



MILITARY COMMITTEE

Topic A: THE BALTIC TRIPWIRE (+1YS)

The fundamental purpose of NATO is to deter foreign aggression by providing a collective security guarantee to all members. This guarantee is especially salient to NATO's newest members in Eastern Europe, who exist on the border of an increasingly assertive Russia with geopolitical interests beyond its own territory. Russia has taken a particular interest in recent years towards former member-states of the Soviet Union, including several current NATO members. The recent conflict in Ukraine (while not a NATO member-state, a former constituent part of the Soviet Union and historically relevant to Russia) in particular has prompted NATO to refocus its attention towards member-states in that region and provide them with credible guarantees of security and protection.

In the last few years, there has been a notable increase in military spending in the alliance, especially in states such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland (the Baltic bordering states of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania are at times referred to collectively as "the Baltics").¹ In addition, NATO has sought to reassure these member states of its commitment to their security through the Readiness Action Plan (RAP). This plan involves deployment of brigades from large western members including Canada, the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom. However, this deployment is far too small to effect any significant resistance in the event of a full-scale invasion. Instead, the purpose

¹ Benjamin D Katz, "Baltics States Have Doubled Arms Spending Since Putin's Advance." Bloomberg.com. October 19, 2016. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-19/baltics-states-have-doubled-arms-spending-since-putin-s-advance>.

of this arrangement is to act as a geopolitical 'tripwire' of sorts.² The theoretical logic of this effort is that belligerent powers could convince themselves that a strong enough move against the Baltic states would prevent the rest of the alliance from being able or willing to actively support them. Conversely, if in the event of an invasion of the Baltics an aggressor were forced to engage with soldiers from, for example the United States, it would leave the alliance with no choice but to respond with overwhelming force to protect both the Baltics and their own forces. A similar theory was behind the protection of West Berlin during the Cold War. However, as the soldiers are confined to their bases rather than being dispersed throughout their host countries, there does exist the possibility that Russia could simply avoid the multinational forces. This would not trigger the tripwire, and would potentially result in a critical delay in NATO's response.

Additional measures taken by the alliance to guarantee the integrity of its eastern border include the tripling of the size of the NATO response force and increased air and naval presence in the Baltics. Additional funding has also been allocated to the Pentagon's European Reassurance Initiative. This started as a one-year project focused on building US capacity in Eastern Europe through increased investment across five categories: presence, training and exercises, infrastructure, prepositioned equipment, and building partner capacity.³ However, there are still concerns that this is not enough. Studies of Russian and NATO capabilities in the region have concluded that without an increase of over sevenfold in manpower, Russia would be able to take the capitals of Estonia and Latvia within five days.⁴ Russia is also significantly ramping up its presence in Kaliningrad, further developing a threat to NATO's flank. This continuous escalation is having a negative impact on geopolitical stability, and the alliance needs to decide its realistic level of commitment to its eastern frontier, and demonstrate that commitment.

More recent relevant developments on this front include increased Russian disinformation campaigns seeking to exacerbate tensions between member countries, undermine support for NATO with domestic populations, and even tensions between the foreign NATO troops stationed in the Baltics and their host countries' civilian population.⁵ Further, the ZAPAD 2017 Military exercises undertaken by Russia and Belarus caused a heightened state of alertness among member countries, and reports of Russia's understating of its troop levels did nothing to alleviate concerns of neighbouring countries.⁶

² "Trip-wire deterrence." *The Economist*, 2 July 2016, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21701515-ageing-alliance-hopes-russia-will-get-message-it-serious-trip-wire-deterrence>.

³ Mark F. Cancian, and Lisa S. Samp. "The European Reassurance Initiative." Center for Strategic and International Studies. February 9, 2016. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/european-reassurance-initiative-0>.

⁴ Dan De Luce, "If Russia Started a War in the Baltics, NATO Would Lose - Quickly." *Foreign Policy*. 3 February 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/03/if-russia-started-a-war-in-the-baltics-nato-wouldlose-quickly/>.

⁵ Adina Bresge, "NATO head says Canadian troops in Latvia smeared by Russia-backed online propaganda," *Global News*, 19 November 2017, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3868991/nato-head-canadian-troops-smeared-russia-online-propaganda/>.

