligence Act demands Chinese companies and individuals to hand over any information deemed significant to the government's intelligence authorities.

Prior to NSM's assessment and recommendations, a recent [survey](#) did not find that any companies in Norway had enforced regulations on the use of Chinese apps for employees. Shortly after NSM presented the recommendations, numerous public agencies, municipalities, and companies strongly discouraged using TikTok on employees' work devices. Notably, the abrupt response was not prompted by a discovery of risks or new security threats posed on TikTok users. Rather, once NSM made the recommendations publicly available, it triggered an immediate change in policy among public and private companies. This conceivably illustrates that private companies rely on and trust government guidelines, but also that they do not have the capacity (or authority) to solely depend on their own judgement to measure and mitigate risks related to use of technological services and devices.

Although most digital infrastructure is owned and operated by private companies, NSM functions as the chief authority when it comes to cybersecurity in Norway. There are two notable observations to make from this. Firstly, a paradoxical moment occurs when Norway's security strategy strongly invests in making private companies responsible for and capable of ensuring their own cybersecurity. With a strategic aim to enhance collective digital resilience through knowledge and skill development, the government also legally obligates the compliance of private companies subjected to the Security Act. This puts the respective companies in a quandary. As illustrated by the case with TikTok (and the dispute surrounding Huawei building Norway's 5G infrastructure), private

companies are not necessarily in a position to perpetually deal with risks and vulnerabilities in technological devices and supply chains to meet the demands determined by the Security Act without government directives. Yet legally, companies are expected to be held accountable for their own security.

Secondly, and more crucially, discouraging the use of a Chinese social media app carries far more potential political and economic repercussions than security and privacy for users. It is worth noting that TikTok is not the only app undertaking comprehensive data collection, such as requesting users' geolocation, device-ID, and contact list. The most widely used social media apps in Norway and across the world harvest a comparable volume of private data through similar methods. Depending on national legal restrictions and obligations, apps and digital services are not necessarily prohibited from selling the data abroad to other governments, intelligence authorities, or intermediaries (such as data brokers). As we have historically seen through the premises of US-owned services such as Facebook and Twitter, these too have harbored spaces for illicit data collection by foreign and non-state actors. However, although there is no physical evidence at the present time, the vast extent of TikTok's comprehensive data collection and what it does with it in real-time we are yet to find out. But in principle, China (or any other government or corporation) does not need to *own* a social media platform to collect and share personal data but can simply buy it on the market.

Questions should therefore be raised to the extent of why TikTok represents a more imperative threat in comparison to other apps and digital services. Although public sector employees should undeniably act with precaution when it comes to the use of digital services and devices, instating 'bans' on TikTok, Huawei or Russia's Telegram is a sign of acting on a political momentum. Considering the lack of attention paid to security risks associated with other apps and services, the question is about the political and economic relations between China and the US and the West rather than simply issues of privacy and security. For Norway, turning to the bigger picture when it comes to the potential economic and political ramifications of pointing fingers at TikTok should be carefully thought-out and contextualized in the current geopolitical climate. ■

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The Chinese factor in the security of the Baltic States

Expert article • 3421

Like their fellow smaller Baltic Rim countries, the trio of Baltic States have been compelled to acknowledge China as a notable factor in their security at least since mid-2017, when for the first time three Chinese naval vessels entered the Baltic Sea to conduct drills with their Russian counterparts. Less than two years later, the trio's intelligence agencies explicitly recognised China as a threat to their national security, and that position has remained basically unchanged ever since.

In August 2019, an unprecedented diplomatic incident occurred in the heart of Vilnius, precipitating Lithuania's shift in its China policy, a transformation which has become particularly acute since the election of the country's new government in late 2020. Most importantly, the proclaimed 'values-based foreign policy' gave rise to a series of initiatives that collectively composed a review of the bilateral relationship with China, as a result of which Lithuania became the first country to officially withdraw from the then 17+1 platform of cooperation between China and 'Central and Eastern European countries' and opened the Taiwanese Representative Office under that particular title in 2021.

It was the latter decision that induced Beijing to retaliate in a multi-pronged and largely unprecedented manner, including unilaterally downgrading the bilateral relationship to the level of *chargé d'affaires*, the tacit application of sanctions against Lithuanian components in the global supply chains, and the cynical borrowing of Russian propaganda narratives to target the country informationally. In late 2021, therefore, Lithuania found itself at the receiving end of some of the most assertive and unique non-military pressure measures China had ever used against anyone, especially in the Nordic-Baltic region.

In an eponymous academic article published precisely during that complex time, I argued that China had actually emerged as a factor in the security of the Baltic States before this was officially acknowledged by them in 2017, particularly if security were to be understood in broader terms and assessed from the perspective of less direct global/systemic and European/sub-systemic impact. As the Baltic States all have open and fairly digitalised economies and are also small states with a particular stake in the preservation of international rules, obligations and peace in general, the trio had by then become exposed to China's stepped-up and often destabilising activities in the global commons, and its more regularised and diversified security presence on the periphery of, and in, Europe itself. Notably, these Chinese advances were often facilitated by none other than Russia.

A decisive test of this perception occurred on February 24, 2022. Merely three weeks before the start of the largest military hostilities in Europe since the Second World War, China in effect subscribed to Russia's consciously provocative interpretation of security on the continent with all of its negative potential repercussions on the Nordic-Baltic region in general and the Baltic States in particular. Despite the terrible performance of the Russian military on the battlefield in both key senses of efficiency and the laws of war, Beijing remained a rather committed friend of Moscow.

Indeed, while driven by decidedly self-interested motives, China has become the single most important foreign country allowing Russia to partially evade the effects of international sanctions. It has also shamelessly spread some of the most absurd Russian propaganda related to the war. Although strong evidence of its supplying Russia directly with arms has yet to emerge at the time of writing, China retains a plethora of means to do so in a covert, circuitous and plausibly deniable manner, particularly if the much-anticipated Ukrainian counter-offensive would result in the collapse of the Russian defensive lines.

Despite apparently neutral voting patterns at the UN, China's global diplomacy during the full-scale war has effectively amounted to support for Russia, as showcased by its Global Security Initiative presented in April 2022 and particularly by the so-called 12-point Peace Plan announced on the first anniversary of the full-scale invasion. While both initiatives are thinly veiled attempts to raise China's own global profile and salvage Russia from a military and political defeat, the latter is anything but a real peace plan and actually conforms to China's ideal position on the conflict in question.

For the Baltic States, all of this meant a definite reappraisal of China. Not only did the Lithuanian government suddenly feel vindicated in its policies towards both Eurasian authoritarian giants, but Estonia and Latvia decided to follow their neighbour by officially opting out of the Chinese 'whatever+1' platform. China's objective transition from a mere security factor to a threat is the root cause of this shift. ■

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The Sino-Russian 'indivisible security' order is a direct threat to Baltic Rim state sovereignty

Expert article • 3422

Organizing principles of the next security order are being forged on the battlefields of Ukraine. The fundamental ordering concept in jeopardy is Westphalian state sovereignty and non-interference. It is now directly challenged by the redefined and revisionist Sino-Russian concept of 'indivisible security'. The importance is self-evident since outright denial of the existence of a Ukrainian state was a core justification for Russia's war. Ukraine has never had real statehood, argued Russian president Putin, but should instead be seen as an 'inalienable part of Russia's history, culture, and spiritual space'. This line of imperialist thinking has long been enshrouded in Russian nomenclature through ideas of the so-called 'near abroad' and the colonial vision of a 'Russian World' extending into the Baltic rim region. All of it antithetical to territorial borders or any political and judicial demarcations separating independent states from the Russian state.

Russian imperialist visions have since the beginning of the 2022 war in Ukraine expanded to deliberations on the destruction or conquest of Baltic rim states. Russian television host and propagandist, Vladimir Solovyov, has notoriously applied Putinist thinking on Ukraine to the Baltic states, publicly interrogating the question: 'why do we put up with their existence?'. A position that recently found public support from Russia's closet security partner and ally as Chinese ambassador to France Lu Shaye denied official statehood to countries formerly under Soviet rule: 'Even these ex-Soviet countries don't have an effective status in international law because there was no international agreement to materialize their status as sovereign countries', Lu said. A statement China only publicly walked back as political backlash intensified. It should be regarded as a geopolitical Freudian slip – and serve as an urgent warning.

The Westphalian principle of state sovereignty will be the first casualty in any geographical area that finds itself in a post-Westphalian order under Sino-Russian influence. Such revisionist imaginations of the European security architecture were laid out in the lead-up to the war when Russia demanded a return of NATO to its 1997 posture, serving two main objectives of imperialist thinking: First, acceptance of a Russian right to a sphere-of-influence buffer zone *vis-à-vis* Europe and second, a rejection of the sovereign political agency exercised by states voluntarily joining under NATO's open door policy. An aggressive threat to the security of all Central and Eastern European states. And a Baltic rim state *fait accompli*. The Russia-China Joint Statement from February 4, 2022, served as the other leg of Russia's means to dismantle NATO and American unipolarity. As a final Chinese approval of war, it has rightly been recognized for its aims of subverting global order. The statement ominously declared a 'no limit' friendship between the two autocratic powers and led EU high representative for foreign affairs, Josep Borrell, to call it a 'revisionist manifesto' redefining core ordering principles.

The specific threat by Sino-Russian revisionism to Baltic rim states is illuminated through Henry Kissinger's differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate orders. Diplomacy as the adjustment of differences through negotiation is only possible in a legitimate order where rules, means and goals are accepted by all major actors. This moment has long passed. Instead, revisionist states are fundamentally challenging the Westphalian order because it is perceived as illegitimate. They are changing the rules, means and goals of foreign policy. And because of this, diplomacy in the Baltic rim region has given way for hybrid warfare and risks of war.

Sino-Russian post-Westphalian security thinking is best understood through their common redefinition of the Cold War concept 'indivisible security'. Russia invoked it to legitimize its war on Ukraine as fighting a threat from NATO while China's 'Global Security Initiative' likewise is based on this concept that 'no state shall strengthen its own security at the expense of others'. At face value an echo of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, however, as the realities of Russia's wars of aggression in combination with China's extensive military buildup and threats of use of force show, indivisible security and the Global Security Initiative aim only to serve national security interests of Russia and China – at the expense of regional states.

Political support for a Sino-Russian order based on indivisible security thus poses a direct threat to Baltic rim state sovereignty. And any encroachment on Baltic rim state sovereignty carries within it an existential threat to NATO cohesion. Therefore, in addition to military support for Ukraine's fight, the security of Baltic rim states also depends on a forceful rejection of the revisionist and imperialist concept of indivisible security and the Global Security Initiative. ■



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The impact of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on China's Arctic strategy

Expert article • 3423

Although the northernmost part of China is far from the Arctic Circle, China has become an increasingly active stakeholder in the Arctic over the past decade. In 2013, China was accepted as an observer of the Arctic Council, the key regional intergovernmental platform promoting collaboration on environmental protection and sustainable development among eight Arctic states (Canada, Denmark via Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States) and six Indigenous Peoples' organizations (Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and Saami Council). In January 2018, the Chinese government published the first-ever Arctic strategy, which describes China as a "near-Arctic state" with interests and rights in the Arctic region. Yet, the political dynamics in the Arctic have changed dramatically since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine started, and the work of the Arctic Council has been paused. This also affects China's chances to advance its interests and visions in the Arctic.

In addition to climate change, China is interested in new Arctic shipping lines and lucrative natural resources, especially in the Russian Arctic. It has invested in Arctic scientific research and established the first Arctic research station on Svalbard in 2004. In addition, China-Iceland Arctic Science Observatory was launched in 2018. Currently, China operates two research icebreakers: Xuelong and Xuelong II, the latter being the first domestically built polar research vessel. China plans to build several other ice-class ships in the foreseeable future as it is eager to develop Arctic shipping with and without Russia. China has also invested in liquid natural gas projects in the Russian Arctic. Since Russia attacked Ukraine in February 2022, the energy imports from Russia to China have increased significantly.

