

Contemporary Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Front

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Contemporary Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Front, by MAJ Benjamin R. Ritter, US Army, 44 pages.

In the wake of Russian actions in Ukraine in 2014, NATO and the United States enhanced their forward posture with a rotational force designed to deter further Russian adventurism. With the additional US force presence in Europe a new reality for the foreseeable future, some have begun to question the efficiency and efficacy of a rotational presence, preferring instead to return additional US combat forces to a permanent posture in Europe. As USAREUR assesses priorities for the potential return of additional capability to Europe on a permanent basis, initial prioritization should go to the formations that contribute to the foundational capabilities outlined in the Chairman's 2012 Joint Operational Access Concepts and 2014 Army Operating Concept. These documents prioritize the Army's role in providing the foundational capabilities necessary to facilitate follow-on Joint Forces in a mature theater. Headquarters, infrastructure, logistics, and intelligence elements will perform the most important functions in enabling follow-on forces in a mature theater with adequate initial NATO conventional combat capability.

To reach this conclusion, this monograph first analyzes conventional deterrence theory. Second, an assessment of the current situation in Europe. Third, an analysis of the relative effectiveness and efficiency of rotational forces vs. permanent forward presence. Finally, a discussion of the role of the Army in the Joint Operational Access Concept. When considered together, these variables suggest a return to competition with Russia in Europe, and the necessity to return US and NATO force postures to deterrence over engagement. However, NATO Strategic Concepts still prioritize engagement, a concept that the North Atlantic Council should evaluate in coming years, against the emerging trends in European security affairs. While the alliance evaluates the strategic concept, the US Army should consider the most immediate priorities, those that return US capabilities to a posture suitable for war fighting and deterrence.

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Acronyms

| | |
|---------|---|
| A2AD | Anti-Access and Area Denial |
| ABCT | Armored Brigade Combat Team |
| AOC | Army Operating Concept |
| CAB | Combat Aviation Brigade |
| CFE | Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty |
| CONUS | Continental United States |
| EAS | European Activity Set |
| EFP | Enhanced Forward Presence |
| ERI | European Reassurance Initiative (before 2016) |
| EDI | European Deterrence Initiative (after 2016) |
| EUCOM | US European Command |
| GDPR | Global Defense Posture Review |
| GWOT | Global War on Terrorism |
| JCS | Joint Chiefs of Staff |
| JMRC | Joint Multinational Readiness Center |
| JOAC | Joint Operational Access Concept |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NRF | NATO Response Force |
| OAR | Operation Atlantic Resolve |
| RAND | Research and Development Corporation |
| RAP | NATO Readiness Action Plan |
| SACEUR | Supreme Allied Commander Europe |
| SOC | Russian Special Operations Command |
| USAREUR | US Army Europe |
| VJTF | NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force |

Introduction

In the contemporary environment, many have expressed the need for the United States to engage in a renewed approach to deterrence of Russia. This monograph seeks to appreciate conventional deterrence theory, particularly the role the US Army should play in deterring Russia in contemporary Europe. As an element of the US Joint Force and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Alliance, the Army brings certain capabilities to the table, some of which will be more relevant than others in the current context. In seeking to prioritize the types of committed, long-term Army forces, the findings suggest a prioritization of the foundational capabilities the Army contributes to the Joint Force and NATO. Consistent with the Army Operating Concept, foundational capabilities underwrite the Army's requirements to set the theater, and consist primarily of headquarters, logistics, and enabling units that function as combat multipliers when they are culturally aware and interoperable with allies in the theater. While further commitment of additional long-term combat forces remains a potential for future Army posture in Europe, investment in foundational capabilities remains a necessary component to facilitate their return.

To reach this conclusion, this monograph first explores the development of deterrence theory and the contribution of conventional forces in a deterrence role throughout the Cold War and in the decades since. Next, an analysis of the contemporary operational environment in Europe demonstrates the complexity and maturity of the theater in terms of infrastructure, economics, politics, and allied capability. Third, an investigation of costs and benefits suggests no demonstrable difference between the cost and deterrence value of rotational versus forward postured forces. Finally, a review of the contemporary concepts for employment of the Joint Force and the Army Operating Concept demonstrates the priorities for the Army in the context of the European Theater, while evaluating potential opportunity and risk.

Deterrence Theory and US Posture, 1945-2014

Since the onset of the Cold War, deterrence theorists worked to articulate the relationship between nuclear and conventional deterrence. While atomic weapons initially promised a panacea, for many, the onset of the Korean War demonstrated their inadequacy to deter a conventional threat. Unable to contain the communist bloc across the entire perimeter of Eurasia, the United States consolidated ground forces at the most endangered points on the perimeter to deter conventional territorial gains. The end of the Cold War encouraged a rapid drawdown from forward posture, and the onset of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) led to a review of US posture in 2004 that further reduced forward presence in Europe. This posture has remained consistent in the past decade, despite changing indicators. Assistant Secretary of Defense Robert Work remarked in 2015: “Our conventional deterrence posture, without question, is based on the assumption that we can project overwhelming power across trans-oceanic distances and exert our will on any opponent.”¹ With traditional adversaries, like Russia, resurgent and increasingly aggressive in their near-abroad, deterrence theory has re-asserted its potential to inform contemporary security challenges. Since the end of the Cold War, the potential for precision guided munitions, cyber, and Anti-Access and Area Denial (A2AD) capabilities to shape the deterrence environment has increased. As the United States and NATO consider an updated strategy to deter Russia, a review of deterrence in US and NATO posture is useful to understand its organization and potential in the modern context.

While the Second World War was still underway, the United States’ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) evaluated the post-war defense strategy. For most American observers, the attack on Pearl

¹ Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, “CNAS Defense Forum,” speech, Center for a New American Security, National Security Forum, Washington, DC, December 14, 2015.

Harbor demonstrated the inadequacy of isolationist policies and a defense strategy governed by oceanic, hemispheric defense. It would not be possible for the United States to return to isolationism, to ensure continued security after the war, the United States needed to remain engaged globally. To guarantee protection after the conflict, it had to prevent a single power from dominating the Eurasian continent. As the JCS reviewed the potential outcomes of the war, it became clear that global defense in depth was the only solution that would guarantee future security. While World War II raged, the JCS undertook the 570 series of studies. JCS 570/2 and JCS 570/40, outlined proposals for a post-war basing strategy. While these plans represented a significant departure from previous basing plans, they did not envision the forward presence of land power in Europe at the end of the conflict. JCS 570/2 and 570/40 were contingent upon rights and access to facilities that would ensure naval and air forces remained capable of projecting power against potential adversaries in Eurasia.²

After the Second World War, it became clear to strategists in the United States that the potential for atomic (and later nuclear) weapons combined with the utter destruction wrought by the conventional conflict demanded a different role for the military. Bernard Brodie observed in 1946, that while the chief purpose of our military establishment had been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them.³ What Brodie described in 1946 as determent was the beginning of a theory that would later become deterrence. Deterrence and containment governed US strategy as the Cold War progressed. Military forces moved around the globe like chess pieces, moves designed to create better bargaining positions, factors in a potential adversary's calculus. In the early days of the ideological standoff, the calculus of deterrence was difficult to assess. According to Henry Kissinger "the nuclear age turned strategy into deterrence, and

² Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783-2011* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2012), 49-52.

³ Bernard Brodie, "American Security and the Atomic Bomb," *The Yale Review* 35, no. 3 (March 1946): 412.

deterrence is an esoteric intellectual exercise.”⁴ In the ensuing decades, intellectuals, including Kissinger, would attempt to generate organizing frameworks for deterrence that moved the theory into manageable and logical constructions that might better define the US security strategy.

According to Stacie L. Pettyjohn, a researcher with RAND, the strategy proposed by JCS 570/40 amounted to a “perimeter defense in depth.”⁵ Throughout the 1940s, the Departments of Defense and State sparred over this program for US military overseas basing. While the War and Navy Departments pushed for basing that would provide future access to Eurasia, the President and State Department were concerned over basing agreements’ consistency with the United Nations Charter and the potential to alienate allies with an aggressive post-war basing posture.⁶ As a result, the United States never fully realized the initial post-war basing strategy.⁷ With the establishment of NATO in 1949, the United States remained committed to a strategy for the defense of Europe that relied upon mostly European ground troops with the support of US naval and air power. The outbreak of the Korean War changed that approach markedly. American observers saw the advance of North Korean and Chinese ground forces as an extension of the Soviet Union’s power, via a bloc of emerging communist nations. Strategists in the United States recognized that a shift in approach was necessary to bolster allied ground forces in the zones that invited Communist aggression. The concern over Korea paved the way for the return of substantial US ground forces to Europe. According to Pettyjohn, this new policy consolidated the

⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004), 10-11, 12-13.

⁵ Pettyjohn, 49.

⁶ Elliott V. Converse III, *Circling the Earth: United States Plans for a Postwar Overseas Military Base System, 1942-1948* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2005), 121, 178.

