THE SIGNIFICANCE AND MODALITIES OF DETERRENCE:
THE CURRENT MILITARY & STRATEGIC SITUATION IN THE BALTICS

Security Strategies Program 2019
EUROPEAN VALUES THINK-TANK
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Security Strategies Program
A strategic program of the European Values Think-Tank which focuses mainly on security interests of the Czech Republic in the context of Trans-Atlantic Alliance, relations with Poland and increasingly aggressive behavior of Russia and China.

Motto:
With the Enhanced Forward Presence concept, the Alliance is to a certain extent returning to the times before the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, when the forward-deployed main defence force played a more significant role, whereas after its dissolution the Alliance focused more on rapid reaction forces and augmentation forces.

Thesis from a study by RAND Corporation carried out on behalf of the Pentagon.

We cannot alter the revanchist aspirations of Russia, Iran, and China, but we can deter their predatory compartment. Finding a way to do so is the central challenge of the current generation of U.S. statecraft. Whether we succeed or fail will determine the shape of the twenty-first century.

Jakub Grygiel and Wess Mitchell: The Unquiet Frontier

Author
Martin Svárovský, Head of the Security Strategies Program and Senior Fellow at the European Values Think-Tank

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INTRODUCTION

This text is reflecting the need for deterrent and reassuring measures in the form of the European Reassurance Initiative / European Deterrence Initiative\(^1\) along with the Enhanced Forward Presence and their further reinforcement, especially in the Baltics.\(^2\) One of the initial premises is that deterrence is not a “pointless provocation with a potential for escalation” (as some European politicians say). In its core, it is a “peaceful” concept. We do not need deterrence so we could fight, we need it so we would not have to.

The efficiency and credibility of deterrence have become the key issue in U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. retaliatory attacks in Syria were about the credibility of deterrence (and coercive policy as well). The same goes for North Korea, China, Russia, or Iran. It is possible to see a kind of universalisation of the deterrence concept in the U.S. foreign policy.

Deterrence, supported by an effective coercive policy, makes perfect sense to American foreign policy strategists. This approach is further strengthened by the fact that the new U.S. doctrine\(^3\) is assigning a role to military force, including the ability to project that force, in promoting American national interests. The strengthening of defence and deterrence is one of the highest priorities of the USA within NATO.\(^4\)

\textbf{It is necessary that the Czech Republic contributes to NATO’s deterrence capabilities} not only because of our commitments (such as Article 3 of the Washington Treaty) but also because in the current security environment \textit{it is fundamentally connected with the defence of our state itself}. Indeed, the best defence of a state is to secure a state of affairs in which the enemy will not launch an attack. We have to ask ourselves whether our present contribution is sufficient.

Strategic discussions about deterrence are held mainly in the United States. Nonetheless, the topic is also a part of the internal policy debate in Germany, which has important implications for the Czech Republic. It is therefore needed to cover the main aspects of this debate, which is currently taking place in the US or Germany, in order to \textbf{stimulate such strategic discussion in the Czech Republic}.

Besides leading expert debates on the concept of deterrence, the Czech Republic needs to ask itself what types of operations and missions it should train its troops to perform. For a small army like the Czech one, every foreign mission has to, besides other things, \textbf{provide an guidance for further development of its forces}. Therefore, when approving the next mandate for foreign missions, simply prolonging or reinforcing ongoing missions, referring to existing commitments, is not enough. It is necessary to have a thorough systemic debate on what each mission can bring to the development of our armed forces as well as on the changed political situation and the priorities of our main partners.\(^5\)

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} The current budget for the European Deterrence Initiative (prior to 2016 known as the European Reassurance Initiative) is 6,5 billion USD. The money is used mainly for increasing the number and readiness of U.S. troops stationed in Europe in order to reassure Allied states and deter a potential attack against them. The budget is expected to increase even more.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Looking at the overall numbers, the Alliance have 3,4 million active military personnel, while Russia has only 800 thousand soldiers. However, the numbers look different when specifically examining the region in question. If we are to count Allied forces in NATO’s Eastern flank (DE, V4, B3, RO, BG), the number lowers to mere 0,5 million persons. If only the three Baltic states plus Poland are taken into account, the final number is 126 thousand soldiers (the vast majority of which is in Poland).
\item \textsuperscript{3} By that term I mean the New Security Strategy, New Defence Strategy, Nuclear Posture Review, as well as the structure of the military budget, for instance.
\item \textsuperscript{4} In this area, the United States is focusing mainly on making the Alliance’s decision-making procedures in times of crisis quicker and more effective, strengthening the Command Structure and the so-called readiness initiative which they introduced. The aim of the latter is to increase the readiness of a certain number of forces beyond the scope of the NATO Response Force (NRF) and Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). However, readiness does not concern only the quality and amount of forces but also the ability to quickly redeploy them (i.e. the reinforcement capability). The heads of NATO member states agreed with this goal at the summit in Brussels last July.
\item \textsuperscript{5} The importance of foreign missions for our armed forces and for the defensive capacity of our country is a topic that deserves a debate on its own. \textbf{An indisputable benefit of missions are the exercises connected with them.} That applies to those missions in which our armed forces engage in direct combat as well as to those whose aim is to prevent a threat, such as in the Baltics. In both cases, our soldiers gain experience. In the Czech context, we must take into serious consideration which types of forces we should develop based on the Alliance’s requirements within the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP). Even though we can develop other forces as well, our commitments in the NDPP will always form the core.
\end{itemize}}
A significant component of deterrence is one’s own resolve (to defend, to repel, or punish an attacker). If a potential enemy believes our resolve, it deters him. However, a potential enemy of the Alliance will not come to believe our resolve by simply reading NATO’s Strategic Concept. The whole picture also comprises of military doctrines of individual NATO members.

Thus, it is worrying that the doctrinal gap between the United States and Europe is increasing. There will not be enough room for this topic in the following text, however, it is that kind of debate that would suit, for instance, the Bucharest Nine, which declares the need for such discussions. The Czech Republic should actively consult this aspect with its members.

It is clear that there must be not only a debate on the importance of deterrence in the Czech Republic but also on the meaning of the term itself. Deterrence has various modalities, which is why such a discussion is needed in the Czech Republic, as it would help define what we can and what we cannot contribute to the (NATO’s) deterrence concept.

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7 Research projects dealing with the very nature of deterrence are arranged by the U.S. Department of Defense. Among those who have dealt with this topic are Wess Mitchell, former CEO of CEPA, nowadays Assistant Secretary of State; or Shmuel Bar, a leading Israeli analyst that spend many years in the intelligence department of the IDF.
The deterrence is not a “pointless provocation with a potential for escalation”. In its core, it is a “peaceful” concept. We do not need deterrence so we could fight, we need it so we would not have to.
PURPOSE OF THE TEXT

This text will attempt to suggest some specific recommendations in the security and political sphere. In addition, it should provoke an expert discussion from which relevant recommendations might emerge, even in the military field. It is possible to picture two kinds of recommendations: those that concern the structure of the Czech Armed Forces, and those that concern the adaptation of strategic documents, both at the national and NATO level.