Although Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has not escalated to the Arctic region, the security dynamics of the northernmost part of the globe have changed significantly since February 2022. Noteworthy, Finland joined NATO in early April. After Türkiye and Hungary ratify Sweden's application for NATO membership, all Arctic states apart from Russia will be NATO allies. From the perspective of China, NATO's Arctic expansion is not a favourable development: It will limit China's room for manoeuvre in the region as NATO members will likely share the United States' critical approach to China.

While the potential security impacts of China's growing Arctic role started to be speculated among regional states and stakeholders in the late 2010s, China's unwillingness to criticise Russia's war of aggression has severely impacted the other seven Arctic states' attitude towards it. Only a few days before Russia attacked Ukraine, Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, and Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, met in Beijing and made new energy and wheat deals. In their joint

declaration, two authoritarian leaders pledged to increase collaboration in the Arctic and underlined that their friendship has no limits. In practice, however, the Sino-Russian relationship is complex due to the historical mistrust, and China has sought to balance between Russia and the West. It seems China does not want to sacrifice its trade relations with the United States and the European Union. Undoubtedly, China does not accept Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons.

As Russia's isolation from international society increases, China's leverage on it also increases. Noteworthy, when meeting Xi in Moscow at the end of March 2023, Putin announced that Russia was ready to establish a joint Russian-Chinese organ to develop the Northern Sea Route. Although their joint declaration did not mention a planned new major infrastructure project, Power-of-Siberia 2, to deliver Russian gas to China, Sino-Russian collaboration in the Arctic can be expected to increase. Whether this will lead to an increased Arctic presence of the Chinese military forces remains to be seen.

In light of growing great power tensions, international collaboration on global heating – the most pressing security risk in the Arctic and beyond – seems increasingly challenging. Given China's status as the world's largest carbon dioxide emission emitter, it is crucial to continue and foster ambitious climate collaboration between China and the West, especially the United States. For the time being, however, it seems that the Arctic is becoming, once again, an arena for armament and great power rivalry, and environmental risks continue to increase. ■

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Armed conflict and the environment

Expert article • 3424

In late 2022, the UN adopted a set of principles for the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict (PERAC). The attention to this problem is an important step, but many principles are non-binding and there is no set-up to ensure and monitor progress.

The problem

Ever since US forces used the herbicide Agent Orange to destroy forest cover and crops during the Vietnam war, there has been a slowly growing international awareness of the disastrous effects of armed conflict on the environment. Examples are plenty: during the first Gulf war, Iraqi forces provoked gigantic oil spills which caused a dramatic loss of biodiversity and left coastlines uninhabitable. The second Gulf war saw numerous oil fields being set on fire, as well as the infamous open burn pits for waste disposal. Armed groups have deliberately poisoned water sources, militaries have used 'scorched earth' tactics, and unlawful exploitation of natural resources for financing war has caused much damage to the environment. In Gaza, 2022, artillery shells set fire to hundreds of tons of pesticides, fertilizers, and other farming materials, causing groundwater contamination. And the ongoing war in Ukraine offers numerous examples of direct and incidental pollution of soil and water sources, caused by explosive and toxic remnants, the destruction of sewage, gas, and oil pipes, as well as chemical, power, and waste-water plants.

Knowledge in this field is still lagging, but it is well established that armed conflicts have both immediate and long-term effects on the environment and people's livelihoods as well as on the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and loss of biodiversity. Therefore, in 2013, the UN commissioned its International Law Commission (ILC) to draft a set of 'Principles for the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict', also known as PERAC.

The principles

In late 2022, the ILC draft principles were discussed, modified, and adopted by the UN General Assembly. More than 40 countries, including Estonia, engaged actively in the process, with Sweden and Finland among the main drivers. The Nordic countries adopted a common position that favored legally binding commitments, while countries like the US, Canada, Russia, and France rejected binding commitments beyond existing treaties and legal frameworks.

The International Law Commission could build on the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which in 1994, based on the International Humanitarian Law (IHL), developed a set of guidelines. Here, the environment is civilian, unless it actively serves military objectives. It should therefore be afforded the same protection as civilians, including principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. Hence, military forces must consider if the foreseeable damage caused to the environment is proportionate in relation to the military threat at hand.

But the new principles move beyond the IHL, the 'law of war', and includes the protection afforded the environment both before and after armed conflict in various legal fields, such as environmental law, human rights law, arms control, and corporate obligations. Before armed conflict, governments should designate particularly fragile or important environments as demilitarized zones, and the PERAC should be incorporated in military doctrine and training. After conflict, the parties should address the restoration and protection of damaged environment and deal with the hazardous remnants of war within their jurisdictions, including at sea.

PERAC also covers both international and non-international conflict, therefore serving as a reference for non-state armed groups and *de facto* authorities as well as state actors, occupying forces, private companies, and other stakeholders.

The challenges

The PERAC process has provided an important forum for dialogue and increased awareness of the issues at stake, but the framework for implementation is weak. A set of 'principles' is about the softest output that the UN can provide. Many principles relate to things that authorities 'should', rather than 'must', do, and the process of implementation doesn't have a 'home'.

Therefore, as the Conflict and Environment Observatory suggests, PERAC needs a group of states as custodians. They must push for the implementation of the PERAC, convince many more states and other stakeholders to buy into them, ensure exchange of good practices, and support the generation of better knowledge about relations between the environment and armed conflict as new weapons, tactics, and arenas of war emerge.

The PERAC is a historical contribution to the promotion of the environment in relation to armed conflict, and several organizations and platforms are pushing for increasing knowledge and action in this field. More than that, while non-state armed groups typically contribute to environmental hazards through fighting and unlawful exploitation of natural resources, some groups have taken up environmental issues to mobilize support, while others, such as the KNU in Myanmar, have developed environmental protection as a political vision. ■

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Climate change likely to raise misinformation challenges

Expert article • 3425

Compared to most of the world, the EU's Baltic states Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden have enviable resources to cope with climate change, despite the challenges they face. Indeed, indices that measure vulnerability to climate hazards like extreme heat and storms rank EU Baltic states among the best prepared. However, these indices focus mostly on financial resources and physical and economic resilience, rather than societal fault lines that could pose liabilities. One such fault line revolves around mis- and disinformation.¹ In addition to floods and heatwaves, climate change is likely to worsen vulnerabilities to mis- and disinformation, which could pose a heightened threat to the EU's Baltic states.

To begin with, climate change and the energy transition are likely to contribute to increased migration, more volatile energy markets, and economic strains that provide tempting disinformation targets for neighbors like Russia. Predicting climate-driven migration is difficult, but in 2021, weather-related disasters internally displaced 22.3 million people - more than any current conflict. The UN's IPCC, which is conservative by design, avoids forecasting future climate migration but expects climate change to increasingly drive migration in the coming decades as harms intensify in vulnerable countries and communities. This suggests Europe will continue to be a destination for a portion of the growing number of those displaced, even while facing potential internal climate migration. Meanwhile, the International Energy Agency and other experts warn that the transition to low-carbon energy may be chaotic, as fossil fuel supply and demand decline out of step with one another, risking price spikes like those prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Finally, on economics, the latest scientific analysis forecasts that climate change could cause as much as 3.6-4.1% GDP loss through 2050, spiking as high as 18-22% by 2100. These numbers do not even account for health impacts, biodiversity loss, or climate tipping points, but nevertheless dwarf the GDP impact of the 2007-2008 recession. Meanwhile, specific economic sectors and communities are likely to face strain from the energy transition, whether that's Polish coal miners or German auto workers.

In addition to their direct harms, these trends risk worsening social divisions and grievances that provide fertile ground for misinformation—whether organic or maliciously spread. Xenophobic actors' efforts to exploit migration would likely worsen societal polarization, as previewed by the impact of the 2015-16 refugee crisis in Europe, or migrants could be unfairly scapegoated for causing climate hazards, as happened in 2021 to minorities in Turkey and Greece after wildfires. Energy price spikes are a sure recipe for discontent, as seen by their role driving protests across Europe in the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Further, the global and local economic costs of climate change could prompt additional strains on cost of living and social benefits, the tightening of which have prompted protests and violent crackdowns in France.

¹ *Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information, even if sincerely believed or spread, and disinformation refers to falsehoods an actor maliciously spreads.*

Moreover, neighboring Russia, its allies, and like-minded nonstate actors will probably seek to exploit these fissures, given their record of stoking European discord around such topics, as documented by civil society and government investigations. Since the 2015-16 European refugee crisis, Russia and European far-right activists have spread disinformation to demonize refugees and bolster sympathetic far-right European allies. In 2021, in retaliation for EU sanctions, Belarus manipulated visa rules and spread disinformation to encourage migration from the Middle East and Africa to Europe, before working with Russia to amplify reports of abused migrants at the Polish, Lithuanian, and Latvian borders. Russia-aligned actors have tried to stoke worries of Baltic economic collapse from COVID-19, capitalize on economic grievances during 2018's Yellow Vest protests in France, and entrench Russian trade and natural gas interests in Europe. Today, Russian propaganda seeks to demonize Ukrainian refugees as the cause of Europe's energy security struggles, a ploy to undermine European solidarity with Kyiv.

Because of these vulnerabilities, the EU's Baltic states would do well to prioritize long-term resilience to such strains.

For example, leaders in combating misinformation like the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats can share best practices. More broadly, these threats speak to the security value of programs aimed at economic equality and societal cohesion, to accommodate migration and economic shocks with solidarity. They also underscore the benefits of investments in climate resilience in vulnerable countries, which can reduce pressures to migrate. While the war in Ukraine and past crises have offered practice countering similar misinformation, climate change is likely to present a unique and ongoing challenge, given that it is projected to worsen for 20-30 years even in the best-case emissions scenarios. This climate-misinformation nexus will be with the EU for a long time, and Baltic states must prepare for the long haul. ■



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Securing peace in a time of environmental crisis

Expert article • 3426

Russia's war in Ukraine is not only a humanitarian catastrophe that challenges the geopolitical order and Europe's security architecture but also an ecological disaster. As such, it is adding to the already daunting security risks posed by a set of acute environmental crises afflicting the planet.

Modern wars have manifold direct environmental impacts. Militaries' carbon footprints are huge. Armed conflict destroys natural habitats and critical infrastructure that protects the environment including wastewater, gas and oil pipelines and storage sites for fuel and industrial waste. Soil, air and water pollution from conflicts can take decades to address. And of course the past year has witnessed high-intensity fighting around the [Chornobyl and Zaporizhzhia](#) nuclear power plants. The environmental impacts of the war in Ukraine have been [carefully documented](#) by a number of organizations, such as the Zoï Environment Network.

Ukraine is not alone. It is just one of more than 50 armed conflicts today, a number that has more than doubled in the past 10 years. In 2022, [global military spending](#) reached a record high of 2,24 trillion USD.

The [links between environmental damage and insecurity](#) are far larger and more complex however than the direct impacts of war. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are not only changing the security landscape but also what it means to build and maintain peace. Environmental stresses are putting pressures on lives and livelihoods that, in already fragile economic or social contexts, undermine human security and in certain cases can lead to conflict. These stresses are also cascading into regions far from their origin, reverberating across the globe. The security risks linked to pollution and other emerging environmental problems are only [starting to be explored](#).

So how do we reduce insecurity in a new era of environmental risk?

Three principles must guide policy responses. First, these twin security and environment crises demand new thinking. This starts with understanding that addressing the root causes of environmental degradation is essential to our long-term security. It also means new approaches. Climate action needs to, at a minimum, be conflict-sensitive. Ideally, it should be peace positive. Peace and conflict initiatives need to support environmental outcomes. This means a shift toward more complex interventions and investments in preparedness and resilience in the most fragile settings. Countries need to examine how best to integrate their foreign and security, development, defense and environmental policy tools, and find greater synergies between them.