⁷ Pettyjohn, 52-53.

focus of the US strategy against a few points on the Eurasian landmass, amounting to a “concentrated defense in depth” strategy.⁸

The introduction of significant conventional US ground forces in Europe in the 1950s denoted a transition where deterrence theorists began to contemplate the contribution of conventional ground forces. Where the US strategy in the 1940s relied on a system of punishment delivered by air power, the strategy in the 1950s evolved to one of deterrence by denial. Glen Snyder first described the difference between denial and punishment in 1958. To Snyder, punishment amounted to pure coercion. By comparison, denial appeared to be a more positive method. Deterrence by denial prevented an adversary from realizing strategic options through positive control of the desired terrain.⁹ Because NATO criteria for the employment of nuclear capabilities remained relatively constrained, conventional forces were crucial throughout the remaining decades of the Cold War to realizing a strategy of deterrence by denial. Only a few authors have attempted to derive a complete theory for conventional deterrence.

In 1983, John Mearsheimer’s *Conventional Deterrence* provided a comprehensive analysis of the contributions of conventional forces to deterrence calculus in a dozen case studies from the twentieth century. According to Lawrence Freedman, Mearsheimer saw conventional deterrence as a strategy to “convince aggressors that a military offensive, in the form of a blitzkrieg, would be frustrated.”¹⁰ However, Mearsheimer’s theory addressed conventional deterrence on a wider basis than Freedman suggests. Mearsheimer evaluated conventional deterrence against three forms of aggressor strategy: blitzkrieg, attrition, and limited aims.¹¹ His

⁸ Pettyjohn, 63-64.

⁹ Freedman, 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹¹ John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 29.

analysis suggested blitzkrieg, and attrition were strategies oriented against forces, but the final strategy, limited aims, sought small gains in territory while the attacker engaged a fraction of the defender's total conventional potential.¹² Once a terrain objective was realized, an aggressor would then consolidate gains, transition to the defense, and leverage the advantages gained in the defense to deter a potential counterattack. Limited aims remains the easiest strategy to realize and the hardest to deter. When a potential aggressor considered a limited aims approach, the first variable was the potential cost, while cost increased in direct correlation to the length of the conflict. If the preponderance of forces presented the potential for a prolonged war of attrition, deterrence likely applied. Mearsheimer's second variable was the prospect for success, if deterrence by denial was going to work, it had to create credible doubt in the mind of the attacker. When defenders made their deterrence assessments, they combined these two variables to avoid "conditions under which decision makers are likely to conclude that they can quickly achieve their objectives on the battlefield."¹³ In 1983, Mearsheimer observed that NATO had achieved the force ratios necessary to deter the Warsaw Pact along the Inter-German Border.¹⁴

With the decline of the bi-polar world order, many entertained the notion of a world without major conflict between great powers, theory and doctrine for deterrence shifted toward other challengers. Maintenance of liberal values and norms became the principal interest of western powers, and this world view guided US military interventions in the 1990s.¹⁵ Deterrence remained an element of strategy, but it shifted to governing the asymmetric conventional overmatch of the United States with so-called rogue nations. In this context, rogue nations operated outside of acceptable liberal human rights and economic norms. If deterrence remained a

¹² Ibid., 63.

¹³ Mearsheimer, 23-24.

¹⁴ Ibid., 188.

¹⁵ Freedman, 80.

fluctuating element of US strategy in the 1990s, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 called its remaining utility into serious question.

The attacks had a profound impact on the American constituency, analogous to the shock experienced after Pearl Harbor. Americans recognized their vulnerability to these tactics. In the wake of the attacks, elements of the Bush administration questioned whether it was even possible to deter extra-state actors like Al Qaeda, the emergent strategy moved away from deterrence and toward pre-emption.¹⁶ The chief fear, codified in the 2002 National Security Strategy, was the potential for rogue nations to supply terrorists willfully or inadvertently with weapons of mass destruction. Non-proliferation and terrorism became the chief concern amongst the security policies.¹⁷ The North Atlantic Council invoked collective security agreements outlined in the North Atlantic Treaty on September 12, 2001. Article 5 of the founding treaty, originally conceived in 1949 to hedge against an aggressive Soviet Union in Europe, instead promised NATO support in the Global War on Terrorism. NATO troops leveraged bases in former Soviet satellite states and Russian airspace to project power into Afghanistan in support of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission.

With the relationship between international terrorism and rogue nations ascending to primacy amongst security concerns, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld implemented the 2004 Global Defense Posture Review (GDPR). Rumsfeld believed US military posture was still closely linked to a Cold War mindset, and an overhaul was necessary to address the new security environment. According to Pettyjohn, the GDPR “found that deploying heavy Army units from Germany to the Middle East had no advantages over transporting similar units from CONUS.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Freedman, 84.

¹⁷ National Security Council, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: May 2002), 13.

¹⁸ Pettyjohn, 88.

Political obstacles also disrupted the deployments of European based forces to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Countries that opposed US intervention in Iraq refused the use of critical infrastructure and airspace, frustrating US efforts to employ forward stationed units elsewhere. The GDPR recommended the withdrawal of most forces from forward areas, leaving a growing network of bases that US forces could quickly occupy and expand in time of crisis. It also recommended the expansion of transportation capabilities, and the pooling of forces under a global force management system. Designed to deal with an environment dominated by uncertainty, Pettyjohn described this new strategy as global “expeditionary defense in depth.”¹⁹ Robert Work, in an article he prepared for a 2006 compilation titled *Reposturing the Force*, compared the coming era with, what he termed, the US “Expeditionary Era” of 1890-1945. For Work, the 2004 GDPR, meant a return of power projection capability to CONUS.²⁰ In the same compilation Robert Harkavy remarked on the impact of the posture shift and our unpreparedness for the potential outcomes, “[t]he Department of Defense has led a quiet revolution in the global posture of American military forces that is still in the process of working itself out and is bound to have profound and perhaps revolutionary effects. American strategic analysis has yet to catch up with this development.”²¹

While the United States worked to transition its posture, NATO continued a program of expanding membership, begun in the 1990s, it incorporated states once encompassed within the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union.²² No doubt, this activity provoked concern from observers in Russia, raising questions about the agreements made in the waning days of the Cold War, and in

¹⁹ Pettyjohn, 88-94.

²⁰ Carnes Lord, ed., *Reposturing the Force: US Overseas Presence in the Twenty-First Century* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2006), 95.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

²² Mark Kramer, “Myth of a No NATO Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” *The Washington Quarterly* (April, 2009): 40.

the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997. The Founding Act precluded the introduction of permanently based, substantial combat forces in the new NATO member states, but it lacked clear metrics defining substantial forces.²³ According to William Alberque, a researcher at the NATO Defence College, Russia sought to define the ambiguous promises in the Founding Act with an Adaptation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE). Over several years of negotiation, NATO arbiters repeatedly rejected Russian definitions. The resulting animosity over the terms provoked Russian suspension of the CFE in 2007, demanding NATO agree to defined numbers, geographic constraints, and time tables before Russia would return to the negotiation.²⁴ Under the increasingly authoritarian Putin regime, Russian frustration with the seemingly duplicitous NATO representatives grew.

In 2008, attempts to develop a common understanding of the term, substantial combat forces, concluded with no agreement. While the United States and Russia momentarily found potential common ground in combating terrorism, tensions arose over several key issues, including the Iraq War and United States and NATO plans for missile defense in Europe. By August, Russian forces engaged and defeated the Georgian military, then affirmed the political independence of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. This move accelerated a trend toward contentious engagement with the west. Prior to the conflict, the Bush administration had championed a fast-tracked path to Georgian membership in NATO. With Georgia disrupted and Russian troops garrisoned in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, relations between the Bush administration and Russia reached a low point, unprecedented since the end of the Cold War.²⁵ This animosity endured throughout the remaining months of the Bush administration.

²³ William Alberque, *“Substantial Combat Forces” in the Context of NATO-Russia Relations* (Rome, Italy: De Books Italia, 2016), 14.

²⁴ Alberque, 14.

²⁵ Cory Welt, *Russia: Background and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2017), 40.

In 2009, the newly elected Obama administration sought to engage with Russia in a more constructive dialogue. Moscow was amongst the locations for President Obama's early international trips and it was there he met with Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev in July of 2009. During that travel — derided by conservative pundits as an 'apology tour' — President Obama gave a speech that attempted to reassert the liberal agenda and rebuke American unilateralism under the previous administration.²⁶ Citing Russia among a group of rising Twenty-First Century centers of power that included China and India, the 2010 National Security Strategy attempted to reset the US relationship with Russia.²⁷ In the spirit of this effort, the Obama administration continued the drawdown of conventional forces from Europe. Secretary Gates temporarily halted the withdrawal of two brigade combat teams from Europe in 2007, but by 2012 the downward trend continued.²⁸ That year, then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, directed the withdrawal of two brigade combat teams from Germany.²⁹ With US capability in Europe at a new low, credible deterrence in Europe was flagging. The United States and NATO still required Russian support to complete obligations in the GWOT, and the strategic documents reflected the need. Engagement remained the hallmark of the NATO strategic approach, and the 2012 NATO Chicago Summit Communique ambiguously urged Russia to cease its build-up of capability in Georgia while simultaneously lauding Russian cooperation with access for the ISAF mission.³⁰

²⁶ *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: May 2010), 40, 44.

²⁷ *National Security Strategy*, 44.

²⁸ Kathleen H. Hicks, Heather A. Conley, et. al., *Evaluating Future U.S. Army Force Posture in Europe: Phase II Report* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2016), 15.

²⁹ Pettyjohn, 93.

³⁰ NATO Publications, *Chicago Summit Declaration*, 20 May 2012, accessed November 9, 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87593.htm.