⁶ NATO Review, "ZAPAD 2017 and Euro-Atlantic Security," *NATO Review Magazine*, 14 December 2017, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2017/Also-in-2017/zapad-2017-and-euro-atlantic-security-military-exercise-strategic-russia/EN/index.htm>.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) Is the current NATO deterrent in the Baltic States effective and sufficient? What can be done to improve the current model?
- 2) In the event of invasion that avoids military bases, would NATO soldiers be actively sent out to engage?
- 3) What else can NATO do to reassure its easternmost member states of its commitment to their security?

Further Reading:

ZAPAD 2017 and Euro-Atlantic security

<https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2017/Also-in-2017/zapad-2017-and-euro-atlantic-security-military-exercise-strategic-russia/EN/index.htm>

“If Russia Started a War in the Baltics, NATO Would Loss Quickly”

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/03/if-russia-started-a-war-in-the-baltics-nato-wouldlose-quickly/>

Securing the Nordic-Baltic Region:

<https://www.nato.int/docu/Review/2016/Also-in-2016/security-baltic-defense-nato/EN/index.htm>

The European Reassurance Initiative

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/european-reassurance-initiative-0>

Lanoszka, Alexander. “Russian hybrid warfare and extended deterrence in eastern Europe.” *International Affairs* 92, no. 1 (2016): 175-195.

<http://www.alexlanoszka.com/LanoszkaIAHybrid.pdf>

Tripwire Deterrence

<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21701515-ageing-alliance-hopes-russia-willget-message-it-serious-trip-wire-deterrence>

Vienna Document, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe:

<http://www.osce.org/fsc/86597?download=true>

Topic B: THE FINAL FRONTIER: NATO, SPACE SECURITY, AND THE WEAPONIZATION OF OUTER SPACE

The beginning of the 21st century has seen a pronounced opening in the space environment, as several state and non-state actors have shed their mortal coils and launched artificial satellites into the high-earth orbits. Although space security has remained a concern of the Alliance since the launch of Sputnik I in 1957, the wide-spread

integration of space-based technologies by western civilization has questioned the validity of the high-earth orbits remaining a “peaceful sanctuary of humankind”. In the wake of the First Gulf War in 1991, several states within NATO have increased the dependencies of their armed forces on the use of space-based technologies as a means of supporting command, control, and communication functions. Since 2010, other members have outlined a plan of introducing anti-satellite systems (ASATs) capable of targeting enemy space assets or debris.

Outer space is, in the popular vernacular, the “final frontier” in the area of operations, especially where NATO is concerned. Whereas the Alliance’s members and their armed forces have become more reliant on a cadre of progressively more sophisticated space-based technologies, NATO has remained nominally ambivalent to the prospective development of an institutionalized collective space security strategy.⁷ At present, the Alliance neither owns nor directly operates any satellites. Instead, the Alliance’s space-based capabilities are solely dependent on six members – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States – and several private companies who provide Earth observation, meteorological data, and telecommunications services. As such, the Alliance has never considered the space environment as part of its *modus operandi*. Yet, as space-based technologies have become more imbedded into the everyday activities of the Alliance’s populations and militaries, so too must NATO consider how to protect itself from threats originating from the “ultimate high ground”. With the issuance of the Warsaw Summit Communique, the Alliance – for the first time since its founding – is now required to consider how to adapt to the “chang[ing] and evolving security environment” that is outer space by using “all the tools at [its] disposal”.⁸

Perhaps the greatest challenge that the Alliance must consider when developing a space security strategy is the likelihood of the space environment becoming a contested domain. Today, the high earth orbits have experienced an influx of both state and non-state space actors into an already crowded and finite space environment.⁹ Moreover, outer space has remained as it was during the Cold War – a domain of global political, technological, and military competition. As the space environment becomes contested by an exclusive group of spacefaring actors, the likelihood of satellites being targeted by potential aggressors to “balance the technological advantage” seems probable. Consequently, the modern space environment has become blurred between the emerging aspects of military, civil-science, and commercial space activities.

⁷ Nina-Louisa Remuss, “NATO and Space: Why is Space Relevant for NATO?,” *ESPI Perspectives* 40.1 (2010): 2.

⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “Warsaw Summit Communique: Issue by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016,” *Press Release* (2016) 100, July 2016.

⁹ Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Neither Stat Wars Nor Sanctuary: Constraining The Military Uses of Space* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 35; Nayef R. F. Al-Rodhan, *Meta-Geopolitics of Outer Space: An Analysis of Space Power, Security and Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012), 27.