Second, new cooperation frameworks, new modes of collaboration and diplomacy are needed. Many multilateral and regional organizations (such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) recognize the risks posed by the twin environmental and security crises, but have not operationalized their responses consistently. Good practice needs to be better identified, shared and scaled up. Multidisciplinary teams must be the norm and not the exception. Initiatives at national level need

to connect local knowledge to international resources. Collaboration between different levels, actors and sectors holds the best promise to produce and scale up innovative solutions to address these risks.

Third, the urgent transitions necessary to create greener societies must be just and peaceful. Poorly designed adaptation or projects can create negative social consequences, deepening existing divisions or insecurity in fragile communities. Environmental policies must be designed and implemented in transparent and inclusive ways and embrace adaptive governance approaches, shifting course when policies are not working. At the geopolitical level, this requires providing support for economies that rely on fossil fuel rents or are heavily dependent on fossil fuels for energy to transition peacefully to new economic models. It also means meeting climate finance targets and addressing the current uneven distribution of that finance.

The war in Ukraine is undermining international cooperation to address the existential risks of climate change and diverting crucial resources away from development, peacebuilding and climate action. But it also underscores how interlinked our environment and our security are. Securing peace in a time of environmental crisis means not only recognizing these interlinkages but actively integrating development, foreign, security, defense and environmental policy tools to address them.



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Re-emergence of US security policy focus on the Arctic

Expert article • 3427

The United States has increased its attention toward the Arctic in a way that is dispelling a common notion of the US as a slightly reluctant Arctic actor. Compared to other Arctic states like Norway and Russia where the region is a central part of national security policy, the US has kept it at a somewhat distance. The Arctic was indeed strategically important to the US for many decades, such as during the Cold War, as it was the shortest route for Soviet missiles to target North America. Afterward, the region has often been discussed in the context of climate change and environmental and economic issues. In recent years, the Arctic has re-emerged on the security policy agenda in Washington D.C. and the Pentagon. The military significance of Alaska is renewed and US forces frequently exercise in the European High North.

The US Department of Defense's Arctic strategy from 2019 describes the Arctic region as a potential avenue for expanded great power competition, pointing specifically to the activities and ambitions of Russia and China. Various subsequent and first-ever Arctic strategies were presented by US military departments, such as the Air Force and Army, signaling the increased importance of the Arctic to the US. The strategies build on the key themes of counteracting great power rivals, as well as enhancing and regaining US Arctic capabilities, for instance through cold-weather training operations in – and with – other Arctic states.

Great power competition is perhaps the most important factor when explaining the re-emergence of US security policy focus toward the Arctic. During the last decade, Russia has increased its military capabilities and activities in the High North. The security situation in the Arctic also changed after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. This, along with physical changes in the environment, has contributed to the increase of the region's geopolitical significance.

In the Arctic, various geographical subregions hold different security dynamics. Russia's Northern Fleet is located only a few miles from the Norwegian border in the north, on the Kola Peninsula in the European Arctic. The nuclear missiles on the submarines operating in these areas constitute Russia's second-strike capabilities and are some of the most dangerous threats the US is facing, making this a particular area of geostrategic importance.

In the case of the Arctic, much of the great power competition takes place in the European High North, such as the Barents Sea. The increased US military activity is therefore particularly noticeable in Norway, and in Norway's northern neighborhood. The military presence in this area seems also to have expanded both in level and type of activity.

One example of the increased engagement is the re-activation of the US Second Fleet in 2018. The fleet has specific responsibilities in the North Atlantic and its re-activation can be seen as part of a wider U.S. strategy for countering Russia in an era of increased strategic competition. The same year, during the NATO military exercise Trident Juncture in Norway, a US aircraft carrier operated in the waters north of the Arctic Circle for the first time in almost three decades. In May 2020, U.S. Navy surface vessels operated in the Barents Sea for the first time since the mid-80s, in a joint exercise with Great Britain. Likewise, US Air Force bombers have more frequently operated in this area.

In order to prepare for potential large-scale conflict, and deter state competitors in the Arctic region and elsewhere, the US has had a shift in military doctrine, and puts more emphasis on military flexibility and being operationally unpredictable. These are central tools introduced in the 2018 National Defense Strategy. Some of the recent American operations in the European High North, where operational surprise is a central element, can be seen in the context of the new military doctrine, argue researchers from CSIS and the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies. The Indo-Pacific and China will most likely be the number one priority for the US in the coming years. That may also further affect the US operational pattern in the High North.

Norwegian ministers of defense have welcomed the increased interest and dedication to the High North from its most important ally, the US. In light of the Russian war in Ukraine, the renewed US effort in the Arctic can be viewed as a highly valued deterrent seen from the perspective of Norwegian authorities.

Simultaneously, Norway emphasizes predictability around military activity in the High North, as well as its role concerning coordination of allied military activities in the immediate neighborhood. With increasing tensions, ensuring predictability and stability may be more important than ever. In this context, taking into account the Norwegian perspective of the High North may provide useful insights to avoid miscalculations and escalation. ■



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Russian threat and the disillusionment of the Arctic cooperation

Expert article • 3428

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has made the Russian threat increasingly tangible also in the Northern Europe. Finland and Sweden reacted to the changed security situation by dramatically recalibrating their security policy and applying to join NATO. Countries' accessions will be major geostrategic loss for Russia and change the balance of power in the whole Northern Europe theatre. Transformative, potentially systemic ramifications of the aggression have taken shape also in the very north of Europe: in the Arctic.

In the military sphere, the war of aggression has further underlined the importance of the European Arctic for the defence of the whole Euro-Atlantic area. In the foreign policy sphere, the aggression has caused a serious blow to the paradigm of "Arctic exceptionalism". The notion refers to common idea in expert analyses and high-level foreign policy statements where the Arctic is framed as an exceptional "zone of peace" and a "territory of dialogue" between the West and Russia despite problems elsewhere on the globe.

However, the bubble of exceptionalism has now burst and caused a general sense of disillusionment for many in the Arctic expert and policy circles. Political, economic and scientific contacts between the Western Arctic states and Russia have been cut. Cooperation with Russia in various Arctic multilateral structures, such as the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, have been halted.

The West has increasingly come to agree that Russia must be deterred in order to stop future aggressions. However, in the Arctic there still are on-going discussions on the need to continue limited international cooperation with Russia. According to these views, cooperation is necessary because of the urgent need for globally important climate and environmental change related data and research, which becomes extremely difficult without Russian participation. The Arctic cooperation is utilized also for political purposes to mitigate tensions and to find some common ground to start to rebuild diplomatic relations after the war of aggression has ended.

However, the cooperative approach is unwarranted at least in two ways. First, its focus is too regional which fails to understand how the Arctic is connected to broader geostrategic constellations in the Northern Europe and beyond. Secondly, it fails to fully understand - or deliberately brackets out - the essence of Russia's regime's zero-sum worldview and confrontational and civilizational approach towards the West, as well as the role the Arctic plays in Russian broader revisionists geostrategic plans.

When analyzing the possibilities to diplomatically engage with Russia in the Arctic, it should be noted that by attacking Ukraine, Russia did not aim only to suppress the country under Russian dominance. Russia also made a calculated decision to fully challenge the West and the European security architecture. The country itself was very explicit on this, as stated in the list of demands in December 2021. The demands exposed the magnitude of the revisionist challenge Russia is willing to pose on the key principles of European security architecture, including state's territorial integrity and state's right to choose their own security and foreign policy orientation.

The aggression has made it evident that President Putin's Russia is a revisionist and imperialist power, which cannot be effectively contained with diplomacy or with the mechanisms of the rule-based international order. Domestic developments in Russia itself - such as the military mobilization, suppression of the civil society and increasingly hostile communication in the media landscape - are raising serious questions whether the country is quickly sliding from an authoritarian state to totalitarianism underpinned by a strategic culture of militarism and glorified violence.

President Putin himself has declared the collective West as a strategic enemy, which means that Russia cannot be anymore considered as a normal stakeholder in European security. The Russian challenge is systemic and long-term in nature, and there is no going back to the status quo preceding the war of aggression.

The Arctic economic and military resources continue to play an essential role in Russia's ability to achieve its grand strategic goals. Russia's domestic development, military modernization, international influence and the survival of President Putin's regime continue to depend on revenues from Arctic oil and gas. It is important to underline that through regional cooperative practices, the West has unintentionally facilitated Russia's capacity to conduct international aggressions.

The Western tendency to cling to Arctic cooperation has been beneficial for Russia. First, the Western hopes to build multilateral cooperative security have helped to keep NATO out of the region. Second, it has steered the West to underinvest in Arctic military capabilities and neglect regional deterrence, simultaneously enabling Russia to strengthen its relative position in the region. Third, it has helped to gain access to and utilize international research projects that improve infrastructure in the north, thereby facilitating energy projects and military infrastructure in the region as well. And fourth, it has helped to portray the region as a stable investment area to attract foreign capital for Arctic mega-projects, which in turn has helped Russia to maintain its status as an energy superpower and utilize energy as a weapon against the West.

The Western Arctic stance shouldn't anymore be based on daydreams or illusions. The stance must match the current realities and the focus should be on building comprehensive deterrence also in the northernmost regions of Europe. ■



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Countering Russia on the Baltic Sea

Expert article • 3429

Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine provides stark evidence of its readiness to go to war to further its geostrategic ambitions. Despite huge political and military setbacks in Ukraine, Russia has not abandoned its demands for broad changes to Europe's security architecture that would subjugate its neighbours, including in the wider Baltic region, to its malign influence. This demands a forceful response from NATO.

While a Russia-NATO military conflict may be unlikely in the short term, Russia will strive to rapidly rebuild its armed forces after the war. NATO must be ready. Meanwhile, Russia will continue to use military assets to gather intelligence, harass neighbours, and sow uncertainty and fear. The apparent jamming of GPS signals from Gogland is a recent example of the sort of sub-threshold activity that will probably increase as Russia seeks to attack Western interests with limited instruments.

In a NATO-Russia Baltic conflict, naval forces would need to undertake numerous and diverse missions including controlling national waters and ports, striking and defending sea lines of communication, attacking and protecting critical infrastructure such as undersea pipelines and cables, and conducting and frustrating amphibious operations. To provide effective defence, and thus credible deterrence, regional navies must be proficient in a full range of naval warfare disciplines—including anti-surface, anti-submarine and anti-air operations, and mining and mine countermeasures—in the unique geographical, meteorological, and hydrological conditions of the Baltic Sea. Prerequisites for successful NATO operations on the sea also include effective maritime situational awareness, and multi-domain and multinational command and control.

Finland's accession and Sweden's likely accession to NATO are important developments in enhancing defence against and deterrence of Russia in the maritime domain. Finland's *Pohjanmaa* multi-role corvettes, due to begin construction this year, will provide year-round capabilities for surface, anti-submarine and anti-air warfare, mine-laying, and command and control. Sweden's *A-26 Blekinge* submarines (expected from 2027) will be tailored for Baltic Sea operations, including capacity for seabed warfare. Swedish and Finnish surface presence and maritime patrol aircraft will significantly enhance maritime situational awareness, currently a weakness in the Baltic region.

Elsewhere in the eastern Baltic, Estonia has acquired new coastal defence radars, naval mines, and 290 km-range *Blue Spear* coastal defence missiles, while Lithuania has procured an additional mine countermeasures vessel from the UK. Poland is also enhancing its navy, with the acquisition of three multi-role *Miecznik* class frigates, and Swedish-built signals intelligence vessels.

These and other developments will substantially improve the abilities of NATO states to maintain a close eye on Russia's destructive activities in the maritime domain in peacetime and frustrate its operations during conflict. Nonetheless, more needs to be done to enhance maritime deterrence and defence. Three key watchwords are capability, cooperation, and cohesion.