Most of the literature on conventional deterrence is several decades old, but the evolving relationship between Russia and NATO in the last decade has generated renewed interest. In the modern context, progress in Precision Guided Munition (PGM) technology has had the greatest impact in terms of technological development. PGMs emerged as a critical element of a second offset strategy, adopted by the US Department of Defense in the 1970s, in response to growing numbers of modernized “conventional Warsaw Pact forces in Europe that outnumbered NATO forces by roughly three fold.”³¹ While Mearsheimer speculated about the potential contribution of PGMs to conventional deterrence in 1983, the systems were still in their infancy and largely untested in combat. Observing the Arab-Israeli conflicts of 1967 and 1973, Mearsheimer made note of the future potential for PGMs against rapidly moving armored formations. While he discounted their ability to relegate armor to obsolescence, he did observe their relative value, increasing the lethality of PGM equipped infantry on the battlefield. Generally, Mearsheimer believed the PGM would increase the advantage of the defense and consequently the credibility of conventional deterrence.³² With their potential utility demonstrated in the Gulf War, Kosovo, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, contemporary observers have expanded the role of non-nuclear capabilities to fill some gaps that might have existed between conventional and nuclear deterrence in the past.³³ Conventional PGMs coupled with emerging capability in the cyber domain, provide combatants with non-nuclear capabilities that can contribute to deterrence by punishment in a way that Mearsheimer could not have anticipated in 1983. While these capabilities contribute to additional deterrence, they also reinforce Russian potential to ensure gains in a limited aims strategy.

³¹ Robert Martinage, *Toward a New Offset Strategy: Exploiting U.S. Long-term Advantages to Restore U.S. Global Power Projection Capability* (Washington, DC: CSBA, 2014), 13.

³² Mearsheimer, 200.

³³ Michael S. Gerson, “Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age,” *Parameters* (Autumn 2009): 32-33.

Mearsheimer referred to quick victories for territorial gain as limited aims strategy, contemporary scholars updated this term to *fait accompli*. In a concise assessment of conventional deterrence in the modern age, Michael Gerson evaluated the current state of modern deterrence for a 2009 article in *Parameters*.³⁴ Citing esteemed deterrence theorists including; Mearsheimer, Paul K. Huth, and Lawrence Freedman, Gerson suggested that contemporary conventional deterrence hinged on the logic of three interrelated arguments. First, citing Mearsheimer, states will continue to seek quick and inexpensive gains. When potential US adversaries consider this approach in their near-abroad, they intend to secure their limited objectives before the United States can bring its conventional superiority to bear. Second, conventional deterrence is primarily based in denial, but also includes elements of punishment that become increasingly relevant if an adversary can realize its initial *fait accompli*. Third, in conventional deterrence, the local balance of power is more important to deterrence calculus than the general aggregate of conventional capability.³⁵

In the past, a major push by conventional forces could be backed-up by the threat of nuclear escalation. According to Andy Corbett, Russian military doctrine allows for the use of nuclear weapons in the deterrence by denial role. “Russia would use nuclear weapons as military tools to reassert dominance in a conventional campaign, thus denying success to its opponent or seeking to assure its own objectives.”³⁶ Essentially, Russian doctrine allows for limited nuclear escalation that could be leveraged to guarantee conventional gains in a *fait accompli* strategy. Since Russian doctrine allows for the use of nuclear weapons below the threshold of

³⁴ Gerson, 33-34.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

³⁶ Andy Corbett, *Deterring a Nuclear Russia in the 21st Century Theory and Practice* (Rome, Italy: De books Italia, 2016), 3.

contemporary NATO doctrine, the potential for an asymmetric response to NATO conventional overmatch is real.

Coupled with advanced PGMs and cyber capabilities, Russia maintains a spectrum of tools to hold strategic and operational targets at risk. In September of 2017, the commander of US NORTHCOM, General Lori J. Robinson (USAF), commented on the capability at a conference in Washington DC Having reviewed the Russian Exercise; Zapad 17, she remarked on Russia's "ability to hold targets at risk at ranges that we're not used to."³⁷ If the NORTHCOM Commander was commenting, it suggests the simulated targets were inside the continental United States. With a myriad of capabilities available, across domains, Russia maintains the ability to guarantee gains via a rapid conventional thrust with a range of options to deter a NATO counter-attack.

In summary, deterrence theory and US posture have evolved from the Cold War to present. There are two principal means of deterrence; punishment and denial. Most of what has been written on deterrence was geared toward nuclear deterrence by punishment, with a few exceptions. Conventional forces principally support a strategy of deterrence by denial; however, lower thresholds in Russian doctrine allows for a more varied application of nuclear weapons, potentially in a denial function. According to contemporary interpretation, three key maxims govern contemporary deterrence: first, it must prepare to defeat a *fait accompli* (blitzkrieg) style attack; while, second, creating belief in an adversary's mind about the potential for prolonged and costly conflict; and, finally, conventional deterrence must be local. All deterrence is underpinned by credibility, which Lawrence Freedman described as deterrence's "magic ingredient."³⁸ Most of

³⁷ Eric Schmitt, "Vast Exercise Demonstrated Russia's Growing Military Prowess," *The New York Times*, October 1, 2017, accessed November 10, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/01/us/politics/zapad-russia-military-exercise.html>.

³⁸ Gerson, 42.

the literature on conventional deterrence theory is out of date (John Mearsheimer's *Conventional Deterrence* was written in 1983), technological and geopolitical changes have necessitated an update to his theory. Contemporary capabilities in PGMs bolster deterrence by denial, but they are balanced by advanced capabilities in cyberspace and ballistic missile technology. In the contemporary context, deterrence remains a plausible approach to maintaining stability in Europe. As NATO continues to implement its strategy, deterrence will undoubtedly play an important role in managing the evolving relationship with a resurgent Russia.

Current Situation – NATO and Russian Relations

After his admonishment of the United States and NATO at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, Vladimir Putin set Russian foreign policy on a new trajectory. If the 2008 intervention in Georgia appeared at first as an anomaly, subsequent Russian activities in Ukraine began to demonstrate an emerging trend. Politically, Ukraine began to drift toward Russian influence with the election of President Viktor Yanukovich in 2010. When Yanukovich postponed Ukrainian agreements with the European Union in 2014, in favor of links to Russia, protests broke out across the country. The so-called Euromaiden protests led to a crackdown that ultimately backfired for the Yanukovich regime. President Yanukovich then fled to Russia in February 2014.³⁹ Russia annexed Crimea the following month, perhaps for fear of losing access to its Black Sea Fleet base at Sevastopol in an uncertain Ukrainian political climate. Aided by elements of Spetsnaz-GRU and naval infantry, operators from the newly formed Russian Special Operations Command (SOC) infiltrated the Crimea and assisted with the installation of Sergei Aksenov. According to Tor Bukkvoll, “from the take-over of the Crimean parliament to the

³⁹ Welt, 24.

signing of the treaty making Crimea a part of Russia it took only 19 days.”⁴⁰ Russia had taken a significant amount of territory from its neighbor through a method that would come to be known as hybrid or special warfare. Russia supported similar operations in eastern Ukraine in the following months, contributing to the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 in July of 2014, which killed all 298 passengers and crew.⁴¹ NATO met in Wales to discuss a response to these events.

NATO reacted to the initial Ukrainian incursion at the Wales Summit in September of 2014. The most vulnerable NATO members in eastern Europe lobbied for adjustments in NATO’s force posture. They argued that Russian annexation of Crimea “fundamentally altered the existing security environment.”⁴² Calling for the reinforcement of combat troops in the Baltics and Poland, the eastern members feared a similar approach toward their territory. The Wales Summit Communique confirmed Russian aggression in Ukraine amongst NATO’s top concerns. The Baltic States and Poland welcomed the possibility of American troops in their territory as a potential hedge against Russian posture. However, Germany and other major NATO partners dismissed the deployment of additional NATO forces in the east as provocative. Instead, NATO committed to a Readiness Action Plan (RAP) enhancing the readiness of the NATO Response Force (NRF) and established the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF).⁴³ If these efforts

⁴⁰ Tor Bukkvoll, “Russian Special Operation Forces in Crimea and Donbas,” *Parameters* 46(2) (Summer 2016): 17, accessed November 22, 2017, http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/issues/Summer_2016/5_Bukkvoll.pdf.

⁴¹ Tim Hume and Claudia Rebaza, “MH17 shot down by Buk missile brought from Russia, say investigators”, CNN, September 28, 2016, accessed December 5, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/28/europe/mh17-buk-russia/index.html>.

⁴² F. Stephen Larrabee et.al., *Russia and the West After the Ukrainian Crisis* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2017), x.

⁴³ NATO Publications, *Wales Summit Declaration*, 5 September 2014, accessed March 7, 2018 https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm.

seem like half-measures, it is useful to understand the economic vulnerabilities that encouraged caution amongst the Western European NATO members in Wales.

Twenty-two members of NATO are also a part of the European Union (EU). Born of organizations designed to increase economic cooperation throughout Europe in the wake of the Second World War, the EU coalesced with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. EU founders designed a system to increase the freedom of movement for goods, people, capital, and services throughout the European Community, known as the four freedoms.⁴⁴ The EU, as the body governing economic policy for the bloc, is a major player when it comes to establishing and maintaining sanctions. In this sense, the European Council (governing body of the EU) retains major potential to complement NATO military efforts with economic power. While many EU members benefit from a robust and thriving economy, the important economic bloc is not without its vulnerabilities and dependencies.

