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**European Defense Planning and  
the Ukraine Crisis**  
**Two Contrasting Views**

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**Magnus Petersson  
Andres Vosman**

*June 2015*

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# “Focus stratégique”

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# Table of Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Learning the Right Lessons from Ukraine (A. Vossman)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Estonian Context</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>What Should the Alliance Make of This?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Towards Joint Force Generation: European Capability Development and the Ukraine Crisis (M. Petersson)</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The “Wake-up Call”</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Western Reactions</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>The Need for a Different Capability Development</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>29</b>



# Abstract

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As the Ukrainian crisis continues, it is now clear that Europe is facing a new strategic environment and needs to adapt. These developments challenge the expeditionary posture adopted by NATO over the last twenty years, and imply a need to rethink the demand for strengthening collective defense and reassurance capabilities. The two papers presented in this issue approach this question from different angles. On the one hand, an outlook based on the Estonian experience as a frontline state, supports the idea to reinvest in heavy conventional capabilities. On the other hand, a more organizational approach, embodied by the concept of “joint force generation,” which proposes keeping the same force structure while binding European militaries together with common support platforms.

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Alors que perdure la crise ukrainienne, l'Europe doit reconnaître la réalité d'un nouvel environnement stratégique et s'y adapter. Ces développements impliquent notamment de repenser la posture expéditionnaire adoptée par l'OTAN au cours des vingt dernières années, et à réévaluer le besoin de renforcer la défense collective et les capacités de réassurance. Les deux textes présentés ici, répondent, sous différents angles, à cette question. D'une part, une analyse fondée sur l'expérience estonienne en tant qu'Etat en première ligne de la menace, encourageant un retour à la dissuasion par des forces conventionnelles. D'autre part, une approche plus organisationnelle est présentée à travers le concept de « génération de force conjointe », proposant de conserver les structures de forces tout en mettant en commun les moyens logistiques.





# Introduction

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Once, again, the ghosts of war in Europe are back. As it happened twenty years ago with the Balkans conflicts, war in Ukraine came as a surprise to many Europeans who thought themselves rid of it forever. It explains why, prior to the Ukraine crisis, and since the end of the Cold War, two broad trends had been characterizing the way many European countries had been dealing with defense. The first trend was their little interest in defense matters. It meant that they were under-performing to maintain capable armed forces as well as to invest in future capabilities. Most simply did not see the need to do so. This structural trend coupled with the economic crisis that started in 2008 triggered the second broad trend: a rapid, sometimes brutal, decline in defense budgets across Europe. In many countries, the defense budget has served as an easy target to curb public spending. Defense expenditures have declined by 15 per cent between 2006 and 2013 within the European Union member states. Similarly, defense investment, comprising procurement and R&D, was lower in 2013 than it was in 2006.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that these sharp cuts will have devastating and long-term effects on European defense capabilities and consequently on its capacity to act.

At the NATO Summit in September 2014, heads of state and government agreed to devote 2% of their GDP to defense within the next decade and 20% of their defense budget to major equipment procurement.<sup>2</sup> This pledge, while non-binding, was an important gesture that defense should be taken more seriously. Since then, several countries have indeed announced an uptick in their defense budget. In most cases, the main stimulus has been the perceived Russian threat.

Whether this effort will be sustained and spread across Europe remains to be seen, but a mere increase in spending will not magically restore the capabilities lost in the past two decades if it fails to address the fundamental questions looming over Europe, especially in light of the Ukrainian crisis. The annexation of Crimea and the events in Eastern Ukraine have rekindled the debate over 'collective defense' – NATO's term to designate its core mission, i.e. territorial defense in face of a military threat. For the past fifteen years collective defense has been more or less neglected in favor of expeditionary warfare, which, in the wake of 9/11

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<sup>1</sup> European Defense Agency, *Defence Data 2013 Report*, Brussels, 2015, available at: [http://issuu.com/europeandefenceagency/docs/eda\\_defence\\_data\\_2013\\_web/1?e=4763412/12106343](http://issuu.com/europeandefenceagency/docs/eda_defence_data_2013_web/1?e=4763412/12106343).

<sup>2</sup> NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration*, 5 September 2014, available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm).

attacks, became the main operational prospect and the central motive to reform Allied armed forces. Politically, the commitment to NATO's Article 5 was considered as an *acquis*, therefore sparking off little thinking in most capitals especially in Western Europe. The capability requirements focused on flexibility and agility to operate in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other out-of-area theaters. The annexation of Crimea has in fact caused many countries to mull over whether NATO was ready and capable to face an Article 5 scenario in its territory.

This *Focus stratégique* explores that issue. The core question underlying the two contributions is whether European countries have the right mix of capabilities to fight both at home and abroad. The debate is oddly new, since it was felt as secondary to many European countries until last year. However, the events in Ukraine and the economic crisis have propelled the need to have this debate. This issue has consequences on the future capability outlook but also has political ramifications. It is indeed clear that concerns over collective defense are stronger in several countries in Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe. These countries feel that their fears have become reality and that they cannot be ignored as was often the case before. It has two possible consequences. First, they want their partners to be more sensitive to their security threats and seek reassurance. Second, a failure from their Western/Southern partners to do so could, in return, lead them to be also less interested in other threats they perceive as distant, especially in the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

The debate over the right mix of capabilities is critical since any change would take years and resources, which have grown scarcer in the past few years. Both in terms of capability development and procurement, it may imply more cooperation in the form of joint procurement and joint capability.

Andres Vosman and Magnus Petersson, the authors of the two contributions, share the same appreciation of the situation: the Ukraine crisis has been a wake-up call. However, they depart on ways to adapt European defense apparatuses to their new environment. Magnus Petersson emphasizes that the core problem is not that the mix is unbalanced but that there are not enough resources nationally to launch and sustain military operations. He is arguing in favor of a joint force generation process to counter this problem and ensure that Europe can still face up to security threats. Andres Vosman looks more specifically at how Estonia has been adapting its defense posture for several years – even prior to the Ukraine crisis. He shows that Estonia has reinvested resources in capabilities primarily geared toward collective defense. According to him, those capabilities are a shortfall in Europe – the result in particular of the lack of interest for collective defense in recent years. Since he perceives a pattern in Russia's behavior, he argues for a shift back to collective defense within NATO.