Many Baltic Sea states have in recent years prioritised the development of land forces, a tendency reinforced by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. While the maritime domain has seen some investment, Baltic maritime capability remains thin. Situational awareness is incomplete, and regional states lack a full set of capability options to counter Russian aggression at sea. As NATO states ramp up their defence spending, the maritime domain must also see an appropriate level of investment.

The huge expense of building effective maritime defence and deterrence can, however, be partly mitigated by improving cooperation at all levels: between naval and constabulary maritime forces; and between states—in management processes such as acquisition and logistic support, and in operations. The commanders of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian navies have proposed wide-ranging cooperation, including shared procurement and whole-life management of a new fleet and common planning of exercises and operations. Meanwhile, Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO offers an opportunity to build together a stronger Baltic maritime identity, including enhanced information sharing, exercises, and command and control.

Finally, the presence of NATO warships from beyond the region sends a strong deterrence message of NATO cohesion to any potential aggressor. NATO countries must continue to exercise and demonstrate presence in the Baltic Sea.

While the circumstances of the Baltic Sea have shifted dramatically from the 'red lake' of the Cold War to a body of water almost surrounded by NATO and EU states, it retains geostrategic significance as a space in which the West directly borders Russia. NATO needs strong maritime capabilities here as part of a robust and comprehensive package to deter, and if needed defend against, this hostile neighbour. ■



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Collapse of Russia's hybrid warfare

Expert article • 3430

The operating principle of Russia's hybrid warfare

The main determinants of hybridity have long been [debated](#) in defence policy circles. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine in February 2022 shifted the focus from non-military back to conventional tools, jeopardising the entire concept of hybrid warfare. However, for Russia, hybrid warfare was never about choosing between conventional and unconventional tools.

Since the 1990s, Russia has consistently applied all instruments of its power to identify and exploit adversarial vulnerabilities. The main conceptual logic of Russia's so-called [kill chain](#) is to conceal its own weaknesses while neutralising the advantages of its adversaries, enabling it to transform reckless policies and escalation potential into a strategic advantage through five steps: 1. Weaponise a vulnerability to create a crisis 2. Initiate negotiations to impose new post-crisis realities 3. Make threats and escalate while negotiating 4. Obtain concessions 5. Secure gains and look for new vulnerabilities to continue the pattern.

Through this kill chain, Russia normalised the use of military and non-military instruments for achieving its political objectives, erasing the division between geopolitical competition with the West and hybrid warfare. The core operating principle of this pattern is based on carefully testing Western red lines and potential responses to Russia's belligerent actions. As a result, Russia relies on non-military instruments of power to operate below the threshold of conflict in NATO member states while using military force to destabilise countries outside the Alliance. The logic is straightforward: Russia will go as far as the West will allow without imposing painful costs.

A broken pattern of blackmail

Russia, emboldened by the successful implementation of a coherent hybrid warfare strategy in its neighbourhood for decades, began constructing this kill chain around Ukraine in the run-up to its full-scale invasion in 2022. In September 2021, 'Zapad' exercises signalled escalatory posture by simulating a nuclear strike and occupation of NATO territories. That same month, after completing the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline, Russia manipulated energy prices to reinforce these tensions. The next month, Russia began using Lukashenko to instigate a migration crisis at the borders of the Baltic states and Poland. After gradual escalation through multiple domains, Russia began to build up its military presence on the Ukrainian border, culminating in ultimatums to [NATO](#) and the [US](#).

Those ultimatums demanded specific concessions from the West, not from Kyiv, turning Ukraine into the object or the theatre of Russia's geopolitical ambitions. Russia's disastrous performance on the battlefield since the invasion demonstrates that Russia was not prepared for an all-out war and was expecting another easy victory. According to the Kremlin's calculus, Ukraine was deceived as to its ability to resist, and the West would once again rush to the negotiating table under Russia's terms. However, the unity and resolve of Ukraine and the West resulted in a first-ever interruption of Russia's kill chain, exposing its strategic and operational dysfunctionality.

The risk of reviving the kill chain

Recent history proves that impunity and a lack of clear opposition provoke Russia to pursue aggressive strategies. Warnings that Russia was preparing to attack Georgia were widely dismissed as a conspiracy, leading to the invasion in 2008 with little consequence for Russia. Similarly, neither the threat of Crimea's annexation and the War in Eastern Ukraine nor its repercussions for European security have been adequately addressed. Even after the US intelligence shared information about the Russian troop numbers, locations, and intentions in February 2022, there was no

Western response to the invasion of Kyiv. Deterrence failed in all preceding cases because Russia was convinced that the targeted countries were unprepared for a strong opposition. The West was unwilling to impose painful costs – the formula leading to the concessions to Kremlin.

Failure to understand the main drivers of each other's strategic thinking led the West and Russia to a series of misunderstandings. Western policymaking was crippled by the lack of a unified understanding regarding Russian intentions and capabilities, enabling Russia to exploit these uncertainties. After more than a year of the war, there is still no vision of the desired end state of remarkable Western support for Ukraine. Even defining the conditions of victory and defeat is problematic. For Putin's current circumstances, winning may mean slowly destroying Ukraine through attrition until the cost of the war exceeds acceptable limits and then striking a deal to retain some of the occupied regions of Ukraine. Western political debates partially echo narratives that the West cannot sustain existing levels of support to Ukraine indefinitely, and there is a need to avoid escalation into WWII by making concessions to the Kremlin. Allowing Kremlin to revive its kill chain is the worst option for Ukraine and European security.

Hybrid lessons from Ukraine

Russia is waging hybrid warfare as a part of its strategic completion with the West. Denial of this reality, resulting in the lack of credible Western deterrents, provoked further aggression and determined the success of Russia's kill chain.

The devastating consequences of the war in Ukraine on entire Euro-Atlantic security prove that the sources of Western vulnerabilities may stem from outside NATO and EU borders. The operationalisation of resilience is core for any credible deterrence, which requires constantly searching for and mending these vulnerabilities before Russia uses them to initiate the kill chain.

Western defence policymaking primarily focuses on conventional warfare and does not proportionally address unconventional aspects. There is the ill practice of treating hybrid warfare as a standalone, underfunded conceptual problem; when instead, it is crucial to incorporate countering it into the regular national defence and security budgetary cycles.

Finally, properly communicating clearly defined policies is vital for deterring Russia's aggressive hybrid warfare and avoiding misconceptions. The counterproductive Western message aimed at deterring Russian aggression was focused on "defending every inch of NATO territory," convincing Putin that there would be no painful costs for invading a non-NATO nation. The only way to discourage Putin from attacking Ukraine would have been to convince him that the West was united and ready for severe sanctions and unprecedented military support. To avoid reviving the kill chain that caused a current shock to Euro-Atlantic security, the West needs to make it clear that there is no way for Putin to win this war. This requires displaying a strategy aimed at supporting not the resistance but the victory of Ukraine, defined as the restoration of territorial integrity under its internationally recognized borders. ■



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Cyber Security and Cyber Defence comparison of various NATO member states

Expert article • 3431

Cyber Security and Cyber Defence remain one of the most pressing challenges of the today's contemporary and complex security environment. In this regard, there are many ongoing academic, professional and political discussions taking place, as well as various analyses and comparisons of National Cyber Security legal and institutional frameworks. These analyses are mainly based on publicly available data that depict a Nation's digital development, adopted strategies, legal frameworks of Cyber Security and Cyber Defence, the expected ability to respond to Cyber indicators, and the expected capabilities of conducting Cyber Operations, etc. These kind of comparisons give us some kind of general information about the current legal and institutional framework of the National Cyber Security and Defence. The presented results do not necessarily mean that these data represents the effective implementation of a National Cyber Security and Cyber Defence policy as these comparisons do not provide information on the effectiveness and compliance of a Nation's Cyber Security and Cyber Defence concept with respect to International or Multinational legal commitments.

If we just focus on NATO member states, then we could logically conclude that NATO member states have the comparable understanding of all Cyber-related terminology and have a similar organisational structure, as they have committed to realising and respecting the Alliance's strategic goals. Concurrently, it is also worth noting that the majority of NATO members are also EU members, so these two organizations should not differ significantly in their common understanding of the aforementioned concept, especially since the two organisations concluded a Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation that includes Cyber Defence.

The deductive and logical reasoning above gives the impression that it should be simple to directly compare the National Cyber Security and Cyber Defence frameworks among various NATO member states. However, this is a false impression, as each Nation has its own unique approach to National, International and Multinational Cyber Security and Cyber Defence concept due to the disparity in the common understanding of Cyber-related terminology and cultural-historical diversity. Additionally, not all other information with regard to National Cyber Defence capabilities are publicly available (except for strategies that depict organisational structure in general). This disparity has created new pitfalls in terms of widely differing understandings and perceptions of the contemporary Cyber Security and Cyber Defence environment, and consequently, lack of a common approach and response of Nations to Cyber Security or Cyber Defence activities.

In 2021, CCDCOE made the [Comparative study on the cyber defence of NATO member states](#), focusing on Cyber-related terminology, and legal and institutional framework of individual NATO member states. The study

shows two key findings: 1. a universally accepted Cyber terminology does not exist nor is the generally accepted EU or NATO definitions the same, which is echoed in differing National concepts of Cyber Security and Cyber Defence. 2. States are also reluctant to share detailed information about their own National Cyber Security and Defence concepts and policies, especially regarding the internal organisational structure of their National Cyber Defence and subordinate individual unit missions and tasking.

The comprehensive approach of the aforementioned analysis showed that most Nations do not approach the implementation of Cyber Security and Cyber defence holistically, but focus only on Cyber Security, Cyber Defence and Cyber resilience separately. As an example, some Nations replaced Information assurance with Information security, or Information security with Cyber security, which subsequently is mirrored in their updated organisational structure. Moreover, the EU considers Information security as a subset of Cyber Security, while NATO advocates the opposite. There are also terminological discrepancies in the definition of what constitutes a Cyber attack vice Cyber Operations (offensive and defensive). Which is especially important in context of modern interpretations of Multidomain Operations, when most Cyber incidents and attacks occur in the so-called "grey zone", which are events that do not reach the threshold of the legally understood application of the use of force or a clear violation of legally understood norms or international law.

Such terminological disparity is highly undesirable in the Multinational world and the Alliance as it prevents a unified and global response to modern security threats as well as to the creation of easily recognised International law or Cyber norms (e.g. Rules of Customary international law: state practice and opinion juris sive necessitates). Additionally, it should be noted that NATO and the EU define Cyber-related terminology differently. Many other nations, such as the Russia Federation, also do not take into account or agree to the current Rules of International laws or commonly accepted Cyber norms or practices. Additionally, the Russian Federation uses the Information Environment and Cyberspace to implement the so-called "New Warfare Generation" operations (Hybrid operations), while NATO uses are more clearly defined Cyber Operations policy and frameworks to achieve military strategic objectives.

This entire topic is further recognised in individual National organisational structures in the widely differing implementation of National Cyber concepts. All NATO member states have four levels of security management (political, strategic, operational, technical/tactical), but very different organisational structures. In some Nations, a single entity may be responsible for all Cyber-related concept tasks, and in other Nations, a single entity maybe be responsible to provide Information security and at the same time Cyber security. The levels of operational Cyber security between Nations are also highly different, as



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Nations have assigned operational tasks to different entities, such as the National Cyber Security Centre, CERT, Department of Defence, National Intelligence Service, Military Intelligence, Digital Security Oversight Board, Council for cyber security, the Cyber Security Committee at the Ministry of Communications, etc.

Similar findings are seen at the operational level of a many National Cyber Defence frameworks. Some Nations have executed Cyber Defence at the governmental level while others do so at the Ministerial level or equivalent governmental bodies, but most Nations have implemented a shared responsibility for Cyber Security and Cyber Defence concept. From publicly available data, we cannot claim that any Nation has a better or worse organisational structure than another, but we can certainly assert that Nations that do not have intelligence structures included in their framework cannot effectively implement and execute Cyber Defence.