This blurring has also led to the further conceptual distinction between the “militarization” and “weaponization” of outer space. While the former reflects the reality that space has always existed as a domain reserved for military applications, the latter describes a specific practice which can be understood as anything from the destruction of satellites in-orbit using ASATs, to the placement of weaponized earth-to-space satellites on-orbit.¹⁰ Considering these classifications, both civilian and military satellites exhibit three similar vulnerabilities that would constitute space weaponization: signal jamming, IP spoofing, and kinetic strikes from ASATs through to and within the upper atmosphere. Moreover, at present there exists no legal prohibition on conventional space weapons or an article of international legislation that prohibits the use of these stratagems in the high earth orbits.

Over the last several years, several prospective adversaries of NATO have developed and tested offensive technologies that could have the potential to eliminate satellites. Some near-peer actors (China and Russia) have developed and tested ASATs – such as the 2007 Chinese ASATs test which created over 73% of known space debris in low-earth orbit (LEO) – and have expressed an aspiration to “engage and eliminate” enemy space systems during the onset of an international military conflict. Correspondingly, less powerful actors have adapted toward the use of telecommunication and cyber jamming technologies to better disrupt both civilian and military satellite activities. For example, Iraq made use of GPS jammers during the Second Gulf War to interrupt Coalition satellites and Iran has continuously utilized SATCOM jammers against commercial satellites. Over the last decade, non-state actors have also begun to target satellites through a series of jamming and piracy events – the most noticeable of these being the Sri Lanka’s Tamil Tigers (LTTE) “hijacking” of the INTELSAT-12 in geosynchronous orbits for two weeks in June 2006.

Considering these threats, NATO must be prepared to protect the civilian, military, and industrial satellites of its member states within the high earth orbits. A failure to do so would result in catastrophic damage not just to the satellite dependent populations of the Western Atlantic, but to the future of human space activities. At the same time, any NATO space security policy must remain committed to the guiding principles, influence by international space law, cited below:

1. NATO must remain committed to the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.
2. NATO must have assured access to outer space.
3. NATO must remain committed to the development of military space power.

¹⁰ Wilson W. S. Wong and James Fergusson, *Military Space Power: A Guide To The Issues* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 3-4.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) Should NATO develop an independent military space capability or is the current method of relying on national space capabilities sufficient for modern mission parameters?
- 2) Can NATO counteract the development of offensive space-based technologies whilst retaining a commitment to the “peaceful uses of outer space” and other articles of international space law?
- 3) Is the use of a kinetic-energy space weapon or telecommunication/cyber jammer against a satellite owned nationally by an Alliance member worth of the invocation of the collective defence clause? Does a collective defence declaration over the destruction of a member’s satellite only apply to specific classifications of space-based technologies (civilian, military, and industry) or should all classifications be regarded with the same severity?

Further Reading:

National Space Agencies and Organizations Database

<http://cdsweb.u-strasbg.fr/astroWeb/astroweb/agency.html>

Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (“The Outer Space Treaty”)

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/introouterspacetreaty.html>

Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/introliability-convention.html>

COPUOS Database for Articles of National Space Law

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/nationalspacelaw.htm>

Topic C: NATO’S RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION AND THE ONGOING WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

As the War in Afghanistan continued beyond the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation spanning from 2001 to 2014, the Resolute Support mission emerged as a follow-on addition, conducting many of the same activities, in support of similar objectives but on a much smaller scale with reduced troop allocations. As such, the mission in Afghanistan continues to evolve and shift as realities on the ground and internationally change.

After the ISAF mission finished in 2014, the Resolute Support Mission began in January of 2015 to carry on the work that NATO had begun almost fourteen years prior.¹¹ This included a massive shift in NATO-alliance and partner forces present in the country, from a high of roughly 140,000 during the height of the 2010-2011 troop surge, to less than a tenth that size under the current Resolute Support commitments.¹² This continued presence in Afghanistan is provided for by a Status of Forces Agreement with Afghanistan, clearly delineating the mandate of the mission. Further, UN Security Council Resolution 2189 affirms the importance of this continued international involvement for Afghanistan's security and stability.