This publication aims to illustrate that the debate is happening and that no country should brush over its importance. There may be no fully

satisfactory route for all parties, but the NATO obligations, under the Washington Treaty, mean that all Allies must listen to and appreciate what their partners' concerns are, and engage with them to find solutions. Moreover, the debate is also relevant, because the economic crisis has hit national armed forces and capabilities heavily. It most likely will lead European countries to envision further defense cooperation if they want to be remain able to face a variety of threats to defend the European security both at home and abroad.



# Learning the Right Lessons from Ukraine

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*Andres Vosman*

Much has been written about the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine and the resulting strategic implications for the global order, European security architecture and NATO's future. All of these are fundamental issues and deserve the utmost attention. But what the war in Ukraine has taught us in the West in terms of capability requirements has received somewhat of a lesser focus. A major reason for this has been the hype around hybrid warfare as something inherently new, innovative and detached from traditional ways of waging war.<sup>3</sup> Another reason might be the fact that so many in the West are still in awe about what has been happening, reliving in a way the alarm-clock phase (or simply in a prolonged state of denial), whereas others have already concluded that the new European security environment is here to stay for the long haul and it is high time to draw practical conclusions.

Probably nowhere more than in Estonia did Russia's recent actions caused such debates, stimulated so much thinking and solidified the whole of society behind otherwise theoretical notions like deterrence and reassurance. As a West Berliner might have confessed three decades ago, this is the cost of living on a front line. Yet the past year can also be described as a paradox for Estonia and its southern Baltic neighbors. It is true that the events in Ukraine have reconfirmed that Europe is no more insulated from conventional war than any other place and that, two decades after the decay of Yugoslavia, the specter of civil war lives once again a few hundred kilometers from NATO's borders. On the other hand, however, NATO has finally woken up to the need to start taking Russia as a strategic threat and collective defense as the most important of its core tasks – not just in words but in actual day-to-day capability and operational planning activities. Reflecting that, the Baltic States are now hosting rotational allied presence and are in the process of pre-positioning heavy capabilities. Not a minuscule issue, NATO's Wales Summit agreed to implement a number of

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<sup>3</sup> Some really good meta-analyses about the Ukrainian conflict, including sufficiently explaining the conventional element, are Lawrence Freedman, "Ukraine and the Art of Limited War," *Survival*, Vol. 56, No. 3, Dec 2014-Jan 2015, pp. 7-42., Igor Sutyagin, "Russian Forces in Ukraine," *RUSI Briefing Paper*, 9 March 2015, available at: [https://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/201503\\_BP\\_Russian\\_Forces\\_in\\_Ukraine\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/201503_BP_Russian_Forces_in_Ukraine_FINAL.pdf), and Philip Karber, "The Russian Military Forum: Russia's Hybrid War Campaign: Implications for Ukraine and Beyond," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 10 March 2015, available at: <http://csis.org/event/russias-hybrid-war-campaign-implications-ukraine-and-beyond>.

key reforms as outlined in the Readiness Action Plan's assurance and adaptation measures.<sup>4</sup>

It would perhaps be far-fetched to characterize what has generally been an 'annus horribilis' for Europe's security as an 'annus mirabilis' for the Baltic States. There is a strong sense of solidarity with the hopes and dreams of the majority of Ukrainians and the traumas of war have been felt throughout the societies. Then again we are finally seeing things moving in the right direction, at least from a purely regional security policy viewpoint. Things are far from rosy and much more remains to be done – defense expenditures in Europe are still not being increased as promised by heads of state at Wales, practical aspects of some Summit decisions remain stuck in NATO committees due to a lack of consensus and there is still an apparent desire from some corners of Europe to go back to business as usual with Moscow. But considered where things were just 16 months ago we have taken a big step forward.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The Estonian Context***

In order to have a more nuanced appraisal of Estonia's decisions and opinions, it is worth presenting Estonia's key defense characteristics. Estonia's security and defense policy, unsurprisingly, relies on credible self-defense capability as well as on NATO and EU memberships. These two pillars reinforce each other and must be seen in conjunction, including with respect to capability development. Some 2.1% of GDP is devoted to military defense this year (around 440 million euro), conscription service is alive and kicking<sup>6</sup> and the readiness to take up arms to defend the country of 1.35 million is at an all-time high (close to 80%). Estonia has taken its international obligations seriously and has contributed to expeditionary operations since 1995, sustained 170 caveat-free troops in the Helmand province in spite of heavy casualties and was the first ally to join France with ground troops in a recent stabilization mission to Central African Republic. A major goal to transform itself from a security receiver to that of a provider has been shared by subsequent governments and even mundane defense issues are probably more widely debated than in most European countries.<sup>7</sup> Cyber security is a well-established priority area where Tallinn has strived to punch above its weight.<sup>8</sup> If Europeans are

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<sup>4</sup> NATO, *NATO's Readiness Action Plan*, December 2014, available at: [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2014\\_12/20141202\\_141202-factsheet-rap-en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_12/20141202_141202-factsheet-rap-en.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> A particular example of this: when Estonia's then defense minister at a seminar in a respectable Western think tank proposed an allied troop presence in the Baltics to deter Russia, the idea was quickly dismissed.

<sup>6</sup> 3,500 men aged 18-27 are conscripted annually for 8 to 11 months, representing around 50% of the given age group. With 80% support in the society, conscription has proven successful in generating support for the military, including its international deployments, and providing a pool for professional soldiers.

<sup>7</sup> Joel R. Hillison, *Stepping Up: Burden Sharing by NATO's Newest Members*, Carlisle, PA, US Army War College Press, 2014, pp. 262-266.

<sup>8</sup> Estonia hosts NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence and is an international leader in e-governance. The 2007 cyber attacks represented one of the first large-scale examples of politically motivated cyber attacks targeting a

sometimes called 'security free riders' from the other side of the Atlantic, it really does not do justice to Estonia.<sup>9</sup>

Just a few weeks into Russia's aggression in Ukraine there was suddenly no shortage of international leaders, foreign academics and diplomats who started telling us privately, "You were right about Russia all along." As can be imagined, this is not something one likes to be right about. Although the events in Crimea and subsequently in Eastern Ukraine were a surprise to Estonia, it was neither a paralyzing shock nor a paradigm-changing black swan event as it appears to have been in many capitals. Moscow's power projection ability as well as willingness to use military force for its foreign policy objectives, in stark contrast to Europe, its exercise scenarios and rearmament programs have been well known to Estonia. In terms of Russia's military capabilities, readiness levels and doctrine, there have consequently been no major surprises. Estonia had been informing its allies about those developments. This is exactly the reason why Estonia's long-term defense plan, outlining capability priorities, has not been opened for out-of-cycle revision. Thus, Russia's behavior was a tactical surprise but not so much a strategic one.