In conclusion, a generally accepted Cyber-related terminology is the cornerstone for the International and effective implementation of Cyber Security and Cyber Defence, which would enable Nations to more uniformly design an effective security architecture for times of peace, conflict and war. The whole-of-government approach is no longer sufficient, but a “whole-Nation approach” is needed, which would enable the effective integration of the public and private sectors, the distribution of capabilities (especially human resources), interoperability within the Alliance and at the same time allow effective respond to hybrid threats. ■

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Growing cyber treats to the Baltic Rim

Expert article • 3432

The Baltic Rim will remain in Russia's main interest due to its geographical proximity, including the Kaliningrad exclave. For the countries of the region, this will be primarily a challenge given Russia's aggressive stance. In this context, the invasion of February 2022 is a continuation of earlier actions—the invasion of Georgia in 2008, as well as the annexation of Crimea and creation of separatist movements in eastern Ukraine in 2014. For now, it is difficult to predict the outcome of the war, but even Ukraine's victory and the complete recovery of the country's territory does not guarantee that Russia will give up its imperial ambitions. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that Russia will decide to attack NATO and EU member states, which is why hybrid activities, and in particular cyber-aggression, will be all the more important.

Since the Russian invasion of February 2022, there has been a global increase in cyber-aggression. There are several reasons for this, but the most important one is that cyberattacks are perceived as activities below the threshold of war. For a growing number of actors, both state and non-state, they are becoming an effective method of achieving goals, or even of political communication. The latter is particularly clear in the case of Russia. One of the most glaring examples was the attack on the European Parliament's website in November 2022 after it declared Russia a state sponsor of terrorism.

Cyberattacks are an ever-growing threat, not least because of their increasing number. The dependence of states and their institutions, the private sector, and citizens on digital services, including the interconnections between them, make the vulnerability to theft and falsification of data or cutting off from essential services a matter of concern. This is of particular importance not only in the context of information protection, but also hard security provisions. Russia, for example, launched a cyberattack on the KA-SAT satellite network an hour before the invasion of February 2022. By paralysing communication in Ukraine, parts of Europe, and the Mediterranean, it managed to achieve the effect of surprise. This example clearly shows that cyberattacks are being used alongside military means.

Ensuring cybersecurity in the EU has not kept pace with connecting more and more ground- and space based systems. For the most part, cyber protection is reliant on the activities of private companies, while state-owned entities have in fact only recently started to emerge. For this reason, cooperation between member states is not yet sufficiently developed, although the EU has already started to take some action. At first, it was mainly about civilian cooperation, but Russia's war of aggression has turned the attention to military issues as well. In November 2022 the Commission and the High Representative presented a Joint Communication on an EU Cyber Defence policy. However, until now, activities taken by member states seem to be fragmented and funding does not correspond to real needs.

Meanwhile, risks in the Baltic Sea region are serious. Russia, for example, has the ability to intercept satellite navigation signals and spoof them, which can lead to a marine accident. In addition to that, other actors, including China, may become an increasing threat. This will result not only from the current tightening of the Sino-Russian alliance, but also from the growing tensions between democratic states and China related to the reduction of dependence on goods supplies from this country, which arrive in Europe mainly by sea.

In such a situation, increasing cybersecurity levels by states separately may not bring sufficient results. According to information published by the Thales Group at the beginning of 2023, most attacked countries since the Russian war of aggression are those in the Baltic Rim: Poland recorded highest number of 114 incidents related to the war, followed by Baltic countries (157 incidents in total for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Nordic countries (95 incidents in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland), and Germany (58 incidents). Other European countries are hardly under such pressure.

Taking above into account, it seems reasonable for the Baltic Rim countries to initiate tightening cooperation with increased focus on information exchange, both in bilateral formats and at the EU or NATO level. An example that shows the future path is the agreement on Ukraine's accession to the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) located in Estonia. Such decisions will contribute to improving cyber resilience of Baltic Rim countries, and more broadly—the EU and NATO. Our future cybersecurity will certainly depend on unity. ■

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Empowering cyber capacity building: View from Estonia

Expert article • 3433

Recently, it seems like the world has collectively jumped from one crisis to another. In response to the COVID pandemic, governments and businesses shifted more to online services and remote working. As a result, the number of people relying on online security skyrocketed. Then, the rolling out of vaccines and digital certificates brought attention to questions related to digital health and data security. Now, over the last year, Russia's war in Ukraine has demonstrated in a remarkable manner that cyberattacks are not a separate front, but rather a dimension of the conflict. In the context of this rapid digitalisation and exponential growth of cyber-attacks, strengthening cyber resilience has become both an essential enabler of sustainable growth and an urgent precondition for security. As one of the first digital nations, Estonia has learned this from first-hand experience.

This article looks at the relevance of Estonia's digitalisation and cybersecurity solutions for international capacity building. How can Estonia's approach to cybersecurity serve as a useful example for other governments and emerging economies? What is the best practice in this field of e-Governance Academy, one of Estonia's biggest centres of excellence for sharing digital transformation?

Cyber capacity building – general definitions

Capacity building in general is an overarching concept that relates to efforts to "invent, develop and maintain institutions and organisations that are capable of learning and bringing about their continuing transformation, so that they can better play a dynamic role to sustain national development processes."¹ In comparison to other fields of international cooperation, cybersecurity capacity building is still relatively young – the first initiatives dating back to the late 1990s, with the field only properly taking off over the past decade. Building national cyber capacity enhances a country's ability to detect, investigate, and respond to cyber threats. Therefore, supporting cyber capacity-building is essential to creating a cyberspace that works for all, as cybersecurity is a critical enabler of successful and resilient digitalisation.

Estonia's approach

The development cooperation policy of Estonia is based on the globally agreed UN sustainable development goals.² The idea that cybersecurity must be at the core of the digital transformation – in the inception, implementation, and delivery of e-services and solutions has guided Estonia throughout the years. As a second-generation digital society, Estonia has earned its credibility. A whole generation of people has grown up for whom there is no other way for the state to function than digital. Therefore, the Estonian government have a responsibility to develop and maintain cybersecurity capacities that ensure the reliability and safe use of digital services.

Estonia considers digital rights – such as free access to the internet, freedom of expression online, privacy – an integral part of human rights.³ The country is an active participant in international discussions on internet

freedom and a founding member of the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC). In this regard, Estonia has a pioneering role in leading by example of aligning several important goals at the same time: to keep cyberspace free, open, safe, and secure. The country ranks high ranks in international indexes monitoring the foundations of the country's cybersecurity, as well as in those tracking internet freedom. In the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), managed by the International Telecommunication Union, Estonia was third in the world and first in the European Union in 2021. Estonia ranked second after Iceland in 2022 US think tank Freedom House report, which analyzes rights and freedoms in public online space.

Estonia believes that commitment to cyber capacity building efforts for partner countries helps to project stability in the EU neighbourhood. The country is setting an example: Estonia's support in cyber capacity building ranges from strategic advice and institution-building, to education and training. This allows the partner countries to prevent, be prepared for a crisis management and build cybersecurity resilience to the benefit of their population.

As a practical example, Estonia was among the early promoters of introducing mandatory cyber risk management for governmental information systems and essential services. It set an example of cyber threat information sharing, developed and promoted the organisation of cybersecurity reserves, and promoted an understanding of how international law applies to state cyber activities. This is part of the cooperative attitude of Estonia in practice.

E-Governance Academy's experience

The e-Governance Academy (eGA) is an independent, non-profit centre of excellence in Estonia, acting as an implementer of international development cooperation projects. eGA's work relies on Estonia's experience and reflects Estonian values supporting a free, open and secure internet. In its projects, eGA involves top experts from a diversity of backgrounds - civil society organizations, the public and private sectors, research institutions.

The cybersecurity program at eGA started in 2016 reflecting the growing understanding that security is an enabler of effective and reliable digitalization. eGA's team is currently supporting cyber capacity building in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine and in the Western Balkans with the support of EU and other donors. This support ranges from legal advice, cyber institution-building, to providing equipment and tools, as well as training and exercises in cybersecurity.

The conceptual backbone for this activity is the National Cyber Security Index (NCSI) created and managed by eGA since 2016 as a comprehensive tool for capacity building on cybersecurity. The NCSI monitors countries' performance in 12 cybersecurity capacity areas, grouped into three pillars: (a) strategic capacities, including aspects related to cybersecurity governance and policy, global engagement, education, and innovation; (b) preventive capacities that involve secure digital infrastructure and cyber threat analysis; and (c) responsive capacities related to responding to cyber threats, to managing cyber incidents and cybercrime.

1 United Nations "United Nations System Support for Capacity-Building", E/2002/58, 14 May 2002

2 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

3 [https://cyberlaw.ccdcoe.org/wiki/National_position_of_Estonia_\(2021\)](https://cyberlaw.ccdcoe.org/wiki/National_position_of_Estonia_(2021))



Figure 1. The 12 capacities of the National Cybersecurity Index

Cybersecurity policy	Global cybersecurity contribution	Education and professional development	Cybersecurity research and development
Cybersecurity of critical information infrastructure	Cybersecurity of digital enablers	Cyber threat analysis and awareness raising	Protection of personal data
Cyber incident response	Cyber crisis management	Fight against cybercrime	Military cyber defence

These 12 capacity areas are further divided into a total of 49 unique indicators, which describe the relevant assessment criteria and the types of evidence used to support the findings. eGA reviews the NCSI indicators and criteria periodically to ensure they remain relevant to current global good practices. The latest version includes new indicators for political leadership, commitment to international law in cyberspace, and cybersecurity research and development under the strategic pillar; cybersecurity of cloud services and the supply chain, and cybersecurity awareness raising coordination under the preventive pillar; and cyber incident reporting tools, participation in international incident response cooperation, procedural law, and military cyber doctrine to ensure the lawful use of capacities, under the responsive pillar. eGA has used the NCSI to assess countries’ cybersecurity maturity at the national level and to define further roadmaps in various partner countries. For example in 2021, eGA conducted a comprehensive study of cybersecurity in the Western Balkans assessing cybersecurity capacity needs in the region in light of EU *acquis*, policies and identifying further opportunities for EU engagement.

Often, the basic recommendations to partner countries interested in cyber reforms are similar. It is useful to set up a governance and coordination mechanism and agree on information exchange and protocols on various levels. It is required to arrange the continuity of critical services and functions with a view to resilience against cyber risks and threats, and to agree who is responsible for situational awareness, who provides information into the big threat picture, how often, what are the secure communication channels, and what to do in case of a crisis.

Summing up, cybersecurity is not a mere technological challenge, but a matter of societal resilience and stability. While businesses are responsible for the cybersecurity of the services they provide, and individuals need to take care of their digital assets, the cybersecurity of the country is ultimately the responsibility of the state and of national governments. Cyber capacity building is increasingly being used as a mechanism for international cooperation. Development cooperation has a significant role in advancing an open, free, safe and secure cyberspace internationally and increasing cyber resilience. ■



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Cyber conscription – thinking outside the box?

Expert article • 3434

The two topics in the title – cyber (defence) and conscription – have gained a lot of prominence recently, mainly due to two things. First, cyberspace has been declared as being a separate domain of warfare (similar to land, sea and air) and many things happen in cyberspace, both good and bad. Secondly, due to the security situation in the world today, many countries have decided to re-introduce conscription for defence. And many countries which use conscription, have started to train their conscripts for management, development and defence of their IT systems.

Information technology – and cyber security – are integrated into all fields of our lives, from interaction of people and machines to offer of public and vital services. Defence forces are not an exception, but in themselves are an attractive target of cyber attacks. Cyber operations, especially intelligence, defensive and offensive operations, are capabilities which are being developed by most countries. Defence sector, as the ICT sector in general, are looking for innovative solutions to challenges facing it. One of the biggest challenges identified by many organisations and in studies, is that of manpower shortage in cyber security sector. Cyber conscription can be seen as innovation in defence: the country is not defended by traditional weapons only, but also behind computers.