Politically, an internal resurgence in nationalistic politics, including the decision by Great Britain to exit the EU in 2016, threaten to undermine EU strength. Other economic vulnerabilities link the Eurozone directly to Russia and present a challenge for NATO as it tries to deter Russia from further aggression in Eastern Europe. While the EU remains largely independent of Russian influence in most economic areas, energy dependency is a different situation. Western EU members enjoy some insulation from oil and natural gas managed by the Russian state-owned GAZPROM, however, eastern members remain vulnerable. EU members in the Southeast would likely suffer terribly from a cutoff of liquid natural gas, and the Baltic states remain especially vulnerable due to their remaining links to Russian electrical grids. Russia can also lobby private energy investors in the EU to place additional pressure on governments for further access to

⁴⁴ Kristin Archick, *The European Union: Current Challenges and Future Prospects* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2017), 2-3.

Russian oil and gas fields.⁴⁵ When NATO came together in Wales to assess their options, vulnerability of the Eurozone to Russian influence certainly constrained their options. In September of 2014, Europeans still held out hope that diplomacy could restore sense to the situation.

While NATO met in Wales, the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) orchestrated talks between Russia, Ukraine, and separatist leaders in Minsk on 5 September, 2014. Although each party superficially agreed to the terms of the agreement, the initial Minsk Protocol did little to de-escalate conflict in Donbas.⁴⁶ Before the ink was dry on the NATO Wales Summit Communique and Minsk Agreement, Russian-backed forces accelerated their operations in eastern Ukraine. With the NATO Summit Communique and Minsk agreements doing precious little to deter Russian supported conflict in Eastern Ukraine, OSCE coordinated a second round of talks. Belarus hosted the second engagement in February of 2015, including Germany and France. This new arrangement, dubbed the Normandy Format, lent European credibility to Ukraine, and linked the EU sanctions regime to Russian and separatist adherence to the Minsk II Protocol. Since its inception, there have been continuous violations of the ceasefire agreement, incidents skyrocketed in the Spring of 2016.⁴⁷ Considering the continued abuse of Minsk II agreements, the EU and US sustained sanctions against Russia as NATO prepared to meet in Warsaw for its second summit since Russian intervention in Ukraine.

NATO conducted its 2016 Summit in July at Warsaw, Poland. A location understandably designed to communicate NATO solidarity with its eastern members. With Russia seemingly undeterred in Ukraine, NATO members agreed to establish a rotational force to provide an

⁴⁵ Larrabee, 49-50.

⁴⁶ Carl Hvenmark Nilsson, *Revisiting the Minsk II Agreement: The Art and Statecraft of Russian-brokered Cease-fires* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016), 3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-13.

Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) in the Baltics. EFP dictated “each battalion will be led by a framework nation with contributions from several other allies.”⁴⁸ The United Kingdom would lead a battalion in Estonia, with contributions from France and Denmark. In Latvia, Canada agreed to lead a battalion with contributions from four NATO members. In Lithuania, Germany leads a battalion with contributions from six other members. The United States also agreed to lead a battalion in Poland with contributions from Romania and the United Kingdom. All told, NATO troops from 14 different member states would deploy to NATO’s eastern flank by early 2017, in a posture designed to deter Russian intervention in the region. While this EFP provides a measure of deterrence and arguably has some real potential to inoculate the Baltics from a special or hybrid warfare approach, it falls well short of the requirements prescribed by a 2014-2015 study at RAND that painstakingly war-gamed a NATO defense of the Baltics against a conventional Russian invasion.⁴⁹

According to the study, initiated by RAND in the summer of 2014, NATO cannot successfully defend the territory of its most exposed members from a determined Russian conventional offensive. The architects of the study made several assumptions to reach this conclusion, first they assumed NATO would only have about a week of warning with which to deploy forces. Only the available US conventional forces in Europe would arrive in the Baltics in time to fight in the initial engagement. These forces, combined with local troops from the Baltic nations constituted about twenty battalions of mostly light infantry, with the United States providing the sole NATO heavy and attack helicopter battalions. NATO forces principally received their fire support through superior airpower. Russian forces constituted twenty five relatively heavier maneuver battalions of troops from the Western Military Division and the

⁴⁸ Paul Belkin, *NATO’s Warsaw Summit: In Brief* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2016), 3.

⁴⁹ Belkin, 3-4.

Kaliningrad Oblast. These forces were backed-up by ten artillery battalions, five ballistic missile battalions, six attack helicopter battalions, and Russian airpower. Over a series of iterations, this coefficient of forces generated Russian victory in each instance, with Russian forces seizing or isolating Riga and Tallinn in anywhere from thirty to sixty hours. The speed of the Russian advance, limited distances, and pockets of air defense capability mitigated the traditional attrition inflicted by NATO overmatch in the air and delivered Russia a *fait accompli* style occupation of the Baltics. This rapid advance for limited gain left NATO weighing decisions about a counter-attack in a deterrence by denial scenario that turned the tables on the West.⁵⁰

The last of NATO's multinational battalions reached operational capability in the Summer of 2017, little more than a year after Warsaw. For an alliance that seemed to dither in the past, the speed of implementation was remarkable in the face of a credible threat. While the multinational battalions stand little chance of defeating a conventional Russian invasion, the presence of so many flags on NATO's Eastern Flank supports deterrence in a few ways. First, their posture increases the credibility of a strong NATO invocation of Article 5. The forward presence ensures framework nations (US, Canada, UK, Germany), otherwise protected by geography, have skin in the game. These forces serve as a sort of strategic tripwire, substantially increasing the probability of a dynamic Article 5 response from NATO. If this response does not immediately back hypothetical requirements for conventional deterrence to defeat *fait accompli* style Russian operations, it at least supports the menace of a prolonged conflict with the West. If Russia is still able to defeat the force in short order, the EFP contributes to NATO and EU willingness to prolong the regime of economic sanctions instituted after the Ukrainian intervention, contributing to a deterrence by punishment strategy.

⁵⁰ 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), 1-12.

Second, the presence of these forces in the Baltics contribute to the host nation's capability to combat Russia's favored method of warfare. The hybrid techniques, applied with great effectiveness in Georgia and Ukraine, depended on plausible deniability on the part of Russia. Deniability was contingent on the small size of forces employed and their ability to mask covert operations behind allegedly local Russian-speaking elements.⁵¹ These elements are present throughout the Baltics, increasing the vulnerability of those states to the same approach leveraged in 2008 and 2014 to undermine local authorities. Multinational battalions imbedded with the host nation forces, with the appropriate status of forces agreement and rules of engagement, have the potential to identify these operations early and disarm them. They can serve as coordination, logistics, and security platforms for the introduction of advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, and potentially increase the time for NATO to respond in the event of a Russian intervention through early identification of unambiguous indicators and warnings. If multinational battalions only provide a credible deterrent to Russian hybrid warfare and their contribution to conventional deterrence is dubious, at best, what capability is necessary to achieve credible conventional deterrence on NATO's eastern front, and deny Russia a *fait accompli* victory?

The RAND study by Shlapak and Johnson provided one estimate, but several other organizations, including the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and the Army War College undertook similar analysis. While each study suggested a slightly different formula for renewed deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank, none of the estimates deemed the current force posture adequate to deter Russian aggression. Shlapak and Johnson recommended a force of six or seven brigade combat teams, backed with enablers and fire support. At least three of the brigade combat teams should be heavy, stationed in or near the Baltics, with lighter forces able to

⁵¹ Bukkvoll, 16.

flow in rapidly from elsewhere. An earlier study at RAND suggested three to four heavy brigades with supporting forces. While the Shlapak and Johnson study emphasized the necessity for a continuous presence, it also suggested a rotational force was adequate to provide deterrence.⁵²

The CSIS study, headed by former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Kathleen Hicks, provided another formula. Published in two phases, the first in February of 2016, with a follow-up in June of 2016, the reports suggested recent experience in the eastern Ukraine demonstrated a time-tested formula for deterrence. Deploying fifteen to twenty brigades to their eastern border, Ukraine's reaction to separatist and Russian activity constituted the greatest mobilization of troops in Europe since the end of World War II. According to Hicks and Conley, the ratio reached a tipping point by May of 2014 that forced adversary culmination. The 1:3 ratio of defenders to attackers, has long been a component of military calculus. Citing work from the 1980s by Mearsheimer and others, and more contemporarily Michael E. O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, Hicks and Conley suggested a force defending with this ratio enjoys a 65-75 percent chance of success.⁵³ According to the study, a local ground force defending with the 1:3 ratio contributed to deterrence by punishment and denial, compounded by the probability of outright defeat, this posture lends increased credibility to deterrence. The study was ambivalent toward the posture of the force, rotational or permanently deployed forces generated an equal deterrent effect, provided there was no gap between the presence of a force and its relieving element.⁵⁴ The initial report also suggested thirteen brigades would be necessary to achieve these ratios in the Baltics. It recommended the rotation of two Armored Brigade Combat Teams (ABCTs) for the

⁵² Bryan Frederick, et. al., *Assessing Russian Reactions to U.S. and NATO Posture Enhancements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2017), 19-20.