The main principle of Estonia's defense planning over the past several years, having admittedly learned from previous mistakes, has been the creation and sustainment of genuine and quickly usable forces and capabilities. Since the defense budget is limited and will always be for such a small country, the focus is clearly on what Estonia considers absolute priority capabilities. It means that they will not, for example, give in to temptations to procure something cheaply without fully analyzing the long-term implications and the proven need for it. One learns by doing and Estonia surely has learned from its own past mistakes.<sup>10</sup> Pouring additional funds into defense or evenly spreading the available resources to cover areas that do not support the priorities does not necessarily equate better defense.

Over the next few years, the priorities for Estonia's land forces are the continuing formation of two brigades, equipped with modern infantry fighting and other armored vehicles. Both brigades will be supplied with the most modern anti-tank weapons and mobile 155 mm artillery. Two key capabilities have been identified as critical but for now are postponed due to cost – formation of a tank battalion and medium-range air defense. In addition, Estonia's 24,000-strong volunteer force Defense League has been undergoing thorough reforms aiming at providing support to the military, taking responsibility for territorial defense, and even engaging in guerrilla

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state. These attacks were ironically a blessing in disguise, helping to put Estonia on the international e-map.

<sup>9</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of Estonia's threat perception, read Kaarel Kaas, "The Future of NATO's Defence and Deterrence Posture: the Baltic States Perspective," *Polish Institute of International Affairs*, December 2012, available at: [www.pism.pl/files/?id\\_plik=12567](http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=12567).

<sup>10</sup> Too optimistic economy growth and procurement cost forecasts, too optimistic personnel growth projections, the wish to expand command structures at the account of actual capabilities, constant reform-mindedness, etc.

warfare should a part or the entire national territory be occupied. It is interesting to note that the size of the Defense League has jumped by over 10% over the past 12 months.<sup>11</sup>

For Estonia's minimal air force<sup>12</sup>, the objective is to improve situational awareness by upgrading radars, better integration with NATO's command and control (C2) and further developing the Ämari airbase. The navy continues to enhance its already significant mine countering capability, a critical Alliance-wide shortfall.<sup>13</sup> Since Estonia's wartime military is largely a mobilization force based on reservists, a key goal for the entire military is to plan and train for mobilization, including for contingencies that fall short of war declaration. Comprehensive approach, aiming at refining civil-military cooperation at all levels and addressing non-military capability requirements in the same process as military ones, has been a priority for years. The hybrid tactics employed in Eastern Ukraine have proven the importance of this.

So it is probably not a big surprise to note that the war in Ukraine has not dramatically changed Estonia's capability planning outlook. The single exception was the decision taken some weeks into the aggression to bring forward the procurement of Javelin anti-tank weaponry.<sup>14</sup> This turned out to be a quick and available option to boost Estonia's (initial) self-defense capability but in essence was already in our plans.

That certainly does not mean that Estonia has learned nothing from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. As a direct neighbor still scarred by the horrors of the Soviet occupation<sup>15</sup>, being an infrequent target of military exercise scenarios, Estonia has no luxury to rest on its laurels. The ways the Russian military operates in an undeclared warzone side by side with the proxies, how the war casualties end up in unmarked graves in Eastern Ukraine, how occupied territories are governed, how conventional deterrence is employed in parallel to other elements of power, how state propaganda or snap exercises are used – all of these issues deserve great attention. In terms of more practical implications for capabilities, perhaps

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<sup>11</sup> "Resolve of Estonians Always High, Says Head of Defense League," *Eesti Rahvusringhääling* (ERR) [Estonian Public Broadcasting], 26 December 2014, available at: <http://news.err.ee/v/society/0cf2524d-ccd9-4832-99c8-f030e5cf418a>.

<sup>12</sup> The country has no military aircraft, but develops its air surveillance and military airport capability.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance NATO, *The Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence*, Study for Maritime Unmanned Systems In NATO, 8 December 2009, available at: [http://www.cjoscoe.org/images/MUS\\_in\\_NATO.pdf](http://www.cjoscoe.org/images/MUS_in_NATO.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Nicholas De Larriaga, "Estonia to buy Javelin ATGWs," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 11 June 2014, available at: <http://www.janes.com/article/39101/estonia-to-buy-javelin-atgws>.

<sup>15</sup> One of the psychological "scars" reflecting today's security policy thinking in Estonia is the decision in 1939-1940, after the outbreak of the Second World War, to allow the Soviet bases to be formed in the country and not to fight back militarily. Close neighbor Finland chose to fight back for its independence and, with heavy casualties, kept it. The other key historic takeaway is that for small nations in tough neighborhoods, neutrality in foreign policy does not work.



there is a stressed need for more special operations forces or helicopters instead of tanks but for now, Estonia is in no hurry to make changes.

One of the key lessons from Ukraine is that the backbone of everything we have seen in terms of hybrid warfare is conventional force and conventional deterrence. It has been the use of and the threat of conventional military superiority from Russia that has made possible the use of various proxies, the operating in the 'grey zone' between war and peace, the full employment of the DIME (diplomatic, military, informational, economic) ways and means. Without the extensive conventional military support from Russia, without the buildup of tens of battalion tactical groups near the border and the physical presence of thousands of Russian uniformed soldiers in Ukraine, the whole conflict in Eastern Ukraine would have been long over and Kiev's control of the territories restored.<sup>16</sup> Obviously the war in Ukraine has also had a complex, and worrying, nuclear dimension but I would argue that its importance is secondary. The overwhelming majority of Ukraine's military casualties during the entire conflict has been a result of Pro-Russian Forces' artillery fire.<sup>17</sup> There is nothing hybrid or novel about that.