As far as the structure of forces is concerned, the Czech Republic must fulfil its duties in accordance with Article 3 of the Washington Treaty (maintain and develop individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack). Regarding the strategic documents, the following year should bring, besides other things, a new implementation document of the NATO’s Strategic Concept – the so-called Political Guidance 2019 and subsequently a new Military Strategy as well. The Secretary General of NATO intends to initiate the preparation of a “comprehensive strategic assessment of Russia”, whose outputs will be discussed at a meeting of heads of allied countries in December 2019. The question arises whether we will be able to make our voice heard during these discussions. We need to have a very good argumentation basis in order to convince our key partners that NATO should focus more on the threat coming from the East and strengthen deterrence accordingly. The reality is that there is an ongoing tough competition for resources within the Alliance. Plus, the character of the Southern threat makes it a theoretically bottomless pit where resources might end. It is also important to pay attention to updating the Security Strategy of the Czech Republic, which is now over three years old.

Besides recommendations regarding the structure of forces and strategic documents, some kind of tasking of relevant bodies of state administration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Office for Foreign Relations and Information, Military Intelligence) would be meaningful. The goal of such tasking is the tracking the development of various indicators connected with this topic. This would be useful with respect to our capability to efficiently and flexibly assert ourselves in respective strategic discussions both at NATO and EU level.

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8 Also, the „30-30-30-30“ concept will be implemented. By 2020, the Alliance should have 30 battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 naval combat vessels ready to use within 30 days.
SCENARIO ANALYSIS

The worst scenario possible

This text is focusing on the current situation in the Baltics. Nevertheless, in essence, it is a scenario analysis with low-probability scenarios. This is sometimes called prudent planning or horizontal screening and large administrations such as the American one work like that. The structures of the European External Action Service (CMPD, PRISM, or IntCEN) also use it in crisis management, however, in the case of the EU it is considered to be a delicate line of work which is not often shared with the public. Despite the fact that in the Czech context this method is demanding because of both capacity and financial issues, in specific cases, it is necessary to choose this approach, such as the case of our relations with the Baltics. Our troops are stationed in the region and will stay there to prevent the realization of a potential threat not only to the Baltic states but to Europe and the North Atlantic Alliance as a whole. There is a need for new strategic terminology that defines the threat itself as well as the ways to deter it.

We have to analyse the hypothetical question of why Russia could attack even though it knows that its fight with NATO in the Baltics will eventually be lost. There are various factors that might play a role in Russian reasoning, such as internal threats to the stability of Russian regime or an opportunity to extremely boost its national pride by overrunning the Baltic states as quickly as in 60 hours (estimations from analyses commissioned by the U.S. Department of Defense) and afterwards making an agreement similar to the “six-point peace plan” of the Russo-Georgian War in 2008. By launching such a risky venture in the Baltics, Russia would assert its position in the international arena even more than in Syria. In addition, the attack would also serve as a demonstration of Russia’s military power to its own population. The Baltic states would learn their lesson and a clear message would be sent to all other countries thinking about NATO membership: “Entering NATO would not be a good deal for you. Even though the membership will provide you with a guarantee of aid (according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty), it will not prevent you from ever being attacked. The operation in the Baltics showed the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians that their membership in NATO guaranteed them no such thing.”

Together with the above mentioned, the Alliance would in this scenario have to be confronted with the necessity to carry out an operation liberating the Baltic countries. Is NATO ready, trained, and equipped to execute such an operation? Even in the best course of action, the operation would require certain time to gather forces (VJTF is not sufficient for this kind of operation), during which NATO’s political cohesion would find itself under significant pressure.

Meanwhile, Russia would be intensively offering a “political solution” to the conflict. The liberation operation would be bloody and costly. The closure of the Suwalki Corridor by Russian forces (potentially with the help of Belarussian forces) alone would create an obstacle that would be very hard for the Alliance to overcome. In addition, the operation would demand launching strikes against targets (surface-to-air, surface-to-surface) that are located in close proximity to the Baltics, i.e. on Russian soil. That would bring about a risk of further escalation and increase the political sensitivity of the whole action even more.

In any case, I do not agree with the “doves’” argument that when considering an attack against the Baltics, Russia must reckon with the possibility of a devastating conventional defeat, which must discourage it from attacking. That is not true. I do not

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9 Baltic states were chosen for two main reasons; firstly, this region constitutes a sort of a “forward defence” of our country; secondly, an eventual military conflict in this region, in which Russia has a significant conventional superiority, could lead to a dangerous escalation and put us at risk of nuclear war. It is significant that the ongoing reform of Russian armed forces lays exceptional emphasis on the modernization of their nuclear arsenal; that the Russian nuclear doctrine is, as far as the possibility of using nuclear weapons is concerned, the most permissive amongst nuclear powers; and that a limited nuclear attack, especially in an early stage of armed conflict, is in a Russian military thought traditionally understood as means of maintaining escalation dominance or de-escalating the conflict. This place new demands on allied states with nuclear weapons, which have to adapt their nuclear doctrines. For more, see Matthew Kroenig, A Strategy for Deterring Russian Nuclear De-Escalation Strikes (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2018).

10 Lately, this has been of special importance given the fact Putin’s regime bases its legitimacy towards Russian citizens to a large extent on its capability to wage war.

11 Some military simulations, which can be found later in this text, estimate this time to be just 35 days.
believe that the Western political representation, much less the public, would accede to such a thing as inflicting a devastating conventional defeat on Russia. On the contrary, there would be an enormous pressure calling for closing a deal with Russia (in the manner of the six-point peace plan of the Russo-Georgian war) already during the liberation of the Baltics. This scenario would also very likely cause the required European unity to fall apart. It is hard to imagine that the public of Poland or Romania would react to this situation in the same way as the public of those European states that are more distant, more secure, and more friendly towards Russia. Distinct fragmentation lines would also emerge in Germany etc. Russia must know this very well, therefore, that the political vulnerability of the West will play a much bigger role in Russian calculations than the possibility of a devastating conventional defeat.

The probability of this scenario is not big. We are talking about several percent. Nevertheless, for one thing, we must be prepared even for a low-probability scenario. And for another, considering the Zapad 2017 exercise and the first signals of possible challenges to the stability of the current Russian regime (the last municipal elections, in which the opposition party Yabloko achieved remarkable success and Putin’s United Russia experienced a spectacular failure in some districts of Moscow; the fact that oligarchs close to Putin are losing money every day due to sanctions; the negative perception of the unpopular pension reform amongst Russian citizens), it is a scenario the probability of which may potentially increase to 5 or 10 percent.

Russia does not lack military capabilities needed for its realisation (the actively built A2/AD concept in Kaliningrad covering the whole Baltics; sufficient firepower of armoured brigades; elite parachute division in the Pskov Oblast; regular exercises). Furthermore, it is a scenario that is very tempting. If we accept the notion that it truly can be found in the heads of some Russian strategists, we must ask ourselves whether we are able to reduce its attractiveness.

Other possible scenarios

There are other possible modalities of a potential attack, as it can be waged substrategically (cybernetic domain; attacks on vessels in the Baltic sea, or on important railroads), accompanied by massive information campaigns (utilizing the media and think-tank scene which Russia has been building for years), or making use of various proxies (European radical and extremist parties). NATO is currently pondering the deterrence of threats that do not yet fall under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Within this framework, the British presented their non-paper on Russian hybrid threats at the North Atlantic Council. Surely this is a much-needed course of thinking. However, also relevant is the view of some NATO members, such as Poland or Lithuania, which claim that deterrence against hybrid threat does not work. Moreover, it is only logical that a potential enemy will take deterrence less into account when thinking about an attack which would not trigger Article 5, as the probability that such an attack would actually provoke retaliatory measures is lower than in the case of more evident aggression.