⁵³ Kathleen H. Hicks, Heather A. Conley, et. al., *Evaluation Future U.S. Army Force Posture in Europe: Phase I Report* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2016), 11.

⁵⁴ Hicks and Conley, *Phase I Report*, 9.

near future and recommended establishing pre-positioned stock for eight brigade combat teams in Europe, and additional HQs capability in Europe to provide appropriate mission command.⁵⁵

The observations above were all suggested by the Phase I report, the second report further refined recommendations. Published by CSIS in June of 2016, it suggested the US presence in Europe should constitute a “tiered and scalable posture...as the basis for credible deterrence.”⁵⁶ The follow-on report recommended the permanent addition of an ABCT and a second full-strength CAB in Europe. In addition to these new permanently assigned units, the rotational force would transition to a light Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), deployed across the east, from the Baltics to Bulgaria. It further recommended changes to the pre-positioned stocks that supported up-to four additional brigades (two ABCTs) for short notice follow-on. But deterrence calculations did not underwrite the shift in recommendation from rotational to permanent forward presence. Alternatively, Hicks and Conley identified stress on the available US force pool and cost as the principle concerns, while simultaneously lamenting the intolerability of “underinvestment by some European allies.”⁵⁷ What the study failed to do, was reconcile the underinvestment of allies with increased US Army commitment from a small pool of armored forces.

ABCTs remain in high-demand, with a constant rotational presence on the Korean Peninsula and in Kuwait, in addition to the ABCT rotating through Europe. To sustain this commitment, the US has maintained a 1:2 ratio of deployed time, to time in garrison required to reset and train the ABCTs. In effect, the entire Army ABCT structure is committed to one of the three rotational requirements, in either a deployed, reset, or train phase.⁵⁸ The nine US Army

⁵⁵ Ibid., 12-13.

⁵⁶ Hicks and Conley, *Phase II Report*, ix.

⁵⁷ Ibid., x.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 53-55.

ABCTs represent about a third of NATO's combined heavy capability, and the chronic "underinvestment" amongst our allies remains a concern. In many cases, NATO followed the US lead in the GWOT, converting their heavy formations into lighter, expeditionary formations necessary to sustain counter-insurgency efforts in Afghanistan, Africa, and elsewhere. Analysis by Michael Shurkin from RAND, suggested framework partners in Britain, Germany, and France could each generate and sustain about a brigade of armored capability each, but expected the timeline for their commitment would be slow compared to the speed with which a Russian force could dominate the Baltics, weeks (or months) versus days respectively.⁵⁹ If the United States were to commit an ABCT to Europe permanently, it seems unlikely the NATO allies would correct their habitual "underinvestment."

In summary, the 2014 Russian intervention in Ukraine sparked a series of reactions by NATO and the United States that suggest an emergent strategy. In response to the intervention, NATO enhanced NRF capability, and established the VJTF. The EU and United States imposed a regime of sanctions against Russia, to remain in place until the Ukrainian separatists and Russia met the conditions of the Minsk II Protocol. To this date, those parties have been unable or unwilling to meet the requirements, and sanctions remain active. While the EU remains capable of sustaining sanctions against Russia, the bloc is not without its vulnerabilities to Russian economic pressure in the energy sector. Considering increased violence in eastern Ukraine, NATO met for a second summit in Warsaw, in the summer of 2016. At the Warsaw Summit, NATO members agreed to a program of enhanced forward readiness. Fourteen nations committed troops in support of four NATO Multinational Battlegroups, deployed on a rotational basis in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

⁵⁹ Michael Shurkin, *The Abilities of the British, French, and German Armies to Generate and Sustain Armored Brigades in the Baltics* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2017), 1-10.

Beyond the battlegroups, the United States committed additional capabilities in support of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), and Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR). This commitment, in addition to the US requirements in Korea and Kuwait, has pushed the US ABCT capability to its capacity, with each of the nine ABCTs committed to some stage of the deploy, reset, train cycle. The United States sustains about half of NATO's heavy force, while other major NATO members remain understrength in this critical category. Both RAND and the CSIS made assessments about the strength and composition of the force necessary to deter Russia in the Baltics. While results varied, what was clear throughout all the research, was the inability of the current capability to defeat a potential Russian invasion of the Baltics. As the United States weighs an update to its security strategy and its near-term posture in Europe, it is useful to understand the costs and benefits of permanently based forces and rotational forces.

Weighing Cost and Benefit

As the US Army considers options for deterring an increasingly militaristic and aggressive Russia on NATO's eastern front, one potential option to mitigate the tempo for preferred formations is to permanently assign these forces to theaters with high demand. When the George W. Bush administration undertook the 2004 GDPR, the Office of the Secretary of Defense projected net savings and increased flexibility from a US Army based mostly in the Continental United States (CONUS). In practice, however, the security requirements that emerged in the following decades placed increased demands on certain formations in forward areas. The rotational forces committed to the ERI and OAR deployed with their own equipment at greater cost than projections anticipated. At least two studies, undertaken by RAND in 2013 and the US Army War College in 2017, observed little or no fiscal advantage for heavy rotational forces over permanently forward postured formations. These forces deploy with their own equipment, which increases costs. Rotational forces continue to use their own equipment for several reasons: including the advantages gained in deterrence by preserving reserve capability in

the European Activity Set (EAS); and the requirement to exercise infrastructure and organizations that support rapid expeditionary deployment operations.

In terms of deterrence value, the permanent forward presence of a combat formation deters, but it also assures allies. According to former British Defense Minister, Denis Healy, “It takes only five percent credibility of American retaliation to deter Russians, but ninety-five percent credibility to reassure the Europeans.”⁶⁰ Rotational forces provide for deterrence, but their temporary nature signals to allies, the potential for their withdrawal on shorter time horizons than permanently based force. In other words, the rotational force generates deterrence without assurance. If the long-term intent is to stimulate growth of heavy capability in NATO’s European Allies, this approach may encourage US allies to expand their own limited capabilities in heavy ground and attack aviation. While US elements committed to a permanent forward posture, may enjoy some advantages in interoperability, cultural and political awareness; higher level headquarters, enablers, and elements that function to advise and train local NATO forces like the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) are better choices for investment in political and cultural understanding. As Army leaders weigh the cost and benefit of deterrence posture on NATO’s eastern front, it is worth understanding each of the variables above in greater detail. In addition to the RAND and Army War College Study, a 2016 publication by the Center for Strategic and International Study evaluated contemporary US Army Posture in Europe.

One potential option to mitigate stress on high demand Army capabilities is to return to a posture that permanently stations these elements forward in Europe. If a rotational force presence simultaneously generates demand on three ABCTs, one in each stage of the cycle, then permanent forward presence has the potential to release two of three BCTs from the cycle. Consequently, an ABCT in Europe frees two formations to theoretically support requirements elsewhere. The high

⁶⁰ Michael J. Lostumbo, et. al., *Overseas Basing of U.S. Military Forces: An Assessment of Relative Costs and Strategic Benefits* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013), 82.

transportation costs associated with heavy elements, like the ABCT and Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), make these formations strong candidates for permanent forward basing, as the cost associated with their continuous rotational deployment is relatively higher than that of a light Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT). The 2016 CSIS study found the cost of rotational forward presence of an ABCT and a Division HQ command element (providing mission command and oversight) ran to about \$1.2 billion for three-years, with \$637 million in projected costs for the FY 2017 ERI request.⁶¹ Hindsight suggests the cost of rotational forward presence has exceeded the expectations that underpinned the 2004 GDPR, but reversing more than a decade of force posture transition represents a major shift of momentum and should not be undertaken without careful consideration of the costs and benefits of implementation.

For a start, the upfront costs of establishing new facilities are substantial. The Army will only realize cost savings when forces occupy the new, more cost-efficient footprint for some period, time often measured in years to decades. In 2013, RAND published a comprehensive analysis of the cost and benefit factors governing overseas basing decisions. The study addressed the standard challenges of overseas real estate investment and maintenance, contingency responsiveness, security, support for families abroad, and contributions to deterrence and assurance; but it also addressed cost structures in considerable detail. The study found, in certain scenarios, that “new construction comprises about 85 percent of the total cost estimate for posture changes.”⁶² The study assumed that forces returning to the US would all require new facilities, consequently significant savings accrue when existing facilities are available or are free for use by reductions in force structure. The 2013 study found services were most likely to realize cost benefits when US forces consolidated on existing infrastructure in CONUS. Once a service

⁶¹ Hicks and Conley, *Phase II Report*, 55-57.

⁶² Lostumbo, 177.

implements a transition in force structure or facilities, a hasty decision to transition to another posture potentially undermines any cost advantages. The 2013 RAND study also suggested that rotational forces would not be significantly cheaper to sustain, unless the US commits to the closure of the overseas bases that support them. However, closures leave the rotational force without appropriate facilities, or dependent on the host-nation to provide support through one of their facilities.⁶³

When the Rumsfeld administration prepared for the 2004 GDPR, research undertaken by RAND in 2003 suggested the Army would realize cost savings by re-stationing troops to the United States in as few as five years. The research team reached this conclusion, assuming somewhere between \$700 and \$830 million of investment in US facilities to accommodate four ABCTs returning from Europe. However, those one-time costs could be offset by an annual savings between \$200 and \$350 million in efficiencies gained through CONUS stationing. In the RAND estimate, those savings accrued from lower costs in support requirements, reduction of allowances, reduction of DOD overhead (like schools and healthcare), and fewer PCS moves for personnel moving to and from locations in Europe. To reach the five-year target; however, the 2003 assessment assumed any rotational force would fall-in on an enhanced European equipment set. It failed to account for the cost of these additional sets of equipment, valued at \$2.8 billion each, in its five-year payback estimate. If it had, the time horizon for realizing savings extended for several decades.⁶⁴ In practice, the rotational model suggested by the 2003 RAND study was never fully realized. Instead of leveraging an enhanced European equipment set, the rotational force organized in support of ERI and OAR has used its own equipment, deploying from locations in CONUS. While this approach avoids the up-front costs of an expanded European

⁶³ Ibid., 232-233.