Therein lies one of the dangers – we must not read too much into the Ukrainian war experience, simply exporting these events to a theoretical NATO context but try to detect the big picture and longer-term trends vis-a-vis the threat to European peace from Russia. Every conflict is unique and in the villages and railway junctions of Eastern Ukraine, Russia has tried to make use of the best available options that apply to Eastern Ukraine. Should there be another aggression, the modus operandi could be very different: perhaps more airpower, exclusive use of special forces, even more speed and less proxies, use of crippling cyber attacks and so on. The key question, thus, is that while understanding and learning from the opposing side's tactics, do we also understand and learn from its strategy.

### ***What Should the Alliance Make of This?***

NATO, as well as the European Union, has to take all of this into account. The Alliance should avoid itself in lengthy and overly theoretical debates regarding what constitutes Article 5, what can be done to avoid energy blackmails or how to tackle media agit-prop. NATO should focus on its core strength which is traditional military affairs, obviously reflecting the dynamic character of warfare. And it has over the past 14 months done that by developing a sufficiently robust construct for deterrence and reassurance to be taken stock of and further refined at the next summit in Warsaw. After all, bolstering borders, engaging in sanctions regimes or budgeting pan-European strategic communications initiatives are issues where the EU and other agencies are much better suited. There is a real trap for the Alliance to overstretch itself and try to be the answer to all things hybrid where in reality a smart EU-NATO cooperation would be much more meaningful.

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<sup>16</sup> Russia and the so-called separatists were quickly losing in the face of Ukrainian counter-offensive in July 2014 and it was only after the use of large-scale conventional units and support from Russia that the tide was changed in August.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Karber, "The Russian Military Forum," *op.cit.*

Thus from a front-line state's perspective the vivid debates around 'hybrid warfare' are really puzzling. Is it maybe because talking about something seemingly new and innovative spares us from talking about the main issues at stake? Like the lackluster state of defense spending, unilateral disarmament (when every other continent is going in the opposite direction), even perhaps the lack of solidarity within Europe and the lack of vision externally.

Symptomatically in NATO, there is a tendency to drown the big issue of inadequate and insufficient defense spending into endless intellectual debates on whether input metrics (defense spending figures) actually reflect the true contribution of an ally, whether we need more comprehensive indices and so on.<sup>18</sup> Of course output, i.e. country's actual contributions to Alliance operations, deployability and sustainability, are important. Estonia and the other Baltic states have never had issues with the accentuated focus on deployability – after all, Article 5 operations also partly depend on deployable and sustainable capabilities. At the same time, being a front-line member-state, one needs a balance between territorial (static and heavy) and deployable forces and capabilities. Arguably NATO is collectively better off when Turkey, Romania or Lithuania focus some of their national forces and capabilities for territorial needs because it enhances the collective security.<sup>19</sup> After all, when the home turf is kept under control, the Alliance collectively has more room to operate externally. As an oft-used slogan in NATO circles puts it – to be effective away, one needs to be credible at home.

Another misperception is that the Baltic States' only interest is to focus NATO on collective defense. Let it be stated point blank that all three NATO core tasks (collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security) are essential and agreed upon but collective defense remains the bedrock and *raison d'être* of the Alliance. Given the realities of the past two decades and NATO's current posture, a long-overdue rebalancing towards collective defense is needed. That is what the Baltic states strive for – a pivot towards collective defense. In addition, it is evident that recent expeditionary operations have been useful for collective defense as well – increased interoperability, more visibility in terms of critical capability gaps, added impetus towards innovation, tested domestic and international coordination are some of the merits.

Much has been written about the similarities and differences between capabilities necessary for European-based collective defense and out-of-area crisis management missions.<sup>20</sup> Some stress that the dichotomy

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<sup>18</sup> *Motivating Improved Contributions to the Alliance: Defence Measurements*, NATO, Joint Analysis Lessons-Learned Center, 20 June 2011, available at: [http://www.jallc.nato.int/newsmedia/docs/factsheet\\_defence\\_metrics.pdf](http://www.jallc.nato.int/newsmedia/docs/factsheet_defence_metrics.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> That certainly should be no pretext for not developing deployable forces or not contributing to collective operations.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Richard Kugler, "NATO Requirements for Territorial Defense and Expeditionary Operations: Similarities and Differences," *CTNSP/NDU Working Paper*, February 2010, or David Yost, "NATO's Evolving Purposes and the Next

between the two is overstated and there is actually a wide confluence. From a Mediterranean ally's point of view for instance, you would need strategic lift, robust Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and other key enablers for both an expeditionary crisis management mission and a hardcore Article 5 scenario in the High North. Yet others claim that there is a marked difference. While Afghanistan and the Balkans required relatively light forces for an extended duration, modern conventional high-intensity collective defense scenarios would require high-readiness, heavily equipped forces with a high degree of host nation support, likely deployed for shorter periods.

These two tasks might have some overlaps in terms of capabilities but only to a degree.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, over the past several years we have seen a dramatic European-wide fashion of abandoning capabilities needed for territorial or collective defense (infantry fighting vehicles, tanks, artillery, submarines, etc), coupled with endemic troop level cuts.<sup>22</sup> It is obviously the job of defense planners to deal with the specifics of the issue, including striking the right balance between various capabilities for different mission sets as well as between the most likely versus the most demanding missions. Beforehand, there has to be a political will to deal with the new political and security realities. The problem is not so much the lack of knowledge regarding the mechanics of capability planning, it is that collective planning can only be done with the forces and capabilities that nations bring to the table. Or put differently, the core issue is that the overall trend among NATO allies is still not turned toward prioritizing forces, capabilities and training that would be necessary in the new security realm – or not treating defense as a priority at all.

An oft-used argument supporting the laissez-faire approach to the conventional forces is that conventionally NATO is infinitely stronger than Russia. Yet that claim misses the point. Deterrence is also regional, which was equally true three decades ago. Currently the Baltic Sea is the only Alliance region where Russia has a massive peacetime conventional superiority. Given Moscow's stated rearmament goals and US 'pivot to Asia' policy<sup>23</sup>, the gap might be even increasing. Another misconception is that since the world is changing rapidly and new technologies render older ones ineffective, there is less need for traditional kinetic weapons. But as a

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Strategic Concept," *International Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 2, 2010, pp. 489-522, available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/40267>.