Cyber conscription does not have a common understanding internationally, and neither do cyber war or cyber defence. Cyber conscription can be purely IT-technical, related to strategic communications, or intelligence operations. The topic can be viewed even more widely – where in addition to IT technical cyber security, the knowledge of conscripts is used in fields related to drones, robots, forensics, but also information warfare.

Our understanding today is that background in IT means technical knowledge. In our study on cyber conscription, most countries view service in cyber conscription mainly as a technical ICT service. At the same time, there are many fields where technical knowledge is not primary: analysts, social media specialists, strategic communications, some areas of information warfare, etc. There are many youngsters, who want to do something useful – for defence, society in general, or the whole world – but who are not interested in programming as a means, but as a tool to achieve a goal. Perhaps we should start thinking outside the box and offer an opportunity for cyber conscription even for those without IT technical background? For example, in business, the task of “translator” is becoming more important: how to translate business or organisational goals to technological possibilities, options and risks. As any CEO, the defence forces commander does not need to understand IT or cyber security in detail, but needs to have specialists who can explain in layman terms, what can be achieved using information technology or what are the threats. In case cyber conscription can produce such people – who speak “two languages” – it can be useful for our societies as a whole.

Anyone with specific skills can potentially become a cyber conscript. Of course, simply being able to use a computer or device and modern office software is not enough. The service time of a cyber conscript is

relatively short – up to 11 months. This time will include soldier basic training, specialised training and then performing their speciality related tasks.

Research shows that young people want to experience exciting activities and challenges during conscription. Cyber security is definitely a field, that seems mysterious, and can certainly offer challenges, exciting opportunities, as well as provide skills and knowledge for people’s future lives.

We conducted a study of cyber conscription used by 6 countries: Estonia, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Switzerland¹. The countries studied are different in their size, geographical location and population. The aim of conscription in countries with relatively small population – Estonia, Finland and Switzerland – is to prepare soldiers for reserves; in Denmark the aim of conscription is to attract motivated citizens to join defence forces as active duty soldiers. Norway and Sweden use a combination of the two models. Naturally, the aim of conscription influences cyber conscription. The aim of cyber conscription in Denmark is to recruit people, Norway considers that very important as well. Estonia, Finland and Switzerland use cyber conscription to conduct cyber defence tasks and train people for reserves. In Sweden, the aim is to train people so that they would be able to work not only in defence, but also in other public service institutions and (defence) industry.

Having passed cyber conscription could be seen as a sign of quality, where young people have gained useful cutting-edge practical experience in addition to formal training and education. It can be valuable source of qualified personnel not only for defence sector, but also to other public or private sector organisations. Life-long career in just one institution is not attractive to young people today. They want to see exciting new challenges that influence the world and bring value somewhere. Cyber security is a field which is constantly changing, where there are many challenges and where real value can be brought to societies. There are many groups of people in the society, the inclusion of whom to defence and ICT sectors would be beneficial to themselves and societies: women, people with slight disabilities, people with immigrant background, etc. ICT sector, including cyber security, is a very male-dominated field. During World War II, women were very actively involved in cryptography for example – how can we attract more women there today? Conscription means that the youngsters joining service should be very fit and in perfect health – but why can’t we recruit those a little less fit and with a little less perfect health? Perhaps we can integrate non-citizens to our societies better by training them for defence? It is also a well-known fact, that former Israeli cyber conscripts are very active cyber security startup founders. Can we do it in other parts of the world?

¹ Hurt M., Sömer T. *International Center for Defence Studies. Cyber Conscription: Experience and Best Practice from Selected Countries. Tallinn: 2021. <https://icds.ee/et/kuberajateenistus-kogemused-ja-parimad-tavad-valitud-riikidest/>.*



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Cyber security is an exciting field. Service in defence is certainly something, where people can get real experience, face many challenges and can develop a career in the field of cyber security. Perhaps we should really start thinking outside the box and develop some inspiring and innovative ways to develop our cyber security capabilities and workforce? Perhaps it is cyber conscription, which can be incubator for cyber security and bring value to defence, society, each public organisation, business, country, or wider world. ■

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SOLVITA DENISA-LIEPNIECE

From media literacy to cognitive resilience

Expert article • 3435

Cognitive War is happening here and now. We neither have enough time to develop a new solution from scratch, nor can we wait for better conditions. Further securitization of Media Literacy in the direction of Cognitive Resilience is a prospective response to the challenging nature of Cognitive Warfare. We urgently need to update an already established media literacy infrastructure.

The following commentary is based on the comprehensive analysis of the media literacy sectors in six countries - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia, as well as Ukraine and Moldova. The main focus of the research was on A-ctors, A-udiences addressed by them and implemented A-ctivities (which formed a unique three-A approach). The data collection from 2021 and 2022 was summed up for purposes of the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence. It was used to draw attention to emerging challenges and further actions.

The significant changes in the Ukrainian media literacy sector caused by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, flagged the need for rapid changes to strengthen the media literacy sector, including further decentralization, cooperation, holistic approach to advance already developed media literacy "infrastructures". The following five prospects reflect both - the challenges noted by the county teams, and the data coming within the first months of kinetic activities on the territory of Ukraine.

Media literacy as a matter of security and multi-field cooperation

The Baltic states, as well as the other studied countries, have made significant efforts to revise the role of media literacy. Media literacy became a matter of national security. In the case of Latvia, for example, networking with the NATO StratCom COE, was beneficial for non-military practitioners. By recognizing the complexity of cognitive warfare, the media literacy sector would benefit from being regularly updated with new tools, cases, incoming threats, etc. Besides financial sustainability, redirection of responsibility is among the main challenges, which is weakening this sector of increasing importance.

Media literacy in cognitive warfare - monitoring and system of alert

Both media-centric monitoring (content focused) and human-centric monitoring (attitudes, behaviors, values) are at the core of understanding developments in the cognitive domain. Of high importance is the need for conversion of one type of assets to another. Sharing data and data interpretation (as well as reflections) with media literacy practitioners is crucial for proper design, implementation and measurements, highly needed for strengthening projects and society. Better addressing of challenges, threats and audiences is not possible without evidence-based approach - longitudinal, where appropriate.

Media literacy actors and a collective cognitive immunity system

Interconnectivity of the whole-of-society approach, which also is a trend across countries, asks for wise participation of those who already have natural access to different targeted audiences. This access is crucial to be addressed with resilience strengthening activities, while addressing specific topics. Though decentralization is relevant for each mentioned prospective, the collective immune system means focusing on local needs, local context, while operating as a holistic infrastructure, endorsing civic engagement. At the same time, this includes regional and international cooperation.

Revising the role of the journalistic community (Media resilience)

Since the journalistic community is perceived as a media literacy advocate, it should be addressed properly. It is also constantly perceived as a vulnerable audience. Given the widening definition of media and general transformation of the information environment and the change of media consumption among the public, civic activists and their organizations should be engaged in regular training to increase resilience. In the future, more pan-Baltic multi-targeted formats are needed. The oxygen mask rule should be applied on those dealing with media literacy. Financial sustainability, wise implementation of AI solutions and better understanding of the human-centric approach is critical.

Future oriented media literacy - complexity and connectivity

The impact of Digitally impaired cognition should be studied carefully, with a proper infrastructure to transmit knowledge to implementation. News fatigue, learned helplessness, and information apathy are just some incoming topics to be reflected upon. Within the last decade, the Baltic States have made significant efforts to revise the role of media literacy. There is no question if cognitive resilience is needed. Yet, we should keep in mind where, who and how to discuss possible partnerships and to set the local, national and regional roadmaps to make the local societies stronger, having cognitive superiority both for peaceful and warfare times. The expectations are high, and the opportunity to address these expectations is here. ■



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Weaponized social media as a national security threat

Expert article • 3436

Ukraine's experience in war with Russia shows that social media has become an important battleground in the information warfare. Furthermore, the aggressor is also using social media to maliciously confirm hits and improve targeting with the help of civilians, thus directly using social media as an aid to on ground activities.

On March 21, 2022, photos of the Retroville shopping centre in Kyiv, which had been hit by a direct hit from Russian missiles the night before, started to spread around the world. Before that a local Tiktoker published a video of Ukrainian army vehicles parked at the mall. As a result, 8 people were killed in the attack and several residential buildings were severely damaged. This is just one of many examples of how the seemingly innocent habitual use of social media (like posting videos) can become life-threatening. In this particular case, a threat to both the protection of human life and morality was realized. Moreover, any thoughtless filming of army objects and positions has the potential to become a threat to national security.

Such incidents are more alarming because the Ukrainian authorities have constantly warned people to refrain from posting certain types of information on social media. Penalties for posting non-public information are also laid down in the relevant legislation, which was also adopted in the very first days after the outbreak of full-scale war. The speed with which this issue was dealt with in Ukraine is itself an example of the seriousness of the problems posed by social media in a war situation.

At the heart of the problem is the fact that a large proportion of both the civilian and military population use some form of smart device, with a significant proportion also having some form of active social media account. In war, this means that each individual can post (e.g. text, photos, videos or audio recordings), at virtually any time, quickly, often using geotracking, and thereby provide what they have seen or experienced, usually unintentionally but sometimes intentionally (e.g. army positions, combat plans, a hint of a poorly aimed rocket launch etc.), into the cyberspace, where information that can be easily used by the enemy to achieve their objectives. In fact, it has estimated that up to 80% of the intelligence information obtained comes from public sources.¹

Social media is mainly of course being used as a platform for getting and sharing information quickly, also in situations where traditional information channels may not work. But it should be borne in mind that the information on social media is often not verified, for example, Ukraine has reported on the so-called fake 'green-corridors' created by the Russians (e.g. in Mariupol). The latter means that desperate civilians have been led through social media posts to evacuation routes that do not exist and which, when reached, are followed by air strikes or even encountered by the enemy.²

What to do in such a situation where it has been established that the threat is not just theoretical? Ukraine's strategic steps so far have been to inform the public about what is allowed and forbidden behavior on social media, to introduce amendments to the Penal Code, and to develop and deploy social media and certain apps to gather information with the help

of the civilians. At the same time, Russia is constantly improving its means of gathering information, which also includes exploitation of children through smartphone games that encourage them to gather information on the positions of the Ukrainian army.

The weaponization of social media that we are seeing now is just another stage in the further development of Russia's information warfare capabilities. Information warfare has a long tradition in Russia, both in theory and in practice, but its formal and legal beginnings as a national discipline date back to 1942.¹ However, Russia's current use of information warfare operations is simply a modern, internet-age version of an already well-established Soviet-era tactic of creating alternative reality, with Russia acknowledging that IT can be used in future conflicts. Russia shifted its focus to new, online methods of warfare after its invasion of Georgia in August 2008, particularly in the face of domestic criticism.

Ukraine has been exposed to Russia's information warfare techniques even before 2014 in preparation for the annexation of Crimea and Donbass. Although the West has also been exposed to Russian forms of information warfare, these peacetime experiences can't be compared to those of an active conflict. Thus, it is crucial that we support Ukraine also in every way we can in cyberspace, but also learn from the Ukrainian experience to prevent common mistakes. Informing civilians and the military about the dangers of using social media during war, before real conflict begins, can help to avoid damage to infrastructure and vital equipment, civilian injuries and even deaths.

At the same time, the Retroville case, in the initial phase of the war, is a painful lesson not only for Ukraine but also for Europe, and raises legitimate questions for the internal security authorities among them - how to mitigate such threats? ■



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The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine: Looking into 'Demand' to understand human trafficking and organized crime in our region

Expert article • 3437

The current Ukrainian humanitarian crisis, resulting directly from the unprovoked aggression and war waged by Putin against Ukraine, has increased the human trafficking risks in our region. The need for both immediate action and a long-term strategy to assist and protect displaced Ukrainians, and prevent them from being exploited in human trafficking, is urgent and should be a political priority for all states in the region. There is however important to also address the role of 'demand' as the driving factor behind this serious crime.