From the political point of view, an attack under the Article 5 threshold could be even more dangerous for the Alliance than a conventional attack above it. That is because it would produce very sensitive political discussions about what should be done to defend the Baltic states. When discussing Russia’s behaviour, it is important to strive for an analysis of why the Russians would invade the Baltics (be it under or above the Article 5 threshold). Analysing why can help us estimate how they would do that. For instance, it is possible to imagine a scenario in which Russian forces quickly enter the territory of some of the Baltic states on the grounds of “defending Russians living abroad”, which is an official part of the Russian doctrine. That could happen, for example, in the border areas of Estonia or Latvia with the highest concentration of the Russian minority population (Narva, Latgale). Viewed from the military perspective, the Alliance would face an even harder task if Russians managed to, for instance, make use of the...
local fifth column and seize Riga by the airdrop overnight.

Western military analyses show that Russians made enormous progress exactly in their capability to **rapidly deploy forces**. Russian armed forces are prepared for combat in 1-2 days since the declaration of emergency. In 3-5 days, the Russian army is able to generate enough forces to execute limited combat operations in the Baltics, and in 10 days it is able to carry out extensive operations in the region. Before NATO could even react (e.g. by NRF), the Russian “punitive expedition” would already be withdrawn. The aim of sending a warning to anyone standing up to Russia’s will would be achieved. What would the Alliance do at that moment?

In the case of Ukraine, for example, Russia clearly expressed that “it will not allow Ukraine to leave its orbit” already in 2013. It was only after that when the crises in Crimea and Donbas began. The primary goal there never was to occupy Ukraine but to have available an efficient brake pedal that Russia can step on any time Ukraine starts to move closer toward NATO or EU membership. When analysing the fulfilment of this Russian goal, we have to note that they succeeded. Therefore, we must project the analysis of possible Russian motives onto the Baltics and realize what we have to prepare for. The main motive of Russia seems to be the testing of political coherence and military readiness of the whole Alliance.

Even if they might never attack the Baltic states, Russians can still use the idea to threaten Baltic politicians, both at the central and local level. It is easy to imagine the spine-chilling sensation that the Baltic politicians must have felt when they heard the Alliance’s intelligence briefing on the enormous qualitative progress of Russian military capabilities during the last exercise Zapad 2017. How a politician from a small Baltic country, in whose constituency lives a large Russian minority, will behave under such enormous pressure? Deterrence is thus important not only with respect to the risk of a potential Russian attack (be it a massive conventional attack or an attack intentionally executed in a way that it would not trigger Article 5, such as one carried out in a hybrid form accompanied by an intensive information campaign) but also with respect to the reassurance of the Baltic states and their representatives. Reassuring any NATO member is, naturally, in the Alliance’s own interest. **Further strengthening of deterrence should not lead to fragmentation but, rather, it would strengthen the Alliance’s unity in its attitude towards Russia.**

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15 If we admitted that they wanted to reach Romanian borders, the assessment would be different.
The best defence of our state is to secure a state of affairs in which the enemy will not launch an attack. The Czech Republic needs to define what we can and what we cannot contribute to the NATO’s deterrence concept.
THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING RUSSIAN BEHAVIOR

We must focus our attention on Russian thinking, which is affected by a wide range of factors. On top of that, there is a certain dose of irrationality incorporated in Russian thinking. In contrast to the rest of the continent, Russia experienced the Age of Enlightenment only to a limited extent. The impacts of this period, which brought reason to the previously faith-centric Europe, are scarcely found in Russian history. Predicting Russian behaviour is thus rather difficult, as illustrated by the Western failure to do so before the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 or the annexation of Crimea in 2014. With a slightly higher level of accuracy, it is possible to at least delimit the analysis of the Russian perception or rather the Russian reaction to the Alliance’s doctrine and to the measures directed at securing NATO’s Eastern flank or the Baltics explicitly. Apart from analysing Russian military-strategic thinking and strategic documents (Russians have a rather good tradition of writing them), it is important to assess the whole Russian foreign policy and the methods it chooses to achieve its goals.

The current Russian military doctrine considers the measures undertaken by the Alliance in reaction to the Russian aggression in 2014 to be a danger which Russia must confront by boosting its rapid force deployment capabilities in order to leave the Alliance’s representative little time for reaching a decision. No less important is the Russian strategic culture itself, which traditionally considers the initial stage of a conflict to be the decisive one. Given the vulnerability of the Russian state and its inability to wage a long-lasting war with a technologically, economically, and otherwise stronger enemy, Russia depends on its strategic initiative gained by making use of the element of surprise, unexpected attack, deceiving, superiority in military power, and decisiveness in both strategic and on-the-ground decision-making.

For instance, experts from the Potomac Foundation describe how members of the Russian General Staff think in their report from the war simulations focused on the Baltics and Poland (see later in the text) which they held. It would be good to know which sources of information they base their assessment on.

The issue of various groups inside the top Russian power structure and their conflicting interests is worth analysing as well, however, it has more impact on the overall regime stability than on the form of strategic decision-making, which at least so far has been done by a highly disciplined narrow group of no more than ten people.

We can, of course, learn a lot about Russian military-strategic thinking by analysing the Zapad 2017 exercise itself. From our point of view, several elements are worth mentioning. Firstly, Russians do not simply train individual branches of their army, it is rather a test of the state’s ability to mobilize rapidly. In this regard, they will be ahead of us, mainly thanks to the hierarchical nature of their whole state administration. Secondly, part of the exercise was a test of the A2/AD concept exactly over the Baltics (with the use of elements of electronic warfare including UAV). Thirdly, the exercise demonstrated substantial progress regarding the speed of deployment, even at long distance. That is problematic mainly due to the significantly slower

16 Naturally, this is not only due to the character of the Russian soul. It is due to Putin’s way of governance, which is based on his KGB experience. The problem is his belief in his own infallibility, which impacts even his closest circles. Putin can surprise but he is not good at calculating consequences. And that is the essential problem. Even in 2014, he expected the West to react in the same way as it did in 2008 in the case of Georgia.

17 Some Russian theorists (think-tanks or professors at MGIMO) seriously, in the spirit of classic “dialectics of history”, calculate with the fact that armed conflict will erupt in 10-20 years, for which Russia must be prepared. It is therefore relevant to analyse how much the voice of these scientists is heard amongst Russian decision-makers. For example, it would make sense to follow the monthly Vojenaja mysl, which the Americans translate to English. At one time, there was even an English mutation called Military Thought. In the Czech Republic, the journal is subscribed by the Military History Institute (VHÚ), which took over the recently abolished Agency for Military Information and Services at the Ministry of Defence.

18 Stephen R. Covington, The Culture of Strategic Thought Behind Russia’s Modern Approaches to Warfare (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2016).