<sup>21</sup> Barth Espen Eide, *Collective Defence in Today's Security Environment*, Speech given on 16 October 2009, available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/collective-defence-in-todays-security-en/id582015/>. This address introduced the post-Georgia collective defense rebalancing debate in NATO. Also worth reading is Wojciech Lorenz, "Yawning Gaps in NATO Planning," *Polish Institute of International Affairs*, No. 42, November 2012, available at: <http://bit.ly/1MLitaM>.

<sup>22</sup> European armed forces have decreased by close to 500,000 soldiers between 2006 and 2012 from roughly 2 million to 1,5 million (EDA figures).

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Roger McDermott, "The Kremlin, the General Staff and Unlocking Future Warfare Capabilities," *The Jamestown Foundation*, Vol. 11, No. 84, 6 May 2014, available at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=42322&no\\_cache=1#.VUelqBarODU](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=42322&no_cache=1#.VUelqBarODU).

retired British general recently wrote, “these new modes of warfare are adjuncts to hard kinetic fighting power. They may be indispensable, but they are adjuncts nonetheless”. And goes on asking rhetorically, “Why is it that the nations most involved in developing cyber-weapons also see the need to possess massive conventional forces?”<sup>24</sup> As long as most armed forces keep traditional kinetic weapons in great numbers, their relevance will remain acute.

As stated earlier, the decisions taken at the last NATO Summit are a tremendous step forward (ref to the summit declaration). But these decisions have to be implemented, fully and without cherry-picking. Reforming the NATO Response Force, intensifying exercises and contingency planning are some of the most important ones. NATO collectively and allies individually have shown a lot of solidarity with those who feel more vulnerable to a bully next door. But solidarity alone is not a deterrent.

Russia’s war against Ukraine has not changed the essence of Estonia’s security policy or capability development priorities. Ukraine has not changed the big picture for Estonia – Tallinn understood, at least from the 2008 invasion of Georgia onwards, that Russia is willing and capable of using military force against its neighbors as it deems necessary. There is no immediate danger to the NATO territory but should Moscow’s self-inflicted isolation from the outside world get more boost from chauvinism and inferiority complex, sinister scenarios aiming at crippling or precluding the Alliance to act could be envisaged. Putin in his attempts to revise the international order could accordingly be tempted to undermine NATO, not by overwhelming force because Russia lacks one but by being asymmetric means and using his main advantage which is decision-making speed. These scenarios might never materialize but to minimize the likelihood NATO has to show that it means business before it is too late. The stakes are simply too high. It is time for the Alliance and the West in general to get the big picture and act accordingly. Agreeing to a comprehensive package in Wales and deploying allied troops, even if only on a rotational basis, in front-line states is a right start. Increasing investments into defense, especially conventional forces and capabilities needed for territorial collective defense missions, would be a logical next step.

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<sup>24</sup> Michael Graydon, “The dangerous risks Britain is taking with defence,” *Financial Times*, 1 March 2015, available at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f577a18c-bea6-11e4-8036-00144feab7de.html#axzz3asQ2zGOS>.

# Towards Joint Force Generation: European Capability Development and the Ukraine Crisis

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*Magnus Petersson*<sup>25</sup>

This paper will discuss the degree to which the Ukrainian crisis has the potential to mark a shift in European military capability development. In particular, it will assess whether it is legitimate to say that the ‘transformation agenda’ has generated too much expeditionary capabilities at the expense of heavy capabilities necessary for collective defense, and discuss if a rebalancing is needed and possible to achieve. Before that, it is useful to provide a background to the Ukraine Crisis and Western reactions to the crisis.

The main argument in the paper is that the Ukrainian crisis can be a facilitator for a more rational capability development process through joint force generation. Such a development will decrease the effects of increasingly smaller defense forces in Europe as well as increase operational sustainability.

## ***The “Wake-up Call”***

Russia’s military ability and political will to use force to achieve its policy goals outside its borders has increased during the last decade. It started with much more frequent military activities in the North in 2007–2008, for example regular show of air force around Icelandic and Norwegian borders; the Norwegian Defense Forces noted an increase in identified aircraft from 14 in 2006 to 88 in 2007.<sup>26</sup> It continued with increased military activities on land illustrated by several large exercises and of course the war in Georgia in 2008.<sup>27</sup> It reached an even higher level of activity on the European

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<sup>25</sup> The author would like to thank Etienne de Durand, Gjert Lage Dyndal, Tormod Heier, Paal Sigurd Hilde, Vivien Pertusot, Thomas Slensvik, and Tor Egil Walter for excellent comments.

<sup>26</sup> Paal Sigurd Hilde and Helene Widerberg. “NATO’s nye strategiske konsept og Norge” [NATO’s new Strategic Concept and Norway], *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, No. 4, 2010, pp. 10-20.

<sup>27</sup> After the War in Georgia, Russia held its largest military exercise since the end of the Cold War, “Stability -2008,” that lasted over two months and included 50,000 soldiers. Figures quoted from Pavel Felgenhauer, “After August 7: The Escalation of the Russia–Georgia War,” in Cornell Svante E. and Frederick Starr Stephen (eds.), *The Guns of August 2008: Russia’s War in Georgia*, New York, Sharpe, 2009, pp. 162-180. This kind of exercises has continued since then.

continent during 2014 with the annexation of Crimea, the support of Ukrainian separatists and the intensified intimidation of its Western neighbors; in the air, at sea, and at land. Even non-aligned Western countries, such as Finland and Sweden, have been intimidated more frequently during 2014.<sup>28</sup>

Although the situation is not comparable to the Cold War and Russia is not a super power any longer – it has a GDP comparable to that of France and the United Kingdom – Russia uses its great power status and resources in a way that few experts predicted just ten years ago. Its behavior has been punished politically and economically by the West. The economic sanctions – blocking property of certain Russian persons and entities, treasury sanctions against Russian energy and defense sectors, etc. – seem to have been effective in their own way: the Russian economy, as well as several of President Vladimir Putin’s powerful supporters, have been hit hard. Yet the sanctions have so far failed to change Russian policy. It can on the contrary be argued that the Western reaction has increased Russia’s expansionist and revisionist tendencies even more, and that they have united the Russian people against the West and strengthened President Putin’s position.<sup>29</sup>

Russian behavior does not seem rational from a Western point of view, and it is hard to explain it. Why does Russia concentrate its limited power in the only direction that is friendly and stable, i.e. the West?