All of which has entailed a continued NATO presence of roughly 13,000 personnel from member countries and partners, with the key roles being:

“Supporting planning, programming and budgeting; Assuring transparency, accountability and oversight; Supporting the adherence to the principles of rule of law and good governance; Supporting the establishment and sustainment of such processes as force generation, recruiting, training, managing and development of personnel.”¹³

The operation continues to seek to bolster the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capabilities through training, mentorship, and general support. In addition to this, counter-terrorism and combat support comprise two additional aspects of this mission. The Taliban's fortunes have ebbed and flowed since 2001 but they appear to be making inroads throughout the country in places they had not been seen since the invasion. For the most part since 2002 the Taliban had been relegated to the southern provinces of the country, and northern Afghanistan was relatively peaceful. However, now Taliban fighters have shown activity in all eight of the provinces bordering Central Asian countries, with fighters coming over the shared borders.¹⁴ Recently other actors such as Islamic State of Iraq and Levant – Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP, a smaller offshoot operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan) have arrived in the country seeking to make their own fortune and to capitalize on the continuing instability.

There have been a number of recent developments, and impending deadlines that will make the Resolute Support mission of increased salience to member countries and the international community in the coming year. First, as of Summer 2017, the American Government unveiled a new South Asia strategy that stipulates that any withdrawal of US forces will be based on the state of local conditions relating to local Afghan government

¹¹ “NATO and Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last updated 10 November 2017, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm.

¹² “How many foreign troops are there in Afghanistan?,” *BBC*, 15 October 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-11371138>.

¹³ “NATO and Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.”

¹⁴ Bardia Rahmani, “The Battle for the Afghan Border,” *The Diplomat*, 4 August 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/the-battle-for-the-afghan-border/>. Bardia

forces having sufficient capabilities to maintain security on their own.¹⁵ Further, the Afghan government announced the date of July 7, 2018 for the next parliamentary and district council elections.¹⁶ This comes in the wake of increasing influence and areas of activity for the Taliban, who are capitalizing on Afghanistan's weak control of its borders. Efforts to stabilize Afghanistan's porous borders to stop cross-border drug-trafficking and militant transportation are just as critical as any other aspect of the ongoing conflict, given the Taliban's reliance on these networks for recruits and more importantly continued revenue streams.¹⁷

All of this is to say that 2018 will be a major year for the Afghan administration, with the eyes of the world watching to see how the latest elections proceed, and whether security worsens. In sum, the Resolute Support mission seeks to continue the work that was begun in 2001 on a smaller scale, but with similar open-ended commitments. Questions of whether member countries should continue to maintain engagement in the country, or of the difficulties with dealing with non-NATO partner countries (of which there are many) will continue to dominate discussion.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) Should Alliance members increase or decrease their troop contributions to the ongoing continuation mission in Afghanistan? Should those members that are not contributing armed combatants or military personnel contribute through other means?
- 2) What are the ongoing strategic challenges facing the Resolute Support mission?
- 3) How should NATO conduct itself in regards to the various actors (non-member partners, non-state actors, belligerents) in this theatre?
- 4) Are there any lessons to be learned from ISAM that could be applied to Resolute Support?

Further Reading:

Resolute Support Mission "Placemat" – Key Facts and Figures

https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_05/20170523_2017-05-RSM-Placemat.pdf.

NATO Resolute Support Website

<https://www.rs.nato.int/default.aspx>.

¹⁵ Jim Garamone, "South Asia Strategy Already Paying Off in Afghanistan, Official Says," NATO Resolute Support Media Center, 13 December 2017, <http://www.rs.nato.int/news-center/feature-stories/2017/south-asia-strategy-already-paying-off-in-afghanistan--official-says.aspx>.

¹⁶ Javier Delgado Rivera, "UN secretary general speaks out on Afghanistan," *Asia Times*, 1 November 2017, <http://www.atimes.com/un-secretary-general-speaks-afghanistan/>.

¹⁷ Rahmani, "The Battle for the Afghan Border,"

NATO, “NATO and Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.” NATO Topics. Last updated 10 November 2017.

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm.

Bardia Rahmani, “The Battle for the Afghan Border,” *The Diplomat*, 4 August 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/the-battle-for-the-afghan-border/>.

Ghulam Farooq Mujaddidi, “Fixing Afghanistan’s Struggling Security Forces,” *The Diplomat*, 24 July 2017.

<https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/fixing-afghanistans-struggling-security-forces/>.