19 A detailed assessment of the exercise prepared by the Alliance’s intelligence officers is included in the classified reports by the Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to NATO from September and October 2017.
capabilities of the Alliance to deploy a sufficient number of troops that would augment the forces already present in the region in case of conflict.20

Even though the political decisions of strategic importance are made by only the closest leadership of the Russian Federation (which most probably does not even cover the whole fourteen-member Security Council), the fact stands that these decisions have a wide public support and to a large extent mirror the thinking, needs, and preferences of those segments that the present Russian regime relies on (power structures, military-industrial complex, bureaucracy, the Orthodox clergy, media). Furthermore, the regime is increasingly dependent on strengthening Russia’s position abroad (even by waging war) due to the regime’s shift towards patriotic mobilisation as a legitimisation mechanism of the present condition, since the potential for economic growth and increased salaries of the masses has been exhausted. This is also linked to the growing ideologization of Russian public life. For all these reasons, it is desirable to also devote proper attention to the ongoing Russian discourse on the role of Russia in the world and to the Russian strategy for interacting with the outside world, especially with its Western neighbours.

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20 See the results of war simulations organized by the Potomac Foundations later in the text. The fact stands that by answering the question of why Russia would attack the Baltics (and here we have to examine both the motives defined by the form of their strategic goals, i.e. what they would gain, and the internal motives), we can better predict how they would do that. In the case of Ukraine, for example, the strategic goal was not to gain Ukrainian territory and annex Crimea. The strategic goal, which was declared about a year before the annexation, was to prevent Ukraine from leaving the Russian sphere of influence and joining the Western side. Russia simply adjusted their tactics accordingly.
DEBATES ON THE FORM OF DETERRENCE IN NATO’S EASTERN FLANK: THE AMERICAN, GERMAN, AND CZECH CASES

United States

The discussion on deterrence in the United States is the most advanced one. That is, besides other things, caused by the fact that it is a part of the changed security-strategic narrative, which is reflected in the new National Security Strategy published in December 2017.21 The need for deterrence of a potential enemy, namely Russia, is being openly declared by prominent representatives of the U.S. Army, such as the Chief of Staff General Mark Milley, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Curtis Scaparrotti, his predecessor General Philip M. Breedlove, or the former commander of U.S. Army Europe General Ben Hodges. Moreover, research institutions enter the debate on the modalities of deterrence as well, however, as is common in the United States, they often work on behalf of the American administration (a good and not at all unique example is the RAND Corporation). Some recommendations emerged after a several months long preparation in the form of simulating war scenarios (war games), which show how important this issue is there.

There seems to be a consensus that effective deterrence in NATO’s Eastern flank and especially in the Baltics requires further changes in the structure and deployment of American and Allied force. You can find a table with the proposals of the RAND Corporation, the CSIS and Atlantic Council, and the Army War College in Appendix no. 1.

Czech military experts should discuss the pros and cons of these suggestions. From the tactical-psychological point of view, I will nonetheless dare to point out the comparative advantage of the Atlantic Council’s proposal, as it focuses on the equipment and readiness of local forces, i.e. forces of the Baltic states.

What do the American suggestions for further deterrence imply?

Neither of the proposals for strengthening the Alliance’s defensive capacity in its Eastern flank will reverse the substantive imbalance of power in the region. Besides, the proposed measures were in most cases based on simulations of an attack.22 Yet we want to focus on Russian thinking and try to ensure that such an attack will never take place. I believe that the role of a deterrent, which Russian strategists would have to take into account, could be played by the capability of forces (Allied or, even better, local) in the Baltics to cause the Russian troops invading the Baltics’ soil as many human casualties as possible. This capability should be communicated to the Russian public well in advance as part of strategic communication.23

The number of casualties amongst Russian soldiers is nowadays a significantly more sensitive issue in Russia than it was twenty or thirty years ago. The families of soldiers, their mothers in particular, and related civic initiatives are able to elicit a considerable public response, such as the case of Syria showed. Looking from a psychological perspective, it might have an impact in relation to both Russian and world public if an effective

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21 The new National Security Strategy of the USA signifies a certain shift in American strategic thinking and policy. For the first time since the September 11 attacks, the core focus of the NSS is on rival states or adversaries instead of terrorism. The new NSS also declares the need for reassessing the so-called engagement policy with rival states. It is not only that the engagement policy was adhered to by the previous administration, it is that to this day the policy is in the heart of the political and military doctrines of most European states. Another noteworthy feature is the fact that the NSS does not perceive military power only as a crisis management tool during a sudden crisis, but it views military power as an important asset for promoting national interests. See my following article: Martin Svárovský, „US-ELI complementarity. Chance for EU Crisis Management“, On War | On Peace, May 7, 2018, http://www.onwar.eu/2018/05/07/us-eu-complementarity-chance-for-eu-crisis-management/.

22 Study of the RAND Corporation based on a simulation of combat operations came to the conclusion that seven Allied brigades with adequate air support and artillery capabilities could, if deployed at the very beginning of the conflict, prevent Russians from rapidly invading the Baltics. Nevertheless, not even that power would ensure a sustainable defence of the region.

23 Russian representatives or experts do not mention casualties at all when addressing the public. They only speak about victory.
retaliation would come directly from the victims (if someone’s house is destroyed in Narva, they should be able to immediately and successfully fire a rocket at Pskov).\footnote{24}

This idea comes from the conviction that even though the forces in the Baltics will be ordered to defend their territory, in reality, they will not be able to hold it. Currently, neither the air policing there is sufficiently robust nor do the forces have satisfactory firepower.\footnote{25} That is why the Baltic forces should be equipped and trained for causing as many human casualties to the enemy as possible. However twisted this may sound, it is exactly that kind of strategic thinking that in the end might prevent those casualties. The discussion is about broadening the concept of deterrence in so that it would not only be about denying the very physical possibility of any short or long-term territorial gain (deterrence by denial) but it would also focus on potential punishment (deterrence by punishment). This question was explored three years ago by, for instance, the current Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wes Mitchell.\footnote{26} Ideally, both of these components of deterrence should be equally strong. That said, it is also clear that the measures of deterrence relevant for defending the Baltics do not and cannot be concentrated only in this region.

From the political point of view, it will be favourable for the threatened territories of small NATO members if the American administration keeps the truly convicted advocates of strong ties and commitments amongst allied states who have their position well-founded. In the words of the already mentioned Wes Mitchell: “For the United States abandonment of, or by, allies is more dangerous in the long run to our health, happiness, and prosperity as a nation than any supposed entrapment to protect states whose existential interest in the perpetuation of a stable and prosperous world order is the same as—and, if anything, greater than—our own. America. ”

\section*{Germany}

The gravity of the German debate is caused by the fact that foreign policy (with respect to both issues concerning the EU/institutions/finances and questions regarding security) will be one of the frontlines between CDU/CSU and SPD. The struggle will take place in Berlin as well as in Brussels or Strasbourg. Both main actors will be making use of their allies abroad (for instance, such as SPD does with the visions of the French president Macron). Transatlantic ties or relations with Russia will undoubtedly be part of these debates. Both are connected with the Alliance’s reassurance and deterrence policy on its Eastern flank. The views of the CDU, such as represented by the appearances of Chancellor Merkel at the last NATO summit, are quite clear. According to Merkel, Germany knows that it owes the Alliance, it will increase its defence spending by 80 \% compared to 2014, and it is an advocate of active defence of the European periphery. The Chancellor also stated that “hopes for a peaceful arrangement ended with the annexation of Crimea”. Still, it is questionable whether there is room in the German political landscape for such a principled stance. All the main German political parties currently view the policies of Putin’s Russia negatively. But a different thing is what the consequences of this negative attitude are in relation to the defence capacity of the Eastern part of the Eastern flank (Americans view Germany itself as part of the Eastern flank).