Russia is “a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma”, as Winston Churchill famously said in a radio broadcast in October 1939. But, as Churchill also suggested in that broadcast, the motives of Russia’s external actions are interest-based, and it could not, he continued ‘be in accordance with the interests of the safety of Russia that Germany should plant itself upon the shores of the Black Sea, or that it should overrun the Balkan States... That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.’<sup>30</sup>

A similar argument about the interest-based motives behind Russia’s actions has been made recently by John Mearsheimer. According to him, Putin’s ‘pushback’ should not have come as a surprise for the West,

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas Frear et al, “Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014,” *ELN Policy Brief*, November 2014, available at: [http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/dangerous-brinkmanship-close-military-encounters-between-russia-and-the-west-in-2014\\_2101.html](http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/dangerous-brinkmanship-close-military-encounters-between-russia-and-the-west-in-2014_2101.html).

<sup>29</sup> See for example, Victor Mizin, “Russia–NATO Relations after Newport: End of the Game?,” *European Leadership Network*, 23 September 2014, available at: [http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/russia-nato-relations-after-newport-end-of-the-game\\_1928.html](http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/russia-nato-relations-after-newport-end-of-the-game_1928.html).

<sup>30</sup> Winston Churchill, “The Russian Enigma,” Broadcast at the BBC, 1 October 1939, available at: <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/RusnEnig.html>.

since the West had been 'moving into Russia's backyard and threatening its core strategic interests', for a long time.<sup>31</sup>

But it certainly came as a surprise for the West. Back in March, 2014, then NATO's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in a speech that the Ukraine Crisis was a 'wake-up call' for the transatlantic community,<sup>32</sup> and the expression 'wake-up call' has, since then, become a metaphor for Western politicians.

### **Western Reactions**

US reactions to the Ukraine Crisis were rapid, forceful, and substantial during the spring of 2014. President Obama took the lead, and it was welcome from a European point of view. For a long time the US had been focusing on the Asia-Pacific, 'neglecting' Europe and 'refusing' to be the *primus inter pares* within European security affairs. Since the Ukraine Crisis started, however, 'leading from behind,' or 'taking a back seat,' expressions frequently used during the operation in Libya in 2011, have been dropped from the vocabulary of the administration.<sup>33</sup>

US money was also spent in Europe, an additional \$1 billion, to bolster US military presence. President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, and State Secretary John Kerry visited Europe several times – especially NATO's most recent European members, such as the Baltic States, Poland, and Romania – and American and NATO forces were sent to reassure them that NATO's 'Musketeer Paragraph' – 'one for all and all for one' – Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, was reliable. For example, NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission was enhanced, and NATO AWACS deployed over Poland, Romania and the Baltic Sea.

Furthermore, NATO's Wales Summit, held in Newport, Wales, 4–5 September, 2014, was dominated by NATO's reaction to the Ukraine Crisis, and the reaffirmation of collective defense. According to Christian Nünlist and Martin Zapfe, "NATO managed to find a new lowest common denominator at its Wales summit: The mutual assistance guarantee under Article 5, rather than global operations or democratic expansion, has been reconfirmed as the bedrock of the alliance."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> John Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5, September/October 2014, pp. 77-89.

<sup>32</sup> Anders Fogh Rasmussen, *The Future of the Alliance: Revitalizing NATO for a Changing World*, Speech at the Brookings Institution, 19 March 2014, available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2014/03/19-nato-secretary-general-address>.

<sup>33</sup> Magnus Petersson, "The US and the Wales Summit: Washington is back, and NATO is back to basics," *European Leadership Network*, 11 September 2014, available at: [http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/the-us-and-the-wales-summit-washington-is-back-and-nato-is-back-to-basics\\_1882.html](http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/the-us-and-the-wales-summit-washington-is-back-and-nato-is-back-to-basics_1882.html).

<sup>34</sup> Christian Nünlist and Martin Zapfe, "NATO after Wales: Dealing with Russia – Next Steps", *CSS Analysis in Security Policy*, No. 161, October 2014, pp. 1-2. See also, Ian Kearns, "NATO in Wales: Summit of Missed Opportunities," *European Leadership Network*, 19 September 2014, available at:

Despite this, the renewed focus on collective, territorial defense and Article 5, NATO's way forward is not that simple. On the contrary. The other main issue discussed in connection to the Wales Summit was how to handle the Islamic State (IS). The importance of this issue, discussed in a separate form during – but not as a part of – the summit, manifests that there is still a tension within NATO regarding the focus of the alliance – eastwards vs southwards – and regarding the role of the alliance – regional vs global.<sup>35</sup>

These tensions within the alliance, also described elsewhere in the scholarly literature,<sup>36</sup> will not disappear because of the Ukraine Crisis, but the crisis has certainly questioned the balance between the South and the East and between global and regional security. What consequences could that have for capability development?

### ***The Need for a Different Capability Development***

Since the end of the Cold War almost all Western and Central European states, also non-NATO members such as Sweden and Ireland, have gone through a fundamental transformation process. A central component of the transformation process has been a mental and organizational shift from 'stationary' defense at home to 'expeditionary' operations abroad. In less than fifteen years, the forces of these countries have transformed from large, threat- and conscripts-based, focused on territorial defense, toward small, capabilities-based, professional, and focused on operations worldwide.<sup>37</sup>

In connection to this 'transformation paradigm,' it has been argued that capability development aiming for territorial defense differs from capability development aiming for expeditionary defense. Capabilities needed for territorial defense – such as heavy armor, artillery, fighters, submarines, and frigates – differ from those needed for expeditionary operations – forces that are easy to move fast and far, and are trained and equipped for 'lighter' forms of operations such as counterinsurgency.<sup>38</sup>

One would think that this fundamental transformation process has brought about a different capability development in these states. Capability

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<http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/nato-in-wales-summit-of-missed-opportunities-1913.html>.

<sup>35</sup> John R. Deni, "NATO's New Trajectories after the Wales Summit," *Parameters*, Vol. 44, No. 3, Autumn 2014, p. 60.