⁶⁴ John R. Deni, *Rotational Deployments vs. Forward Stationing: How Can the Army Achieve Assurance and Deterrence Efficiently and Effectively?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, 2017), 9-10.

equipment set, it contributes to the kind of transportation costs referred to in the FY 2017 budget estimate (above). If \$2.8 billion remains a conservative estimate for generating an ABCT equipment set, then savings in transportation could accumulate over several years to offset the investment. If the cost of rotating equipment is prohibitive, what are the advantages of continuing to do so?

There are two reasons that remain particularly relevant. First, the capability in the European Activity Set (EAS) represents a reserve capacity that can be quickly manned in a rapid sequence of Reception, Staging, Onward movement, and Integration (RSOI). Combined with the rotational force, employing the EAS in this manner can quickly magnify the US Army capacity in Europe in a matter of a few weeks. This capability in Europe means a potential aggressor considering a *fait accompli* style offensive, must account for the additional force when estimating NATO deterrence capability. Instead of a single US ABCT, an aggressor must assume the United States can field two in Europe in a very short span of time. When the choice is between rotating a force with its own equipment or employing the EAS, the rotated equipment contributes to deterrence while simultaneously enabling twice the capability on the ground. In that way, a rotational ABCT and retained capability in the EAS provides NATO and USAREUR a two-for-one potential. The second reason, it provides rehearsals of expeditionary deployment capability.

To operate from a posture of expeditionary defense in-depth, the US Army must retain and exercise the capability to rapidly deploy US ground forces in support of contingencies globally. Expeditionary forces can forcibly enter a theater, and certain elements across the joint force maintain the capability, but a far more likely scenario for expeditionary deployment to the EUCOM AOR depends on force flow through permissible or semi-permissible infrastructure in friendly NATO states. While light forces can typically leverage air transportation for rapid theater entry, large-scale movement of heavy forces depends on sea transportation with links to rail

networks for onward movement.⁶⁵ Deployment times to various theaters are somewhat different, but, CONUS-based heavy forces can generally deploy with their equipment in about three weeks to a month. In order to deploy on a large scale for major combat operations, a route requires robust and redundant infrastructure and a substantial portion of US Transportation Command's military air and sealift capabilities. Like any military operation, the deployment of forces via infrastructure that originates at a railhead on a CONUS garrison in Colorado (for example), and ends on NATO's eastern front demands rehearsal. The rehearsal does not just concern the combat troops involved, but personnel and capability at each infrastructure node and the transportation assets that move them. A rotational force deploying with its own equipment exercises a theater's deployment routes, and can even proof new routes. A requirement that becomes increasingly important with a peer competitor that can potentially interdict routes with advanced precision strike capabilities that approach US benchmarks.

A 2017 study, published by Dr. John Deni at the US Army War College, provided a similarly ambiguous assessment of costs and benefit for a rotational force model. Deni's analysis focused on the rotation of ABCTs, and found the Army achieved no benefit in costs by rotating the elements through Europe and Korea. According to Deni, the OAR ABCT rotating its own equipment from stateside basing was, in fact, more expensive than maintaining a forward presence and suggested this conclusion would most likely apply with other equipment-intensive units like aviation and air defense. He also assessed the diplomatic value of permanently forward stationing units. As an element of assurance, Deni found that permanent forward presence was, in most cases, preferred by US allies, and issues that the Rumsfeld 2004 GDPR cited over objections to US military presence (i.e. Okinawa) represented exceptions, rather than rules. While acknowledging the high-level of readiness achieved by rotational units before commitment to a

⁶⁵ Lostumbo, 40.

theater, Deni's study also identified internal dissatisfaction with rotational presence, which Soldiers and Families found both cumbersome and lacking the moral and fiscal benefits of a combat deployment.⁶⁶

While the War College analysis suggests the Army can achieve efficient and effective deterrence through the return of forward stationed forces to Europe, the emphasis of the argument presented focuses on assurance over deterrence, and efficiency over effectiveness. The principal components of Deni's analysis concerns allied and US centric interests, assurance of allies and the stress on the US-based rotational Army forces. Deni leaves evaluation of the effectiveness of adversarial deterrence between forward stationed and rotational forces to the Department of Defense to assess.⁶⁷ It is reasonable then, to conclude the efficient realization of long-term deterrence is the central theme of Deni's argument, and he makes no claims on a quantitative difference in deterrence effectiveness between rotational or permanent forces.

Neither the 2017 War College Study nor the 2013 RAND Study made any clear assessment of the quantitative difference between a rotational force and a forward stationed force. In other words, an ABCT permanently assigned to Europe does not necessarily enjoy an improved modification in a war game assessment. On the contrary, the War College analysis, citing observations from regional commanders, found rotational units arrived in theater at a higher level of readiness relative to projections for permanently forward stationed units in Korea and Europe. Having just completed a rotation at one of the Combat Training Centers (CTCs), rotational forces arrive at the peak of readiness, ready for maximum employment for a nine-month window. Rotational forces, committed to the theater sans the typical distractions of garrison requirements, can accomplish relatively more in nine months than a permanently

⁶⁶ Deni, 37-38.

⁶⁷ Deni, 2.

stationed unit. However, this subtle differentiation will likely remain unobserved to an adversary that does not recognize or maintain the ability to collect and assess nuanced differences in unit readiness.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the increased activity of a rotational force does not necessarily translate into increased deterrence, and in some cases, the volume and pace of US activity exceeds and strains the capacity of the partner nation(s) to participate.⁶⁹

While a rotational force enjoys advantages in readiness and activity metrics, a forward postured force is likely to develop qualitative advantages in other factors, like allied interoperability, and improved knowledge of local terrain, culture, and political context.⁷⁰ However, the question remains, how do you quantify those advantages? Is it necessary for an ABCT or a CAB to enjoy an advantage in cultural and political knowledge, functions that lend themselves toward assurance and stability mechanisms, or do these heavy combat formations principally serve to deter and defeat a potential aggressor? While the studies did not emphasize a quantitative advantage for either a rotational or permanent presence, RAND found that the capabilities inherent in combat formations were more likely to deter and assure than others, and the posture of these forces generated a qualitative signal about US commitment to a region. In particular “forces that can respond to prevent a quick victory and missile-defense capabilities to defend allies from coercive attacks” did more to demonstrate US will.⁷¹ The value of combat formations in deterrence calculations are relatively straightforward, but the contribution of enablers and HQs elements are harder to measure and this is the most likely echelon for cultural and political knowledge to provide for a distinct advantage.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁹ Hicks and Conley, *Phase II Report*, 23-24.

⁷⁰ Deni, 38-39.

⁷¹ Lostumbo, xxi.

By their nature, large headquarters focus engagements at the strategic and operational levels of war, and their presence in a theater increases engagement activity at the senior leader level.⁷² These headquarters engage daily to negotiate and implement security cooperation activities in the theater. Their forward presence contributes to the advantages described in the War College Study, including interoperability and knowledge of local terrain, culture, and politics. Beyond the combat and headquarters elements, the presence of Army's JMRC and specialized capabilities in enablers such as logistics, medical, and intelligence units contribute to security cooperation in a third way. The 2013 RAND Study suggests the permanent presence of these units in Europe encourages frequent, low-level engagements, and the JMRC serves as a platform for tactical level training with NATO partners, that potentially shapes partnerships in ways that are more productive than a method that relies entirely on combat units.⁷³

According to his 2016 testimony before the House Committee on Armed Services, General Breedlove, former commander of EUCOM and Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), suggested the headquarters footprint in the EUCOM Area of Responsibility was designed under the assumption that Russia was and would remain a partner. Therefore, designs for US Headquarters in Europe promote engagement over deterrence and their ability to conduct war-fighting operations at the levels required to deter an assertive Russia remain dubious.⁷⁴ Breedlove's comments suggest the combat formations are only a component of shortfalls in capability in Europe. By comparison, in the event of conflict, US Forces in Korea will be managed by a hierarchy that includes the Combined Forces Command (CFC), an organization designed to combine efforts of US and South Korean troops; a sub-unified command in US

⁷² Ibid., 292.

⁷³ Lostumbo, 292.

⁷⁴ Hicks and Conley, *Phase II Report*, 26.

Forces Korea (USFK), the only forward postured field army in 8th Army, and a dedicated division headquarters will manage other theater specific functions, 2nd Infantry Division. While NATO functions at a similar level to CFC, US Army headquarters capability in Europe is understrength by comparison. Any decision to increase forward posture in Europe should, therefore, account for headquarters and the enablers necessary to support additional combat formations.