Human trafficking, being one of the most serious crimes and violations of the human rights and dignity of a person, is first and foremost a threat to those victimized by it but it also poses a great threat for our states and institutions. The ongoing war against Ukraine has devastating consequences to the Ukrainian people and has increased the human trafficking risks in the Baltic Sea Region. Being the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, with millions of Ukrainians currently displaced and registered across the continent, the Baltic Sea Region is faced with a situation that has required immediate action and the activation of all services available by both the institutions and civil society.

The displacement of several million Ukrainians in the region has required a unified response from the member states of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and its Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings to prevent the exploitation of arriving refugees and to assist those who have been victimized in the conflict zone, during transit or upon arrival to a new country. To address the needs of the refugees, and in particular the most vulnerable such as women and children, increased attention needs to be paid to their long-term protection, including aspects of labour and social integration.

Although the swift activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive likely managed to mitigate some of the foreseen risks related to the exploitation of refugees, we must keep in mind that the traffickers work tirelessly to exploit the immediate vulnerabilities of newly arrived migrants as well as taking advantage of challenges faced by migrants in the longer run. While paying attention to the criminal networks and the modus applied, we need to also keep in mind the role of demand.

Indications and reports from the Baltic Sea Region states, institutions, and NGOs since the start of the Russian aggression, provide numerous examples of organized crime groups and networks in Europe taking advantage of the current vulnerabilities of displaced Ukrainians and attempting to supply the sex industry with vulnerable women. Ranging from direct recruitment attempts targeting displaced Ukrainian women and their children arriving at both border crossings and train stations, to various offers to Ukrainian women for jobs at brothels posing as "night clubs", it is evident that there is a clear demand in our states to take

advantage of and exploit vulnerable women and children and that there are criminals ready to ensure the supply.

A likely increase in the prevalence of trafficked women from Ukraine can also be noted since the start of the war. During an anti-trafficking operation carried out by the Swedish Police Authority in March 2022 – only weeks after the start of the war and displacement of millions of Ukrainians – 30 of 38 the individuals arrested for purchasing *sexual services*, had purchased sex from Ukrainian women. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) reports that the online exploitation risks have increased as well, noting that global search traffic only months after the start of the war showed that searches for "Ukrainian escorts", "Ukrainian porn" and even "Ukrainian refugee porn" increased with between 200-600%.

Although broad segments of our societies demonstrate solidarity and compassion towards the Ukrainian displaced persons in our region, far too many view the current circumstances as an opportunity to exploit the vulnerabilities of other individuals.

Preventing and fighting human trafficking requires a gender-sensitive approach, a strong victim-perspective, as well as a strong law-enforcement perspective. The victims should be guaranteed long-term support and protection, regardless of exploitation form, origin, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs. Simultaneously, the perpetrators must be prosecuted and convicted for the gross violations of human rights they are guilty of.

However, we need to acknowledge first and foremost that without the demand to sexually exploit women and children against payment of various forms, human trafficking as we know it would not exist. The existing demand in our region, and in Europe as such, for exploiting women requires that organized crime networks regularly and effectively supply the human trafficking businesses and schemes with women and children. Partly going hand in hand with push-factors such as poverty, war and armed conflicts and migration flows occurring due to crises and climate change, demand is the main pull-factor explaining the prevalence of human trafficking and exploitation in our region. This reality requires a response from the states and institutions.

When we successfully manage to counter demand, the financial models and businesses that fuels human trafficking are disrupted and the options for those considering to engage in this criminal activity are limited. This also means that addressing demand must not be limited solely to legislative measures holding exploiters accountable. We also need to address related social and cultural factors that can explain why and to which degree demand exists.



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This requires a community-based discussion and awareness on the importance of fighting demand, also including stakeholders with the power of raising public awareness, such as media and journalists. How do we discuss these issues from an early age? What effects does the commodification of women's bodies in social media and in our information-flows have? What role does media have in shaping the understanding of human trafficking and related exploitation? These are questions we need to engage in jointly.

The Council of the Baltic Sea States have since 2018 worked intensely to raise the awareness among students of journalism in the Baltic Sea Region and Ukraine on human trafficking and demand. To date, over 800 students have participated in our national trainings and seminars on human trafficking. Our work to inform the journalists of tomorrow about the threat that organized crime and human trafficking poses to our states and the destructive, yet powerful, role demand has behind this phenomenon, continues.

The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and the displacement of millions of Ukrainians has resulted in both unified and amplified measures from the Council of the Baltic Sea States and its member states to exchange information on trafficking developments, produce awareness raising efforts and campaigns as well as develop hands-on tools for frontline workers in the region who might encounter presumed victims of human trafficking.

Although some improvements can be noted in the anti-trafficking work regionally and globally, the current challenges are grave. It is more important than ever for real political will and leadership to once and for all eradicate human trafficking in the Baltic Seas Region, as well as a joint discussion on innovative measures addressing the demand as a driver behind this serious crime. ■

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JOS BOONSTRA

Defending democracy by example

Expert article • 3438

The countries around the Baltic Sea should not only defend democracy at home through boosting defence expenditure and reinforcing institutions, they also need to continue leading by example abroad. This especially applies to Poland and the Baltic states who's reform and integration story remains relevant as ever to Moldovans, Georgians and Kyrgyz alike. Cooperation with and support to East European and Central Asian countries will not only help these countries to connect to the European mainstream but also lessen the threats towards Europe and its Baltic region.

The Baltic Sea is surrounded by democratic countries with diverse histories of democratic growth. Germany a founding EU member coming from the most undemocratic past imaginable, Denmark, Finland and Sweden as countries that joined European integration while already boasting functional democracies, Poland transitioning in the nineties from its post-world war communist past and the three Baltic states going through a remarkably quick transition from Soviet republic to EU member state. The exception in Baltic littoral states is Russia with a Freedom House democracy rating of 5 in 2022, compared to Poland's 59 and Estonia's 83 score.

It is especially the Baltic states that can lead by example in promoting democracy to those that are keen to reform. It is unfortunate that Poland's democratic institutions are under threat and become a less vivid example. Whereas West European democracy support can be 'welcomed' with suspicion or scepticism, former communist countries can appeal to a shared experience. For them, democracy cannot be instructed but rather inspired or supported with a 'do-it-yourself' approach. Poland and the Baltic countries have an active track-record: Poland was for instance the driving force behind establishing the European Endowment for Democracy in Brussels. Current development policies are still heavily democracy promotion-gearred. Estonia seeks to help countries with digital transformation that benefits people, not regimes; Latvia has taken a leading role in shaping European policy towards Central Asia; and Lithuania seeks to assist countries like Moldova and Georgia with countering disinformation.

While the development of the Baltic states and Poland works inspiring, the support by Scandinavian countries and Germany remains indispensable in supporting countries that are open to development and connecting to Europe. A more prosperous, resilient and democratic East European neighbourhood – including possibly Central Asian neighbours further down the street – leads to better and more stable relations between the EU and East European countries. The Baltic area is important in helping to shape European development, democracy and integration policies. This applies to three major challenges.

First, helping new candidate members getting ready for actual integration in the European Union. Whereas EU integration has become more political, and less merit based, the actual democratic reforms remain a crucial aspect. In that sense, assistance to Ukraine during and after the war will be crucial in abolishing the influence of oligarchs and countering corruption. Maybe here traditional members with greater resources are well placed (Germany, Sweden).

Second, the Baltic region can be instrumental in helping to revise the Eastern partnership as the distinction between countries with EU membership aspirations and perspective (Moldova, Ukraine and maybe Georgia) with countries uninterested or unable to move on reform and integration (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and the five Central Asian countries) has grown. A task in which the Baltic states can prove instrumental.

Third, the Baltic region will be important in building relations with a future Russia. Russia might not always stay authoritarian and aggressive but will always be a Baltic region country for better or worse. If the day comes that Russia takes a radically different course, it should be included in cooperation to end the isolation of its people. While to early to predict, Russia could collapse and disintegrate; a situation where Europe and its neighbours will need to reach out and play a stabilising role.

Probably the most stable region in the world is sharing a coastline with one of the most instable countries in the world. Defence alone against aggression is not enough. Building close ties with East European countries that are open to change is more essential than ever; for their benefit, that of the Baltic region, and for Europe as a whole. ■



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Poland will have nuclear power plants

Expert article • 3439

Poland has recently become an active partner joining the global race for nuclear development through the decision it has made. There are a few potential partners, i.e., the U.S., France, South Korea, Russia, China and Canada, that are global leaders in building nuclear power plants. Nevertheless, the most important element is the offers that can really be presented and later accepted. Based on the potential in the process of building nuclear reactors on Polish territory, and highlighting the influence of politics on that decision, offers from the Americans, and the Koreans are were accepted and the French are still under consideration.

Although only six partners were considered, as they were the most actively involved in developing nuclear energy in foreign countries, their potential is very significant. If the simultaneous strengthening of political and economic capabilities is analyzed, the competition for global nuclear development in the coming decades will be participated by only a few countries.

Although coal continues to play a dominant role in Poland's energy mix, it should be noted that its importance is declining. In the early 1990s, coal-fired power generated more than 130,000 GWh. Due to the growing energy demand, with still little or no development of other energy sources, in 2006 coal-fired power plants in Poland generated 148,600 GWh. Thus, coal accounted for 90% of the Polish mix. In 2020, coal-fired power plants generated only just over 109,000 GWh.

Most of Poland's coal-fired power plants were built between 1960 and 1980. Hence, in the upcoming years they will require either a major renovation and upgrade or phasing off and decommissioning. Renewable energy is being developed, but in Polish conditions it will not have the opportunity to become a major source of energy. That is why it is so important to build a nuclear power plant. It will allow a significant reduction in coal-fired power generation and the share of coal in the Polish energy mix.

The distinction of countries that are most actively engaged in the construction of nuclear power plants worldwide demonstrates how dynamic this market is. This is not just a contemporary dilemma faced by Poland. More and more countries will opt to use the atom, and by doing so they will engage energy giants to implement their own projects. Therefore, one must take into account that not only Poland's allies, but also the Russians and the Chinese will be highly expansive in their nuclear diplomacy. That entails investments all over the world, with a particular focus on South America, Africa and the Middle East. The construction process itself is long-lasting and creates a commitment of the contractor state with the recipient state in terms of politics and energy.

Developing nuclear capabilities of Poland is part of the international rivalry regarding energy security. Given the time required to build and commission a power plant, all measures should be taken in the coming months. The race for international diversification has begun a long time ago, but it is still possible to join it to have an energy source that will be a fundamental part of Poland's energy security. The atom enhances the

building of democratic independence from other, external energy sources. In consequence, countries that can use nuclear energy will not be forced to cooperate with countries that are, for example, authoritarian, or those that manipulate the market of raw materials to achieve the best possible prices and politically influence the buyers.

The most important decision, to build a nuclear power plant, has already been made. Poland is considering only the following three partners, although globally there could be even more than ten potential investors: the U.S., France and South Korea. Each of these countries brings with that investment many other projects and opportunities, in addition to the development of nuclear energy. This is the next chapter in the cooperation with Poland, which will be one of the foundations of further bilateral relations. The United States, which is already Poland's closest ally, would further strengthen its influence and gain an opportunity for further investments in the years to come. France could develop a strong new alliance in Europe, while seeking cooperation and agreement within the European Union. On the other hand, South Korea would continue to strengthen relations with Poland, just after the armament purchase agreements were signed. When choosing a partner, it is important to remember that it is taken over as a whole, and this means directing Poland's foreign policy in a specific direction.