<sup>36</sup> Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, "NATO's Vietnam? Afghanistan and the Future of the Atlantic Alliance," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2009, pp. 529-547.

<sup>37</sup> Magnus Petersson, "Defense Transformation and Legitimacy in Scandinavia after the Cold War: Theoretical and Practical Implications," *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 37, No. 4, 2011, pp. 701-724. The scholarly 'transformation' literature is huge. See for example Theo Farrell, Terry Terriff and Frans Osinga (eds.), *A Transformation Gap? American Innovations and European Military Change*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010, and Anthony King, *Transformation of Europe's Armed Forces*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> John R. Deni, "NATO's New Trajectories after the Wales Summit," *op. cit.*



development is, however, not as rational as it should be. The Netherlands and Denmark are two of the few examples that actually have transformed their forces from territorial defense to expeditionary operations, *including* capability development. Denmark has disbanded its submarine force, its ground-based air defense capability and most of its heavy artillery. Instead, Denmark's forces have been designed to support NATO operations closely linked to – even integrated into – US and UK forces.<sup>39</sup>

By and large, most countries have however continued to 'produce' traditional, conventional forces that could both be used 'at home' and 'away.' Norway is a good example. It has recently procured new frigates, decided to procure the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and the intention is to procure a new artillery system as well as a new submarine system. All this happened before the Ukraine crisis. Even countries that cannot afford to, or do not want to, buy new defense systems, invests in traditional, conventional forces; two examples are the Czech Republic's and Hungary's leasing of the JAS 39 Gripen aircraft, also decided before the Ukraine crisis.<sup>40</sup>

There are several reasons for 'conservatism' in capability development and procurement. First of all, procurement is a long term process in periods of time where we are at peace or involved in conflicts of choice. It often takes 10–20 years to replace old weapons systems with new ones in this framework. Second, Western military officers seem to be of the opinion that conventional warfare is their primary mission, and that military operations other than conventional warfare are exceptions that can be handled on an ad hoc basis and should definitely not allow to steer the capability development process.<sup>41</sup> Third, the 'military-industrial complex' or the 'iron triangle' between bureaucratic (the armed forces), legislative (politicians) and private sector (armaments manufacturers) actors tends to hinder flexible and rational procurement and capability development.<sup>42</sup> Therefore it is not surprising that most countries have not changed their capability development since the end of the Cold War, although budgets have decreased almost everywhere.

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<sup>39</sup> See for example Sverre Dese, "Towards an Affordable European Defence and Security Policy? The Case for Extensive European Force Integration," in Janne Haaland Matlary and Magnus Petersson (eds.), *NATO's European Allies: Military Ability and Political Will*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> Jomana Amara and Petr Pargac, "Offsets and Defence Procurement in the Czech Republic: A Case Study," *European Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1, March 2009, pp. 63-80 and Lukáš Dyčka, and Miroslav Mareš, "The Development and Future of Fighter Planes Acquisitions in Countries of the Visegrad Group," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2012, pp. 533-557.

<sup>41</sup> An example of this is the animated debate between 'Coin-dinistas' and 'Coin-tras' within the US Army the last years. See Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Reconsidering war's logic and grammar," *Infinity Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 2011, pp. 4-7.

<sup>42</sup> Christopher M. Jones and Kevin P. March, "The Politics of Weapons Procurement: Why some Programs Survive and Others Die," *Defense & Security Analysis*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2011, pp. 359-373; Peter K. Eide and Charles D. Allen, "The More Things Change Acquisition Reform Remains the Same," *Defense Acquisition Reform Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2012, pp. 99-120.

What has happened, however, is that Western capability development has generated fewer units because of more expensive weapons systems in combination with decreased defense budgets. The capabilities are sophisticated, flexible, mobile, deployable and ready, but they are so few that they have low sustainability and high vulnerability – most of the small and medium European militaries are actually not full-spectrum anymore. At the end of the Cold War, the British Navy had 50 frigates and destroyers and the British Army had 900 main battle tanks. In 2010 the numbers were 19 and 200, respectively.<sup>43</sup> For smaller countries, such as Norway and Sweden, the situation is even more striking: The Norwegian Army has been reduced by 92 per cent (from 13 to one brigade) and the Swedish Army by 93 per cent (from 29 to two brigades) between 1990 and 2010.<sup>44</sup> In practice that means that many of the smaller nations cannot conduct territorial defense on an individual basis; it has to be done within a coalition of forces.

The problem is not mainly ‘wrong’ capability development. In fact, the distinction between forces necessary for territorial defense versus those necessary for expeditionary operations shall not be overemphasized. The European defense structures of late 1990s were badly suited for both territorial defense and expeditionary operations. They were ‘big’, but poorly trained, not particularly interoperable, lacked integrated logistics, relevant communications and ammunition, had low readiness, and could hardly be moved. NATO’s former Secretary General (1999–2004), Lord George Robertson, repeatedly complained that the European states were pressed to keep 50,000 troops in the Balkans, although defense spending was considerable:

...hardly any European country can deploy useable and effective forces in significant numbers outside their borders, and sustain them for months or even years as we all need to do today. For all Europe’s rhetoric, and an annual investment of over \$ 140 billion by NATO’s European members, we still need US help to move command and provision a major operation.<sup>45</sup>

The main problem today is that European armed forces have too few units to sustain conventional operations during a long period (low sustainability). In small states they might soon have an under-critical mass of units which will cause capability gaps when important systems simply disappear as they become unsustainable. In addition, medium ground capabilities as favored by European nations in the past 20 years would by themselves be better suited for counterinsurgency operations. They would however likely need to be complemented by heavy forces should the opposite side have such heavy forces itself. All this calls for a

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<sup>43</sup> Sverre Diesen, “Towards an Affordable European Defence and Security Policy? The Case for Extensive European Force Integration,” *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> Magnus Petersson, “Defense Transformation and Legitimacy in Scandinavia after the Cold War: Theoretical and Practical Implications,” *op. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> George Robertson, “A Global Dimension for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership,” NATO, 19 February 2002, available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020219a.htm>.

new approach to defense cooperation or integration to be able to keep an all-round defense structure.<sup>46</sup>

Norway's former Chief of Defense, Sverre Diesen, has suggested three forms of such defense cooperation: role specialization, pooling and sharing, and joint force generation. Role specialization means that a group of countries decides to divide their overall defense and security tasks between them; an extreme variant would be that one country has an army, another a navy, with a third an air force. Each country will retain basic military capabilities and competencies, whereas responsibility for fielding some of the more expensive systems in the capability spectrum will be shared between them on a complementary basis.<sup>47</sup> Today, this is not yet a realistic solution since it presupposes joint action by all and thus creates a significant vulnerability for each nation. But in the longer term, given that defense budgets continue to shrink and defense technology continue to be more and more costly, it could become a realistic option.