US and NATO Strategic Guidance, and implications for US Army force posture in Europe

General Dempsey, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued a Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO) in September of 2012. The concept provided guidance for the development of Joint Forces in the near term, looking to 2020 and a concept of Globally Integrated Operations (GIO) to guide requirements for capability development amongst the services. GIO calls on the Joint Force to accelerate systems for forming Joint Task Forces (JTFs). GIO cited the necessity of Joint Forces to muster from a dispersed network of forward bases, using home-station, and prepositioned stock. Smarter distribution of forces should enable global agility, with Joint Forces aggregating, reconfiguring, and disaggregating as required. The CCJO further emphasized the need for enhanced distribution and transportation capability to facilitate the rapid transition of forces between combatant commands, while standardizing the tactics, techniques, and procedures amongst the combatant commands to ensure the interoperability of forces. The CCJO prioritized development of capabilities and systems that allow forces to transition quickly between regional requirements. However, it would also be necessary to develop deep regional expertise, and operate effectively within the cultural and political context of

specific security dynamics.⁷⁵ If these requirements seem antithetical, they are, no single formation or echelon can do it all.

The Joint Staff issued the Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC), prior to CCJO in 2012 to provide a framework for a cross-domain approach to sustained operational access in the emerging strategic environment. JOAC outlined three developing trends in the global environment that would govern future US expeditionary operations. First, adversary development of anti-access and area denial (A2AD) capabilities will interdict US forces and infrastructure at increased ranges, across a spectrum of capability ranging from sophisticated to clandestine. Second, the US overseas posture would continue to change due to three component factors, which included decreased local support for overt US presence abroad, continued reduction of resources throughout the joint force, and the difficulty of protecting US forces and installations abroad, with threats ranging (again) from sophisticated to clandestine. Finally, JOAC highlights the emergence of space and cyberspace as increasingly important and contested domains, where competitors will operate to gain and maintain advantages, even in the absence of open conflict.⁷⁶ Because of these observations, the JOAC cites eleven precepts to guide operational access.

While many of the JOAC's joint precepts and the derivative requirements for joint capabilities focus on high-end interoperability to gain and sustain operational access, JOAC also directly addresses traditional methods for sustained access. Amongst these traditional methods, posture precepts include preparation of the operational area in advance, and the necessity gain and maintain varied and dispersed basing options. Preparation subsumes bilateral and multinational exercises, and activities necessary to establish command relationships, advice and

⁷⁵ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Washington, DC: Joint Staff, 2012), 4-12.

⁷⁶ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Operational Access Concept* (Washington, DC: Joint Staff, 2012), 9-12.

equipping of foreign forces, and efforts to establish, improve, and harden forward and immediate bases necessary to project military force into the region and sustain prepositioned supplies. Bases should be varied to mitigate the effects of A2AD capabilities while still meeting the demands of the Joint Force. While the precept calls for increased proportions of forces capable of forced (baseless) theater entry, it acknowledges the necessity of bases to sustain major long-term combat operations.⁷⁷ Where JOAC focuses principally on early entry operations leveraging sophisticated technology and air-mobile ground forces to enter an immature theater, a subsequent concept, developed by the Joint Staff in April of 2014 further developed joint concepts for theater entry.

The Joint Concept for Entry Operations (JCEO) describes the subsequent stages of theater entry, following the forced entry approach outlined in the JOAC. In the JCEO, four types of forces support operations: support forces, initial entry forces, reinforcing entry forces, and follow-on forces. Support forces are essential to the entry of any of the other forces, they include intelligence, air and sealift capabilities, air and missile defense, and global strike capabilities. Support forces provide a platform from which the other forces can project power. While initial entry forces retain the unique capability to enter theater “offset from infrastructure,” follow-on forces (and reinforcing entry forces) are often heavily equipped and they are dependent on a basic level of infrastructure to enter the theater.⁷⁸ Within this construct, the maturity of the EUCOM AOR in terms of US posture, allied force presence, and adequate and myriad infrastructure does not preclude the need for initial entry forces. However, it does emphasize the relative importance of support forces and follow-on forces. Where existing infrastructure can offset the demand for high-end capabilities to enter a contested theater, it should. This arrangement maximizes the

⁷⁷ *Joint Operational Access Concept* (2012), 17-20.

⁷⁸ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Concept for Entry Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 15-16.

potential to leverage the high-end initial entry capabilities, outlined in the JOAC, to hold other areas at risk, presenting a potential adversary with multiple dilemmas.

In support of the CCJO and its derivatives, the Army Developed an operating concept in 2014 that emphasized Army contributions to the principles outlined in the CCJO. According to the Army Operating Concept (AOC), codified in Training Pamphlet 525-3-1, the Army contributes to the Joint Force through several core competencies. Amongst these competencies, the Army shapes security environments through continuous engagement and exercises; responds globally through forward positioned and rotational forces; while supporting the global responsiveness of the Joint Force with foundational capabilities in communications, intelligence, rotary wing, missile defense, logistics, and engineering; and sets the theater through essential capabilities in logistics and protection, including maintenance of vital infrastructure and lines of communication. Within the framework of the CCJO, the Army provides “foundational capabilities” to sustain and integrate the efforts of partners and the Joint Force.⁷⁹ While the AOC also emphasized the Army’s competency in joint combined arms maneuver and area security, it does not prioritize the fitness of forward-stationed forces over rotational forces to conduct these activities.

The CCJO and its subordinate documents, Joint and Army, emphasize the necessity for a Joint Force capable of unilateral operations to enter a theater under austere conditions, penetrate an adversary’s A2AD zone, and deliver follow-on capabilities to defeat any potential adversary. Within this framework, the Army’s role is to provide land combat forces capable of deterrence and, if necessary, forced entry to fight and win decisively. But the Army also fulfills a role in sustaining the Joint Force and providing a backbone of foundational capabilities to enable Joint Force efforts. In an austere theater, the Army prepares to provide the full spectrum of capabilities

⁷⁹ Department of the Army, *Army Operating Concept* (Washington, DC: Army Publishing Office, 2014), 17-24.

codified in its core competencies, but the EUCOM AOR is anything but austere. The CCJO and AOC also emphasize the necessity for tailored and scaled forces to address the specific concerns of each region. In Europe, where the capabilities of NATO's European allies buoy deterrence and facilitate theater entry, the high-end Army capabilities necessitated by CCJO become less relevant, relative to Army generated foundational capabilities. In this context, CCJO high-end capabilities represent US leverage in support of NATO contingencies, a reserve capability that can present a potential adversary with multiple dilemmas in the EUCOM AOR and elsewhere.

While the strategic concepts outlined in CCJO, adopted between 2012-2014, address the reality of increased capability amongst potential near-peer competitors, NATO's Strategic Concept: *Active Engagement, Modern Defence*, seems out-of-date by comparison. Adopted by the NATO Council at the Lisbon Conference in 2010, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence* highlights Russia's role as an indispensable NATO partner, calling for reciprocity in ongoing efforts toward reconciliation. It also reaffirms NATO commitment to the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the statements of the Rome Declaration of 1991.⁸⁰ The rosy outlook reflects near-a-decade of cooperation with Russia in the GWOT, discounts Russian action in Georgia in 2008, and cannot yet account for the 2014 interventions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. As out-of-date as it appears, there seems to be little momentum behind an update for 2018. At best, the Council may assign a working group to assess a potential strategy for the following year.⁸¹ In the meantime, any adjustments to Alliance policies will likely be incremental. As the United States reconsiders its European posture, any major adjustment should consider the potential implications of an updated Strategic Concept for NATO in 2019. By comparison, the United States has done much more work in the past decade to update its operating concepts, while NATO has lagged.

⁸⁰ North Atlantic Council, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2010), 29-30.

⁸¹ Brooks Tigner, "Next NATO Summit to Shy Away from New Strategic Concept, Say Officials" *Jane's Defence Weekly* (London: Jane's Information Group, 2017), https://janes-ihs-com.lumen.cgscarl.com/Janes/Display/FG_699962-JDW, accessed 29JAN17.

While the outcomes of the Warsaw and Wales NATO summits have provided for some adjustment to the strategy, an overhaul of the NATO Strategic Concept is overdue.

Opportunities and Risks

Considering the implications of the CCJO and its derivative documents, and an emergent strategy for the NATO Alliance that demands refinement in the light of recent developments in Eastern Europe, the best possible approach USAREUR can advocate amounts to *wait and see*. The rotation of US land combat forces to Eastern Europe should continue until updated United States and NATO strategies emerge. Rotational forces contribute to deterrence calculus in the same way permanently stationed forces figure. While rotational forces deployed in an enhanced forward presence deter potential adversaries, they do less to assure allies than permanently assigned troops. The arrangement puts allies on notice, today they can count on US land combat power in Europe, but the likelihood that the force will be present in some future conflict is lower. This arrangement should encourage NATO allies to invest in their own security capabilities. In the meantime, USAREUR can pursue several opportunities that bolster the Joint Force's ability to implement the CCJO, and set conditions for the permanent return of additional land combat formations to Europe, should the decision be made.