Both CDU and CSU take the security concerns of the Eastern flank’s countries seriously, they unequivocally support the Alliance’s measures aimed at reassuring these states as well as the strengthening of the Baltics’ own defence capacity.\footnote{27} By contrast, there are many voices in the SPD which say that besides retaliatory measures motivating Russia to change its behaviour and measures aimed at strengthening NATO’s defensive capacity, it is also necessary to seek opportunities for dialogue with Russia, which would lead to increased mutual trust. Despite the fact that the SPD supports boosting the Eastern flank’s defensive capabilities, it also holds the view that such development should not be to the detriment of the dialogue and building trust with Moscow. In that sense, for example, they argue against the permanent deployment of troops from Western

\footnote{24} Needless to say, that even the presence of American and Allied troops is already a deterrence factor on its own. Moreover, retaliatory measures also include economic instruments like sanctions. Those, however, must be in such situation used very flexibly, strategically and without any compromise.

\footnote{25} A well-arranged summary of the gradual strengthening of American and Allied forces in the Baltics already since April 2014 can be found, for instance, in the book of J. Šír et al. Ruská agrese proti Ukrajině (Praha: Karolinum, 2017), see particularly Chapter 12 by L. Švec.


\footnote{27} Stenographic records from a Bundestag session on July 7, 2016 and September 9, 2016 (Plenarprotokoll 18/183, Plenarprotokoll 18/190).
NATO members in the Eastern flank. Other measures which respond mainly to the military-security aspect of the issue are met with reserve (as “sabre-rattling”) amongst the members of the SPD. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the current President of Germany and former Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, once criticized the Allied exercise Anaconda 2016, whose aim was to demonstrate the readiness of NATO members to defend the countries of the Eastern flank. As a result, Steinmeier was then criticized by his coalition partner.

Even though Germany is, together with the USA, UK, Sweden, Belgium, Norway, and Israel, one of the biggest suppliers of military equipment to the Baltics (Lithuania in particular, see Appendix no. 2), these states still have concerns about whether Western European countries like Germany will not eventually give preference to their own particular interests over the coherence of NATO and support pragmatic deals or compromises with Russia. The economic interests of Germany speak for the continued strong economic relations with Russia (although their bilateral trade has decreased) and there might even be some political motivation. So far, the German stance towards NATO has been consistent and rather resolute, especially at NATO or EU meetings. The thing is that Germans do not like when someone does not keep agreements. On the other hand, it is necessary to keep an eye on how much longer the diplomatic success can (containing certain concessions) under the Normandy format be politically significant for the German administration. This is why it is important that the new American administration has a close coordinated working-level contact with the German and French representatives of the Normandy format (Kurt Volker acts more carefully and strategically than his predecessor Victoria Nuland).

The above mentioned is only a tiny sketch of the state of the German debate. It is important to bear in mind that Germany is a country in which the final policy is influenced by many factors and actors, who often differ in their foundations, interests, and attitudes. This applies to the German political parties, federal administration and individual states, regional organizations of political parties, important economic corporations, and other key organizations and interest groups. They all have an influence on the formation of German foreign policy. For several years, the author of this text has been advocating the strengthening of institutional capacity which would enable a deep, wide, and flexible identification of the spectrum of opinions in German foreign policy. One of the recommendations is formulated in relation to deterrence and the Baltics.

Czech Republic

The crucial strategic precondition for dealing with the defence of the Czech Republic is to identify who specifically poses an external military threat to our country and what their intentions are. At the same time, it is evident that the military defence of the Czech Republic would not be possible without the help of Allied states from the very beginning. I believe that given the size of our contribution to the Alliance, we should distinguish between contributing to assurance, crisis management, or deterrence. This exactly is where the core focus of this text is. One of the debate’s objectives must be to identify how specifically our army can contribute to the Alliance’s deterrence capabilities (especially those responding to scenarios which are relevant to the Czech Republic). After all, the last-mentioned American study (Army War College) emphasizes that the development of military capabilities of individual NATO members should contribute to the deterrence capabilities of the Alliance as a whole.

In order to help the strategic thinking focusing on the Baltics within NATO and the required military capabilities develop, we are the ones who must pitch in, since the defence of the Baltics is a “forward defence” of the Czech Republic. Neither the Western nor the Southern flank of the Alliance will do it for us. The Baltics do not represent a “forward defence” for countries like the USA, UK, Canada, or France. Moreover, these Western countries will always be tempted to agree on defining spheres of influence in the manner of the Yalta Conference. This temptation may be supported by the escalation of other global issues that might lead to conflicts (assertiveness of China, North Korea, Iran, US-China trade war, trade disputes with the EU etc.). For the time being, the danger of a new Yalta is not on the table, at least with regard to the relations between Russia and

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28 Stenographic records from a Bundestag session on July 7, 2016 and September 9, 2016 (Plenarprotokoll 18/183, Plenarprotokoll 18/190).
30 This is how Poland, Romania, or the Baltic states think about their acquisitions and adapt their acquisition plans.
31 In the section on the debate in the United States, there is a table attached containing modalities of troop reinforcement. However, the deterrent message should also include large military exercises in the threatened territory.
the United States. However, there is currently a strong transactional approach visible in international politics, which makes it only logical that it is up to us to take care of the Baltics, perhaps within the framework of the Bucharest Nine Platform.

The Baltic states are the “Achilles’ heel” of NATO, which presents us with an opportunity to boost our significance in the American eyes by taking care of the Achilles’ heel ourselves. The current form of strategic thinking, which has been present in the USA already since ca. 2015, is described, for example, in the book The Unquiet Frontier written by Wess Mitchell and Jakub Grygiel. According to this line of reasoning, Russia is one of the four main global threats. At the same time, this argumentation clearly reflects the phenomenon of “regionalisation” of threat assessment inside integrated entities such as NATO, and from that it deduces the need for establishing coalitions of the willing. This increases the strategic value of American allies located at the verge of the spheres of influence and creates an opportunity for the Czech Republic.

As for reassurance (which is a more reactive concept), the Czech Republic must actively contribute to the highly topical concept of strategic mobility. That implies carrying out tasks regarding both the legislature and the development of specific infrastructure (roads and railroads, backup airports, bridges, backup storehouses, making use of existing logistics centres etc.). There is no need for long and theoretical discussions on this matter, as it is nothing more than fulfilment of our commitments from the last NATO summit in Brussels. Such measures are not the subject matter of this article, however, taking into account the overall assessment of the Czech contribution to the NATO’s readiness they are very much connected with the deterrence measures.

Armed forces of the Baltic states

The armed forces of the Baltic states are consequently expanding their heavy forces. All three of them have recently made purchases that considerably boosted their military capabilities. Especially the positive progress in building heavy armoured units and self-propelled artillery is of great importance. On top of that, regardless of their size, all these armies are well-trained, and their members are characterized by patriotism and high motivation (see more in Appendix no. 2).

Poland and the Baltics as an inspiration for the Czech Republic?