Pooling and sharing is a more structured – and more realistic in the short term – approach to the same problem, according to Diesen, creating a common force or capability. The EU is calling this pooling and sharing, and NATO smart defense.<sup>48</sup> The point is the same, however: to create a common force or capability. Current and successful examples of this are NATO's AWACS fleet and the Strategic Air Lift Capability that also Finland and Sweden participate in. Under this arrangement, nations provide a proportional share of the cost of manning and operating the capability.<sup>49</sup> Another good example is the European Air Transport Command (EATC), established in 2010, which allows the participating countries to reduce their transport flights by using other member states spare capacities. Although not a part of the EU's pooling and sharing, it shares a similar spirit. A final example is NATO's agreed Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS), a capability that will be able to provide surveillance over large areas in any weather and light conditions, which will be operational in 2017–2018.<sup>50</sup>

The essence of the third form, joint force generation approach, is, according to Diesen, that each nation will retain its entire spectrum of capabilities, and the necessary resources will be achieved by having a common logistic and training organization supporting the forces:

The first prerequisite to make this work is that the countries in question procure the same equipment for their forces, at least when it comes to major items such as main battle tanks, artillery, helicopters and so on,

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<sup>46</sup> Sverre Diesen, "Towards an Affordable European Defence and Security Policy? The Case for Extensive European Force Integration," *op.cit.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> See for example Giovanni Faleg and Alessandro Giovannini, "EU Defence Policy after Chicago: Going Smart?," *CEPS Commentary*, 19 May 2012, available at: [http://aei.pitt.edu/35031/1/GF\\_&\\_AG\\_After\\_Chicago.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/35031/1/GF_&_AG_After_Chicago.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Sverre Diesen, "Towards an Affordable European Defence and Security Policy? The Case for Extensive European Force Integration," *op.cit.*

<sup>50</sup> NATO, *Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS)*, available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natolive/topics\\_48892.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/fr/natolive/topics_48892.htm).

thereby achieving a certain commonality of systems. This will enable them to have a joint basis for force generation, such as maintenance facilities, training infrastructure, specialist courses for technical as well as operational personnel and so on... Although such an arrangement will also create a degree of mutual interdependence, this will be in the field of logistics and support, as opposed to the more immediate kind of operational dependence created by the role specialization approach.<sup>51</sup>

According to Diesen, the strength of joint force generation is that joint operational action is not a prerequisite, only an option. It will demand coordinated investments and capability development, and definitely challenge the iron triangle, especially for countries that have retained a defense industrial base.

The difficulties of this model have been demonstrated empirically several times within the framework of the so-called Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFECO), when efficiency has been challenged by sovereignty. The most well-known example is perhaps the Swedish–Norwegian Archer artillery project, formalized in 2007 and interpreted as a flagship of Nordic defense cooperation. The project was shut down in December 2013 due to Norwegian technical dissatisfaction with the system, but as Håkon Lunde Saxi has argued, there were other – perhaps more important – underlying problems as well with this model of defense cooperation:

At its optimistic start, in order to increase cost-effectiveness, it initially envisioned the joint storage of ammunition and the joint maintenance of guns at a depot in Sweden. However, this plan ran into serious trouble when Sweden refused to issue an ironclad guarantee to Norway that the ammunition and guns would be made available to Norway in a crisis. Such a guarantee would be incompatible with Swedish nonalignment. Norway thus feared abandonment by nonaligned Sweden in a crisis, while Sweden feared becoming entrapped and losing its freedom of action vis-à-vis NATO member Norway. These concerns seem to have overridden concerns about efficiency.<sup>52</sup>

But despite the difficulties, joint force generation could be the future model of capability development, especially between allies within NATO, where concerns about sovereignty should be less central. In addition, as many have argued, the question of sovereignty needs to be addressed despite the evident challenges. The vast majority of European countries have relinquished the option to use military forces independently. Moreover, the shrinking of national capabilities within small

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<sup>51</sup> Sverre Diesen, "Towards an Affordable European Defence and Security Policy? The Case for Extensive European Force Integration," *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> Håkon Lunde Saxi, "Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO): Balancing Efficiency and Sovereignty, NATO and Nonalignment," in Kati Leopojarvi (ed.), *Stete Yearbook 2013*, Helsinki, Finnish Committee for European Security, 2014, p. 70.

armed forces begs the question of their capacity to defend themselves or even be part of a coalition in the future.<sup>53</sup>

The joint force generation approach could also open up for interested NATO partners such as Austria, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland to a larger degree than role specialization and pooling and sharing, since it is more about coordination than integration. The Framework Nations Concept, discussed at the Wales Summit, points in that direction. The idea is that a framework nation coordinates a group of nations working together voluntarily to close existing gaps, be they operational or capability-related.

### **Conclusion**

The Ukrainian crisis has, together with decreased defense budgets, the potential to mark a shift in European military capability development. Primarily not because the present capability development processes leads to 'wrong' capabilities (expeditionary capabilities rather than capabilities necessary for collective defense). European territorial defense have to be more expeditionary today than during the Cold War, i.e. the forces must be able to move fast and secure over long distances.

The main problem is that capabilities are insufficient. NATO's European allies, especially the small members, have so few units left that they are forced to cooperate if they want to keep an all-round defense that can operate over longer periods (sustainability). The joint force generation model – joint capability development but not necessarily joint operations – could be a new model acceptable for all states involved. NATO's concept of framework nations, coordinating groups of nations, seems promising in that respect, because it opens for coordination based on national sovereignty. And the Ukraine Crisis will hopefully facilitate that.

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<sup>53</sup> See for example Antonio Missiroli (ed.), *Enabling the Future: European Military Capabilities 2013–2025: Challenges and Avenues*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2013.



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