The declared cost of building 1 GW of nuclear power in Poland will range from PLN 13.4 billion to PLN 23.2 billion, depending on the bid (1 EUR – 4,5 PLN). The three most likely suppliers are considered. Korean option: APR1400 – PLN 13.4 billion/GW, U.S. option: AP1000 – PLN 19.7 billion/GW, and French option: EPR I – PLN 23.2 billion/GW. The average cost of building two nuclear power plants in Poland is PLN 184 billion, provided there are no significant delays. In addition, the nuclear plants built will meet between 25.6% (for 6.6 GW capacity) to 38.4% (for 9.9 GW capacity) of annual energy demand in 2043. The numbers may still fluctuate, plus the decision is strongly linked with the political aspect, which cannot be valued.

It is required to consider how the world is adversely affected by CO2 emissions, which will reach record-breaking levels in the upcoming years. Already now, a significant factor contributing to higher carbon emissions is the winter and the use of fossil fuel stocks accumulated during the pandemic. Now they are used, as there are concerns about how the energy market will develop with, for example, a reduced use of raw materials from Russia. It is true that renewable energy sources are seen as inadequate in many countries in the face of crises, but at the same time, price volatility and disruptions in the supply of, say, oil and gas make it necessary to move towards more stable sources. For example, by creating a balanced energy mix. Moreover, it is the European Union that requires us to reduce CO2 emissions. From the perspective of the future of the Polish power industry, it should be indicated that nuclear power does not stand at the opposite end to coal power; conversely, it will help it meet the requirements of European climate policy. The challenge to be dealt with is the energy transition and departing from coal by 2049.



The development of nuclear power, whether as part of SMRs or large nuclear units, is beginning to fulfill two fundamental tasks. Firstly, it is a part of an energy development strategy by reducing carbon emissions, among others, which is consistent with the climate policy and the restrictions imposed by international treaties. Secondly, it fits into the development of diversified energy sources, where the most important thing is to create conditions within the energy security. It is true that it is impossible to operate entirely independently in terms of energy (in Poland), as some raw materials will still have to be imported (for the time being, there are no plans to extract uranium, since it is not profitable). Nevertheless, it will be possible to significantly reduce the import of non-renewable raw materials if the use of nuclear energy is introduced into domestic sources. Poland will build nuclear power plants, and it is only a matter of time when the first reactor starts to operate. Above all, there are more Central European Countries that are also aiming at having power plants. The atomization became crucial. ■

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Energy security in the Baltic Sea Region: A multi-level dilemma

Expert article • 3440

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to an energy crisis, bringing the issue of energy security to the forefront of the EU's policy agenda. The Baltic Sea Region (BSR)—which experienced tensions in relation to the construction of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 projects and later explosions along both pipelines that pointed to an act of sabotage—is no exception. The mounting concerns surrounding security of supply, skyrocketing energy prices, and the simultaneous challenge of low carbon energy transition, raise the question of what does the regional energy security currently entail, and how can energy insecurity be managed most effectively?

Energy security is a tricky concept, comprising of multiple dimensions, scales and frameworks. The literature on the subject provides over 45 different definitions of energy security, yet in practice different political and societal actors are continuously redefining it further. Diverse understandings of energy security typically focus on four key elements - availability, reliability, affordability and sustainability (Sovacool 2010). The ongoing war in Ukraine and impaired EU-Russia relations have put additional geopolitical strain on these dimensions.

To start with, availability refers to the physical endowment of producers (e.g., gas, oil, coal, and uranium resources), the ability of the producers to reach trade agreements with import countries, as well as adequate technological solutions (for production, transportation, conversion, storage and distribution). Currently, despite availability of Russian fossil fuels, the EU's sanction packages mostly prevent energy trade (coal and oil) with Russia, while obtaining alternative energy sources is often complicated. For instance, the availability of liquified natural gas (LNG) on global spot market is limited. Moreover, although some countries in the BSR have significant domestic energy resources – e.g., coal in Poland, they might have largely depleted cost-effective reserves. The BSR has also a big potential for the renewable power generation, particularly from wind. However, there are often problems with siting new energy infrastructure due to variety of reasons, including NIMBY ('not in my back yard') syndrome. Increasing regional availability of energy sources also requires significant investments in new technologies and adequate legal and regulatory structures. Whereas the former is still in the early stages (e.g., investments in hydrogen production), the latter frequently proves problematic (e.g., long permitting periods for offshore wind farms).

Second, reliability dimension of energy security has become especially prominent over the last year. With Russia no longer considered a reliable nor desirable energy supplier, countries in the BSR had to consider alternatives. Yet, not for all of them a robust, diversified value chain was in place to lean on. Hence, sanctioning energy imports from Russia affected BSR countries differently, owing to their level of former dependence on Putin's petrostate, domestic resources and national energy mix. Germany was hit particularly hard by the gas shortages and had to accelerate investments in new gas infrastructure (including liquified natural gas (LNG)), while some states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) fared better in this sector (notably Poland and Lithuania). The changed geopolitical context also highlighted the issue of adequate reserve capacity, especially

for natural gas. While the relatively mild winter of 2022-23 and significant gas reserves (often of Russian origin) helped the BSR go through the past heating season, next year poses a bigger challenge. Moreover, recent attacks on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines raise an issue of hard security risks to energy infrastructure, such as intentional physical destruction. Therefore, apart from continuous efforts of energy diversification and investments in new technologies, the BSR countries will need to jointly tackle new security threats through increased surveillance and cooperation.

Third, as far as affordability is concerned, current energy crisis led to drastic increase in energy prices for households and businesses, triggering a cost-of-living crisis and plunging many economies into recession. In these unstable circumstances minimizing price volatility and ensuring equitable prices, as well as maintaining realistic expectations about future prices fluctuations are major challenges. Nonetheless, countries in the BSR adopted different mitigation policies, such as cash handouts to most vulnerable groups, a price cap on gas, tax cuts on electricity and petrol, financial incentives for saving energy or liquidity guarantees to the domestic energy sectors. While implementing mitigation policies, it is important for states in the region to consider that a lack of coordinated action (e.g., implementing energy subsidies in one country, which might stimulate consumption and result in higher wholesale prices across the region) could negatively impact customers in other states, hence common solutions are often needed.

Lastly, the BSR cannot lose sight of its sustainability goals. The current need for an accelerated energy transition is in line with the climate agenda of lowering greenhouse gas emissions and limiting environmental pollution. However, while cutting energy demand and improving energy-saving measures is the easiest and fastest short-term solution, mass scale-up of low-carbon energy technologies will require overcoming a number of obstacles in the coming years, including financial and regulatory barriers or societal acceptance. Regional cooperation, sharing of best practices and know-how, are the surest ways to facilitate this transition successfully. ■



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From Russia dependence towards energy security in the Baltic Sea region

Expert article • 3441

Oil and natural gas accounts for more than a half of the EU's primary energy consumption. Since the EU's own energy production covers only a fraction of the energy consumption, the EU member states are forced to import a significant portion of the energy consumed in the EU. In fact, 60 percent of all the energy consumed in the European Union was imported from outside the Union in the beginning of the 2020s.

Russia used to be the EU's main external supplier of oil and natural gas before Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Should we include all energy forms, i.e., oil, natural gas, uranium, coal and other solid fuels, Russian energy met roughly one-fifth of the total energy demand in the EU. To put it differently, nearly 100 million EU citizens were completely dependent on Russian energy before Russia's invasion of Ukraine began on 24 February 2022.

Due to the 2022 escalation of the war in Ukraine, the EU banned maritime shipments of crude oil and petroleum products from Russia to the EU on the eve of 2023. Here, it needs to be stressed that the EU has not banned the imports of natural gas, and therefore the EU still received some 10 percent of its pipe gas imports from Russia in the first quarter of 2023. Furthermore, one should not forget that Russia is still the second largest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the EU, representing one-fifth of the EU's LNG imports in February 2023. For more on the LNG in the Baltic Sea region (BSR), see the book "[The Future of Energy Consumption, Security and Natural Gas: LNG in the Baltic Sea region](#)".

The littoral states of the Baltic Sea used to be highly dependent on Russian energy supplies. Finland and the former socialist states of the region, namely Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, were the most dependent on Russian energy as the table below indicates. However, the dependence on Russian gas has decreased in the aforementioned countries due to the fact that Lithuania constructed its LNG terminal in Klaipėda in 2014 and Poland in Świnoujście in 2015. By January 2023, Germany has received three floating LNG terminals (Brunsbüttel, Lubmin and Wilhelmshaven) since the beginning of the Russian invasion a year earlier. Moreover, Finland began operating its floating LNG terminal in Inkoo at the beginning of this year. In addition to these LNG terminals, new gas pipes have been constructed between the western BSR countries, such as the Baltic Pipe connecting Norway and Poland (in operation since November 2022), the GIPL pipe connecting Lithuania and Poland (in operation since May 2022), and the Baltic connector linking Estonia and Finland (in operation since December 2019). These infrastructure projects have improved the energy supply security of the region.

Generally speaking, the energy import dependence on Russia has decreased in the Baltic Sea region since Russia launched the war in Ukraine in 2014. However, German gas imports from Russia were an exception. Germany increased its natural gas imports from Russia. In 2013, Germany imported 40 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas from Russia, while the respective amount was 55 bcm in 2021. The increase led to the situation where Germany's gas import dependence on Russia jumped from approximately some 40 percent in 2013 to 66 percent in 2021. The main reason for such an increase is not Germany's complete geopolitical blindness but the end of the export of Dutch gas supplies to Germany

in 2016. LNG forms a fraction of the German gas imports. What Germany does is important for the whole EU, since Germany consumes nearly one-quarter of all gas used in the EU and Germany is able to meet just five percent of its annual gas demand with its own production.

To sum up, Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine finally woke up the BSR countries and surprisingly quickly, they have been able to decouple from Russian energy. The decoupling from Russia means higher energy prices, but on the other hand, it means more predictability and more security. Even if the BSR has heard the war bells, some BSR countries may still have difficulties to secure their energy supplies in the next heating season, and thus we should be alert and engage in more discussion of the possible problems in advance.

Russia's share in the foreign trade of the littoral states of the Baltic Sea

	2013	2020	2013	2020
	Imports	Imports	Exports	Exports
Denmark	1.27%	1.13%	1.74%	0.80%
Estonia	9.28%	9.03%	17.91%	8.35%
Finland	17.95%	9.78%	9.43%	5.21%
Germany	3.34%	1.52%	3.36%	1.95%
Latvia	8.37%	6.14%	11.64%	8.51%
Lithuania	28.10%	8.80%	19.84%	13.36%
Norway	1.72%	1.79%	0.94%	0.40%
Poland	12.29%	4.52%	5.30%	2.99%
Sweden	4.58%	0.99%	2.11%	1.25%

	2013	2020	2013	2020
	Oil & petroleum product imports	Oil & petroleum product imports	Gas imports	Gas imports
Denmark	14.2%	17.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Estonia	16.3%	39.0%	100.0%	66.8%
Finland	71.0%	64.2%	100.0%	96.9%
Germany	27.8%	29.3%	40.9%	66.4%
Latvia	14.2%	23.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Lithuania	85.6%	76.0%	100.0%	36.7%
Norway	9.5%	11.5%	0.0%	79.9%*
Poland	84.5%	60.2%	77.1%	56.5%
Sweden	31.4%	10.6%	0.0%	2.6%

*Norway imported natural gas from Russia in 2021, but its gas imports were symbolic (0.1 bcm in 2021). The aforementioned conclusion applies to Sweden as well (0.03 bcm in 2021).
Sources: World Bank; Eurostat.



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Energy security will be discussed in one of the three panels of the National Baltic Sea Forum of Finland. The forum will be organised for the 15th time in Turku on 15 June 2023. This year the forum will focus on security and safety in the Baltic Sea region. You may follow the event online. The programme and registration information can be found via the following link: [Link to the 15th National Baltic Sea Forum of Finland](#) ■

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