The three Baltic countries, together with Poland or Romania, are in the process of a clearly targeted armament with respect to their own defence as well as to their contribution to the Alliance’s deterrence capabilities. While assessing the Czech contribution to NATO’s defence and deterrence capabilities, we have to distinguish between assurance measures (such as RAP, strengthening NRF, creating VJTF or NF1U) and deterrence measures (such as EDI, eFP, strengthening the NATO Command Structure, Air Policing, hypersonic weapons etc.). Our core focus should be on deterrence, which means that we have to effectively contribute to the Alliance’s deterrence component. In the words of the former minister of defence Dobrovský: “Contributing one mechanized brigade without rotation and complementation, which we would send out only if Article 5 of the Washington Treaty was activated, is utterly inadequate. Besides, “deterrence” is not conditioned by the activation of Article 5 in this case, quite the contrary. Yet Article 3 is of rising importance, although in a somewhat updated interpretation based on the current identification of the external military threat. That is why it is necessary to rethink our level of participation in the deterrence strategy. Large exercises are needed, with the movements of at least a mechanized battalion, or even a whole brigade in the future. These exercises would take place in the area that is in the highest danger of threat realization. Necessarily, this would affect planning. Acquisitions would focus on transport vehicles, both

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34 At the beginning, I stated that the focus of this text would be on the Baltic states. Nevertheless, even the security and military experts of these three countries consider the Baltics and Poland to form a single operational space connected with the (vulnerable) Suwalki Corridor. According to these experts, the territories of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia a single integrated operational-strategic challenge in Russian eyes.
35 In the Polish case, it is worth mentioning the WOT forces (Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej). As war simulations have shown, if supported by attack helicopters, these forces can play a significant role in defending the Polish territory.
surface and aerial. There is a lot of things that have to be thought over and readjusted, such as supporting the growth of the defence industry by preferential purchase rights regardless of the prices."

**Broader aspects of the issue**

While analysing Russian thinking and motives, we do not have to take into consideration only the Baltic region. After all, the Baltics do not hold such a prominent place in the Russian strategic thinking as Ukraine or Georgia. The main incentive in a potential conflict would be less the attack on these three states than an attack on the Achilles’ heel of the Alliance which they represent. 36

That is why it is necessary to take into account the overall relations of the Alliance (and its strongest member) with Russia. 37 An interesting aspect of this issue is the question of strategic parity. Can it play a role in the Russian strategic thinking about the Baltics and if so, what role would that be? And vice versa, can the United States be playing the strategic parity card with Russia, even when taking into account the interests of the vulnerable NATO members? As stated above, the overall superiority of the Alliance over Russia is a tricky thing. Firstly, these numbers do not stand when applied to a specific region, such as the Baltics. Secondly, the commitment resulting from Article 5 does not oblige NATO members to provide the country under attack with all available resources (which was the case in the WEU). And thirdly, we cannot ignore the existence of opinions which say that it is exactly the superiority of one side that may sometimes fuel the enemy’s aggressive behaviour. Especially if there is an assumption that the superiority will increase (modern hypersonic weapons, Prompt Global Strike, increase defence spending after the Wales summit etc.), the enemy may consider action on the grounds of maintaining a strategic initiative. Nevertheless, in this instance, we would most probably witness only limited actions the goal of which would be to test the Alliance’s readiness and cohesion. The rapid deployment of forces is exactly the area in which Russians made the biggest progress. It is not a coincidence that it is this very capability that they invest in the most. 38

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36 On the other hand, the "Achilles' heel" theory has a positive side as well. If we assume that an effective deterrence and defence of the Baltics is mainly about the United States, we have to admit that Russia and the Baltic states do not constitute vital strategic interests for the US (compared to China, the Middle East, or North Korea). But the credibility of the deterrence capabilities of American or NATO forces and the coherence of the Alliance are in American eyes exactly these kinds of interests.

37 In his book *The Unquiet Frontier*, Wess Mitchell is dealing with the so-called probing behaviour on the part of America’s rival, when the rivals of the USA test the level of readiness and resoluteness of their opponent together with its reliability to its allies via the fringes of the Allied territory (such as the Baltics).

38 The retired commander of the British Joint Forces Command General Sir Richard Barrons estimates that Russians may be able to launch an offensive action within 48 hours and that some parts of land, territorial waters, or airspace of the Baltic states can be lost before the 28 member states even decide what the Alliance’s reaction will be.
The Baltic states are our allies, this region constitutes a sort of a “forward defence” of our country.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

• The text is focusing on the threat of a Russian armed attack, and thus it does not analyse the so-called Gerasimov doctrine, which is a conception of hybrid warfare. It is important that we do not restrict ourselves in our strategic thinking by the limits of our own current military doctrine (Concept of the Czech Republic’s Foreign Policy, Security Strategy of the Czech Republic, White Paper on Defence, Concept of the Czech Armed Forces 2025). Instead, we should work with a certain level of imagination in order to be able to further shape and adapt the doctrinal documents.

• War games represent a useful contribution to the development of such thinking. The results of the several months long exercises were shown in the chapter on the USA. These simulations also took place in Poland in 2017 and in Romania in 2018. The Polish simulation, organized by the Potomac Foundation, focused on the first 35 days of war since the Russo-Belarus attack on the Baltics and Poland. As such, it covered both the phase of the Russian invasion and the beginning of the liberation operation. The Czech Republic has its own experts who experienced war games in the USA during their career, which is one more reason why it should try to get involved in the Baltic simulations. The contact details of the experts in charge of the simulations in Poland or Romania are available. The responsible bodies of state administration should make use of them.

• While discussing the need for undertaking any measures (be it in the field of deterrence, reassurance, or defence), we must not limit ourselves by the hardly quantifiable question of the potential crisis scenario’s probability, as it might lead to an inconclusive debate that would surely discredit or disgust those that are willing to actually do something.

As stated in the section “Purpose of this text”, it would be useful to at least initiate some division of roles at the state administration level aimed at tracking various indicators that influence the probability. Such indicators are, for instance, the proximity of Russian strategic hawks to political elites, the question of stability or instability of the Russian regime etc. The legitimacy of the ideas included in this article is evident by simply looking at the current numbers of Russian forces in the region or at their, regularly practised, readiness. The level of (politically-strategic) probability of the crisis scenario can never be the decisive criterion influencing the composition and doctrinal basis of our, i.e. NATO, forces in the region. In fact, a no less important criterion is the very structure and readiness of Russian armed forces there.

• It is impossible to evaluate the current relations between the West and Russia without asking the question of whether it is possible to alter Russia’s behaviour. Russia is not an unpredictable regime like North Korea, which makes it possible to be deterred from hostile actions. Since we cannot change Russia’s behaviour as a whole, we must focus on what we can influence. The fact remains that the balance of power in the Baltics is working to the Alliance’s disadvantage. There will never be enough NATO or local forces to halt the potential Russian attack. Their ability to slow down and aggravate the Russian invasion might probably not be enough to reliably deter the enemy, especially in case of a direct challenge to the Russian regime’s stability. Thus, we must wonder how to make the potential attack more costly for Russians, as an excessively high price.

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39 The simulations organized by the RAND Corporation were attended by, besides its own analysts, both uniformed and civil employees of various branches of the U.S. Department of Defense (including U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, Joint Staff, U.S. Army in Europe, and U.S. Air Forces Europe, together with the European section of the NATO Naval Command).