First, USAREUR should focus on establishing the requisite headquarters necessary to support future engagement, but also provide mission command in support of major combat operations in Europe. Second, infrastructure and enablers that contribute to implementation of the foundational capabilities outlined in the AOC in support of the CCJO should receive priority. Third, USAREUR should sustain as much capability as possible in the EAS, and exercise that capability via an exercise program that rehearses theater procedures for RSOI employing the pre-positioned fleet of equipment. Fourth, USAREUR should advocate and support programs

designed to accelerate the pace of allied land combat capability development to a point where US and NATO strategic leadership can make responsible decisions about the continued need for US land-based combat presence in the region. Fifth, invest in tactical infrastructure enhancements (obstacles and protective positions) along the most probable contact lines in order to enhance the survivability of PGM equipped light infantry formations in the defense, increasing their contribution to deterrence calculus for little cost.

Within this approach, the greatest risk is that NATO will be unable to generate sufficient combat power on its eastern front in enough time to reach the necessary ratios to achieve deterrence by denial. Several independent estimates, including those referenced in this paper, emphasized the necessity for more combat forces in the Northern Baltics.⁸² Others have also emphasized the need for the Baltic States to enhance their own capabilities in armor, anti-armor, and anti-air PGM capabilities for their light forces. Recommendations published by the Atlantic Council in May of 2016 (just prior to the Warsaw Summit) suggested each of the Northern Baltic States maintain two brigades, one heavy, and one light.⁸³ That capability, combined with a modest rotation of NATO forces from Western Europe has the potential to generate local, credible, conventional deterrence by denial in the Baltics over the next few years. In the meantime, a back-to back rotational NATO Force that includes a demonstrated US Army commitment to the region remains a viable solution to fill the gap. What is not clear, is how the return of permanently based US Forces will encourage European NATO members to take defense matters into their own hands. With twenty six NATO heavy brigades already in Europe, and the continuous global demand for heavy US Army combat formations in places like Kuwait and Korea, European members must do more to defend their own continent. While ongoing stability

⁸² Frederick, 19.

⁸³ Franklin D. Kramer and Bantz J. Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2016), 6.

commitments for NATO members domestically and abroad in places like Afghanistan and Africa tie-down substantial capability, these requirements largely employ light, para-military, and special forces, better suited to the intricacies of counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.

In aggregate, NATO conventional capabilities remain numerically superior to Russian conventional forces. For example, in the land component, NATO members can field a total of 1.75 million troops, while Russia can only muster some 235,000. However, that capability is not uniformly dispersed, and Russia enjoys relative superiority in the regions perceived to be most vulnerable, the conventional capability of NATO's European based forces alone is numerically superior to Russia's entire conventional force. As of 2015, NATO Members retained thirty five total armored brigades. Despite outsized US contribution to the armored force, NATO maintains twenty six armored brigade equivalents in Europe, with six positioned on NATO's Eastern Flank and just four in the Baltics.⁸⁴ Polish Brigades account for most of the capability in the Baltics, with a brigade each in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonian transitioning toward a heavier force to provide for minimal capability as well. The US Army augments this capability with a rotational ABCT and CAB in support of OAR.⁸⁵ NATO Multi-National Battlegroups maintain a rotational presence in each of the Baltic States, with VJTF and NRF poised to respond within days, in addition to US Army Stryker, Airborne, and Combat Aviation Brigades permanently assigned to Europe. Combined with a US Army prepositioned capability and superior NATO airpower that can generate cumulative effects in a matter of weeks, the potential to muster NATO capability in the Baltics on short notice is significant. Combined with thirteen light and mechanized brigades in the Baltics (capability that Mearsheimer suggests contribute to conventional deterrence when

⁸⁴ Frederick, 11-13.

⁸⁵ United States Army Europe, *Atlantic Resolve Fact Sheet* (Stuttgart, GE: US Army Europe Public Affairs Office, 2017).

equipped with man-portable PGMs in the defense) the potential short-notice NATO capability in the Baltics approaches the theoretical force ratios necessary to achieve local conventional deterrence.

Against this capability, Russia retains some twenty eight active combat brigades of mixed composition ranging from heavy armored to lighter airborne and naval infantry in its Western Military District, with just over half that capacity considered heavy or mechanized.⁸⁶ While a conventional intervention in the Baltics would certainly warrant additional priority for forces in the Western Military District, Russia maintains its own commitments to hedge in areas beyond the Baltics and a major shift in these forces to the Western Military District would likely be observable, constituting a warning for NATO to reciprocally enhance its posture in the Baltics. Continued exercises, like Zapad 17, will contribute to ambiguous NATO interpretations of Russian troop movements and could serve to mask a real mobilization. Furthermore, the A2AD capability maintained by Russia in the Kaliningrad Oblast can contest NATO's superiority in conventional air power, increasing the time and resources necessary for NATO to generate sorties against Russian ground forces. With just 200 km between the Russian frontier and Baltic capitals like Tallin and Riga, time is not a luxury that NATO enjoys. To further complicate matters in the Baltics, the Kaliningrad Oblast contributes to geographic isolation of the northern Baltic States from Poland and the rest of NATO. What remains as a contiguous land link between NATO and the Baltics is a 60-kilometer gap near the Polish town of Suwalki, with just two roads linking Poland to Lithuania. It is reasonable to assume Russia maintains the capability to interdict this route in some form, effectively cutting the NATO contingent in the Baltic in half. If Russia could succeed in closing the Suwalki Gap, the remaining NATO force left to defend the Northern Baltics is nowhere near the ratio necessary to deter Russia by denial.

⁸⁶ Frederick, 14.

Conclusion

In summary, the current US military posture is best described as expeditionary defense in-depth. In recognition of increased ambiguity in the strategic environment, US policy makers implemented a strategy that consolidated US capability in CONUS in anticipation of the necessity for rapid deployment to any number of global contingencies. Given the strategic outlook and a tendency toward policies that valued pre-emption over deterrence, the dictates of the 2004 GDPR seemed contemporarily appropriate. As US forces accelerated the draw-down of capability from the advanced, concentrated forward posture of the Cold War, traditional adversaries became increasingly assertive in their near-abroad. While the United States and NATO engaged in the GWOT, Russia intervened in Georgia in 2008, and Ukraine in 2014. In Crimea, Russia annexed territory into the Russian Federation, leveraging special warfare techniques that subverted traditional thresholds for international military intervention, but nonetheless drew international scorn and a package of sanctions targeting Russia's economic and politically influential stakeholders. While Russia increased military spending and advanced A2AD capabilities designed to counter United States and NATO advantages in conventional capability, the US CJCS prepared a series of conceptual frameworks to counter this trend. The 2012 CCJO directed the development of Joint Force capabilities that guaranteed future access for US Forces, doubling down with investment in the capabilities necessary to sustain the expeditionary strategy. The Army followed suit, with its 2014 AOC, highlighting the Army's contribution to Joint Force CCJO concepts for initial entry in austere operating environments, but also the enduring requirement to support Joint Forces with foundational capabilities in logistics, and executive agent requirements for infrastructure.

The ongoing re-introduction of additional US combat formations to Europe, on a rotational basis, necessitates the question of efficient use of resources. With costs for rotational forces approaching or, by some estimates, exceeding the cost for forward presence, it may be advantageous to invest in long-term forward presence for some elements. With an uncertain NATO Strategic Concept on the horizon for 2019, the best possible outlook for USAREUR today amounts to *wait and see*. In the meantime, immediate investment should focus on force structure that supports the foundational capabilities outlined in the AOC. In Europe, the Army priority will be to support the CCJO Joint Force precepts of: shape the theater through engagement, prepare for rapid global deployment, and set the theater for the Joint Force. Senior headquarters assigned to Europe in a long-term posture, provide the Army with additional leadership, capable of efficiently managing rotational forces, and culturally familiarized, interoperable agents ready to engage NATO partners through various exercises. In addition to headquarters, USAREUR should also invest in the logistics infrastructure necessary to support the EAS, and prepare for the rapid introduction of follow-on forces into theater. Rotational forces, deployed with equipment from CONUS locations, will rehearse these capabilities, while simultaneously contributing to deterrence of potential Russian aggression on NATO's eastern front.

Rotational forces, which arrive at higher levels of readiness, provide the same influence to adversarial deterrence calculus, so long as their presence remains continuous and uninterrupted. More so than with long-term forward presence, rotational combat forces give US leaders more flexibility to employ combat formations globally. Rotational forces contribute to deterrence by denial, while concurrently communicating to allies a limited form of assurance. This temporary, limited assurance compels allies to invest in their own defense. Furthermore, the capability inherent in the CCJO framework contributes to deterrence by presenting any potential adversary with multiple dilemmas. A US Force, held in reserve, capable of penetrating an A2AD

envelope, entering any theater on short-notice, is dangerous to a near-peer competitor. A rational adversary will hedge against this capability, denying forces to decisive efforts elsewhere.

As the US weighs the potential return of additional long-term Army capability to Europe, initial prioritization should go to the foundational capabilities the Army provides to the Joint Force and NATO. These formations, principally composed of headquarters and enablers, provide capabilities that are consistent with Army and Joint operating concepts, while preserving combat formations for global employment. The sustained presence of rotational US combat formations in Europe will continue to contribute to deterrence estimates and is consistent with NATO and Russian agreements made under the Founding Act. While the use of home-station equipment increases the cost of rotational presence, it also exercises expeditionary deployment systems, ensuring their readiness in the event of conflict. US policy makers may decide to re-introduce additional long-term combat capability to Europe in coming years, in the meantime, Army foundational capability is the priority, and rotational forces will continue to deter.

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