40 On the political level, this phenomenon can be seen, for example, in the German debate. Due to the history of Germany, it is very easy and effective to label someone as a proponent of “militarism”, which is not compatible with the constitutional and moral order of the country.
might deter them.\footnote{David A. Shlapak and Michael W. Johnson, Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO’s Eastern Flank. Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2016); or Phillip A. Petersen, Nicholas Myers, Jānis Bērzins, Edmund Bitinas, Phillip A. Karber, Wojciech Zalewski, Balti Kaitsekolledž; Potomac Foundation, Baltic security net assessment (Tallinn, Baltic Defence College, 2017.), thesis on page V. – Transatlantic Capability Enhanced and Training Initiative, UK-France Combined Joint expeditionary Force or rotating presence of V4 + Russian plans terrain.}

- Contrarily, any military clash between the armed forces of Russia and any European state (even outside of NATO) that gets away without punishment will disrupt the confidence in the Alliance and its significance. The international community has experience with the fact that Russia is prepared to use its armed forces wherever it might bring territorial or political gains. Even just disrupting the confidence in the collective defence of the West represents a political gain for Russia. In this respect, it is important to have the right messaging, even via robust Allied exercises or their scenarios.\footnote{Allied exercises in the Alliance’s Eastern flank has so far comprised of hundreds of soldiers, a few thousand at most, whereas Russia regularly deploys tens of thousands of troops for similar exercises.} At the same time, we must practice not only combat readiness but also the allocation of forces. After all, the character of Zapad 2017 clearly shows that Russia is testing its ability to wage war against NATO. A significant role in our signalling is played by the very form of European political discourse, which can be influenced by appropriate strategic communication.

- Due to the reasons stated in the chapter “The need for understanding Russian behaviour”, it is advisable to systematically map the imminent proximity of the Kremlin and continuously analyse the main directions, problems, and trends it deals with. That concerns the main departmental publishing platforms of the Ministry of Defence (General Staff), outputs of expert structures affiliated with the regime,\footnote{To illustrate, after the Ukraine intervention there was a lot of attention devoted to the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, whose chair at the time was an Orthodox fascist Leonid Rešetnikov, who evidently provided skewed data on alleged “pro-Russian” sentiments in Ukraine.} or “discussions club” and similar formats (the annual Moscow Conference on International Security organized by the Russian Ministry of Defence, the Izborsk club or the Valdai Discussion Club), which are capable of influencing and forming the intellectual breeding ground from which political decisions later arise.

- As for the Russian public, it should be targeted by an active information “offensive” and made aware of the risk of considerable human casualties in case of the potential attack on the Baltics. The domestic propaganda together with a certain segment of the local movie production encourages Russians to believe that they can win a third world war. The aim here is to disrupt and refute this belief.

- The most advanced (American) discussion on deterrence in the Baltics is also addressing the issue of how Russia will react to individual changes in the posture of U.S. and NATO forces. Between the lines, there is an unuttered concern about whether these changes could cause an unwanted, i.e. armed, reaction. These questions are surely legitimate; as was stated at the beginning, they are being openly addressed by part of the German political scene. Nevertheless, it is more probable that the reason for a potential Russian action will be rather of an offensive than defensive character. Russians know very well that NATO and the USA do not pose any real threat to them, which is why the impression of being endangered will not be the primary Russian motive. Nor will it be, under the current political situation, the fear of reaction to the potential attack on the Baltics, especially if the attack was executed using the indicated “quickly get in, swiftly get out” method. In this situation, any loosening of the sanctions imposed after Crimea or Donbas would have a devastating effect on the Baltics’ impression of security. The Czech position must always be based on the fact that the sanctions are not only about Ukraine. The political discourse on sanctions must be broadened.

- All relevant studies on this topic share the same belief that NATO must pay attention to the development of heavy forces in order to be able to deter (and potentially defeat) the threat of an attack on its Achilles’ heel. Sufficiently armoured ground forces must have adequate firepower, anti-aircraft equipment, and logistic capabilities. For instance, the above-mentioned
study by the RAND Corporation from 2016 was very explicit in identifying those capability gaps. Since then, the Baltic armies have been working on filling the gaps. We must answer the question of whether the Czech Republic must contribute to this kind of capabilities (e.g. by purchasing modern Western tanks and IFVs) or if it can substitute its contribution to the overall deterrence capabilities of the Alliance with something else. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that it should contribute to NATO’s deterrence at least in some way.

- The Czech narrative on security-military must thoroughly distinguish what is deterrence and what is not (assurance and crisis management). The main mission of the Readiness Action Plan adopted in Wales was not to strengthen deterrence. Therefore, our special forces in NRF (810 in 2017, 380 in 2018) are not a contribution to the deterrence on NATO’s Eastern flank, contrary to the mechanized company in Lithuania or the mortar platoon in Latvia. Moreover, the above-mentioned war simulations organized by the Potomac Foundation in Poland reached an unequivocal conclusion that, given the enemy’s potential capabilities, the concept of Allied Rapid Reaction Corps is too slow for the defence of the Baltics. That is exactly the reason why, after the lobbying of Poland and the Baltic countries at the summits in Wales and Warsaw, the enhanced Forward Presence concept was adopted. This concept finally represents a component of deterrence in the Baltics.

- Thus, the level of deterrence must, besides combat capabilities, constitute a significant factor in the prioritization of armament plans. While building a medium and later heavy brigade (according to our commitments to the Alliance), we must take into account its logistics capabilities or the anti-aircraft defence after its deployment.

- The text dealt with the discussions on deterrence in the USA, Germany, and the Czech Republic. In addition, it is important to seek partners for discussion in the Bucharest Nine format (possible regionalisation of contributions to deterrence?). As for bilateral consultations on this topic, I believe that we need to have a much more intensive dialogue with Poland and individual Baltic states than we have had so far. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must actively participate in the debate on deterrence and must cooperate with the Ministry of Defence, General Staff, Office for Foreign Relations and Information, or Military Intelligence. Our foreign service must devote more attention to the relations with Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, with respect to both the conceptual and personal aspects. There are not many countries in Europe that show such a positive attitude towards the Czech Republic as these three countries do.

- A similar thesis holds true in relation to Poland, which must be our priority partner, especially in the field of security policy. It is not essential for our diplomacy to devote excessive attention to the analysis of Poland’s internal politics, as it can contribute to wrong recommendations like not having our head of state present at the NATO summit in Warsaw, which was attended by president Trump. To illustrate current Polish strategic thinking, which is very open and straightforward, it is worth mentioning the official document Proposal for a U.S. Permanent Presence in Poland, whose aim is, as the title suggests, to achieve a permanent presence of American armoured division in Poland. The most pressing goal must be to renew the Czech-Polish meetings in the 2+2 format (MFA and MD) from working-level contacts to the political level. These meetings must carry appropriate weight during further development of the conceptual Czech-Polish cooperation in the security field.

- It is necessary to start monitoring the current trends in Russian strategic thinking as well as to

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46 Although the newly created VJTF are quicker, they are not numerous enough. Besides, some high-ranking NATO officers believe that even the VJTF are too slow for the Baltics, plus they would be very vulnerable during their arrival.
47 After all, deterrence, especially deterrence by punishment, does not have to be determined only by the capabilities of the Alliance’s armed forces in the threatened territory but also by the specific postulates of the EU’s foreign policy, which have a whole set of tools at its disposal.
48 The American president did not fly in only to visit Warsaw, one of his objectives was to reassure our region that the European Deterrence Initiative will continue, and it will even be intensified. The Czech Republic was similarly hesitant to forming the Bucharest Nine, which is very well remembered in Poland, for instance.
attempt to evaluate the impact of Russian strategists on actual decision-making (be it military or civic). Russian experts on armed forces should be contacted and a dialogue should be established at specialized forums. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Defence could start monitoring the monthly Vojenaja mysl. A project should also be announced, whose realisation would consist of contacting the employees of Vojenaja mysl and gathering behind-the-scenes information on the “influence” of its authors (or, for example, professors at MGIMO). The question is who could do research like this (academic or member of the administration).

• Regarding Germany, the Czech Republic must renew its project focused on boosting its capacity to carry out a continuous and flexible analysis of German foreign policy. The project was approved by minister K. Schwarzenberg in 2009. Now we need to commence an “operational analysis” aimed at monitoring the German debate – including its individual actors - on the deterrence policy of NATO. Also, it is desirable that the internships for Czech experts in the think-tank Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik continue. SWP advises German political decision-makers (the Chancellery and Federal Foreign Office).

• Ukrainian soldiers have valuable experience with the Russian style of warfare and its new methods (e.g. in using tanks, artillery radars and other reconnaissance equipment including drones and artillery). They are willing to share their experience and the armed forces of the USA or the UK have made great use of it. We need to think about the possibility and manner of gaining such information. For example, there is a think-tank in Kiev which focuses exactly on evaluating this combat experience. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Defence could place an order with it for a tailor-made “operational analysis”, or they could better use the opportunities when relevant persons are in the Czech Republic.

• A mobility audit must be initiated in accordance with our commitments from the last NATO summit. It is true that the mobility of forces comes into play only in case of an actual reaction, however, it is also true that it influences readiness, and the enemy knows it. It could thus be approached as part of deterrence. In order to fulfil our commitment to dramatically increase the permeability of Czech territory for allied troops, we have to do a lot of work as soon as possible.

• The normative form of the issue, that is the analysis of NATO’s reaction based on the codified commitments or current strategic calculation, is one thing. However, one cannot omit the more general line of thought concerning the psychological aspects which affect the public in Western countries. The thing is that the political will to act is not only influenced by commitments and capabilities but also by the public attitude. We can assume that the public would call for a devastating strike if the whole Alliance was invaded. But would the citizens of allied states consider the potential invasion of the Baltics to be as serious as if the same happened to, for example, Germany or Poland? There is no point in launching sociological research on this question, as it would inevitably have a very speculative character. The situation when there is a need to defend the Baltics by military force would pose an extraordinarily important challenge to the political coherence of NATO. Russians surely know it very well.

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49 Some French analysts hold the view that Russia does not aim to defeat the Alliance but to divide it. That is quite a realistic estimate. But what conclusions will the French administrative or the French public draw from it?
APPENDIX NO. 1

Posture Enhancement Proposals
Deterring a major land power in Europe became a topic of intense study and debate for the first time since the Cold War and has led to numerous proposals on additional posture enhancements that NATO should take. Many of these proposals include recommendations that would take many years longer to implement than the posture enhancements currently underway.

Proposal - Additional Proposed Forces

RAND Corporation (2016) /a/
- 3 heavy brigades
- Air, artillery, and other supporting elements also recommended

RAND Corporation (2015) /b/
- 3–4 heavy brigades
- Air and missile defense forces recommended, along with additional supporting elements

CSIS /c/
- 2 rotationally-based ABCTs
- 1,000 headquarters staff

Atlantic Council /d/
- Baltic States' own forces upgraded to heavy brigades; 1 heavy brigade per Baltic State
- Additional anti-tank and air defense weaponry acquired by the Baltic States
- 3 multinational (U.S./European/Baltic) battalions; 1 battalion per Baltic State
- 3 rotationally-based, forward-deployed heavy brigades from NATO countries
- (analogous to ERI’s ABCT; one brigade each from the United Kingdom, Germany, and Poland)
- Additional supporting units supplied by the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway

Army War College /e/ • 1 rotationally-deployed ABCT
- Headquarters with a two-star command

a Shlapak and Johnson, 2016. This proposal recommends six or seven brigades on the ground at the start of hostilities, including both new heavy brigades and forces already in Europe; lighter and more-mobile forces need not be forward deployed, but heavier forces should be stationed close to or in the Baltic States.

b David Ochmanek, Scott Boston, Burgess Laird, and Forrest E. Morgan, Securing NATO’s Eastern Flank: An Assessment of the Allies’ Capabilities and Posture in 2020, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2017, not available to the general public. In this proposal based on research conducted in 2015, brigades can be rotationally based but should have continuous presence of equipment and battalion-sized elements.

c Conley et al., 2016. This proposal recommends 13 total brigades to support effective deterrence.


The armed forces of the Baltic countries are consequently developing their heavy forces. Estonia purchased 44 used but well-preserved and modern IVFs CV9035NL from the Netherlands (treaty signed in December 2014, vehicles delivered in 2016) and additional 35 vehicles from Norway which it plans to convert to command, recovery, and other types of vehicles (also purchased in 2016). Thanks to this acquisition, Estonia now has its own heavy forces (by the way, all Nordic countries and the Netherlands have these vehicles). Estonia has also recently ordered 12 modern Korean self-propelled howitzers (estimated delivery is 2020-2021) with an option on 12 more units. The same howitzers were purchased by Finland as well (delivery is currently taking place). Estonia and Finland plan to jointly handle logistics, maintenance, and exercises, which should lower the operating costs. Norway has recently purchased these howitzers too (24 units with an option of another 24); another NATO country that uses the same licenced type of howitzers is Turkey (T-155 Firtina), whose chassis is part of the Polish Krab system.

Latvia purchased a large quantity (123) of reconnaissance IVFs (or rather light armoured reconnaissance vehicles) Scimitar from the UK’s surplus, which radically increased the combat capabilities of the Latvian army. Besides that, Latvia bought the American self-propelled howitzers Paladin from the surplus of Austria (47, which means that the Latvian army “outran” the Czech one in this regard).

Lithuania bought 21 units of used but modern and well-preserved self-propelled howitzers PzH 2000 from Germany, whose delivery is currently in motion. It also acquired 88 units of modern German AFVs Boxer fitted with the Israeli-made Samson weapon station.

We can see that all the Baltic states have recently made acquisitions which radically increased their military capabilities. Fundamentally important is especially the positive progress in building heavy armoured units and self-propelled artillery, regardless of the fact that many systems are used, as they are still modern and high-quality.

As experience from the armed conflict in Ukraine shows, good artillery plays a crucial role – up to 90 % of casualties were inflicted during artillery attacks. It seems that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have drawn their conclusions from this and, as a result, they are now developing their artillery capabilities. It is also clear that they take seriously the recommendations of aforesaid American think-tanks, which just two years back were pointing out that the Alliance’s forces, including the Baltics’, are only light and lack sufficient tactical mobility and necessary firepower to confront an armed enemy.

On top of that, all these armies, no matter their size, are well-trained, and their members are characterized by patriotism and high motivation. The author of this section believes that a potential attack on the Baltics would lead to severe losses on the enemy’s side. Also, its outcome is not certain (in particular, I doubt that the Baltic forces would be simply “smashed” by a conventional attack; I think that the enemy would have great difficulties, especially if the attack was not unexpected, but that depends mainly on the good work of secret services and analysts).\(^{51}\)

\(^{50}\) The text about the Baltic states’ armed forces was written by my colleague Ján Krivoš.

\(^{51}\) The “Hegemon” war simulation carried out by the Potomac Foundation showed that the first days of conflict might bring rather big losses of Russian/Belarussian armoured vehicles (the successor of the Potomac Foundation in performing war games is The Centre for the Study of New Generation Warfare).