

BACKGROUND REPORT

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NATO

NATO's Readiness Action Plan



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Model NATO

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1 Introduction

Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea followed by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have not just changed the security environment in Europe, but consequently also the balance among the basic priorities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.¹

A few years ago, NATO was at the height of its global security role (crisis management) with its involvement in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Libya or Somalia.² However, even back in 2013, the former Secretary General Rasmussen from Denmark hinted at NATO shifting back to its duty of collective defence of its members.³

This trajectory has been further enhanced a year later, mainly because of the actions of the Russian Federation and also after the emergence of the so-called Islamic State in the Middle East⁴ (also known as ISIS, ISIL or Daesh⁵). Collective defence is thus "*back at the heart of the Alliance*."⁶ Maintaining global security has nevertheless not been brushed aside entirely as NATO missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Mediterranean Sea and around the Horn of Africa continue, although in changed modalities.⁷ The validity of the NATO's Strategic concept from 2010, and in extension the three core tasks that the Alliance identified for itself in the 21st century, was not questioned.

NATO's reaction to these threats is the Readiness Action Plan (RAP).⁸ As stated by the current Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, "*the Readiness Action Plan is the most significant*

¹ TECHAU, Jan. How NATO Reinvented Itself in Less Than Six Months. *CarnegieEurope.eu* [online]. Carnegie Europe, 4. 6. 2014 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://carnegieEurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=56525>>

² LOMTADZE, Tamta. NATO Missions And Operations: Response To The Crises. *Atlantic Voices* [online]. 2015, vol. 5, no. 2 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.ata-sec.org/index.php/publications/atlantic-voices/61-nato-readiness-action-plan-1/file>>

³ NATO after ISAF – staying successful together. *Nato.int* [online]. 8. 4. 2013 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_94321.htm>

⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *NATO's Readiness Action Plan Fact Sheet* [online]. February 2015 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_02/20150205_1502-Factsheet-RAP-en.pdf>

⁵ BEAUCHAMP, Zack. ISIS, Islamic State or ISIL? What to call the group the US is bombing in Iraq and Syria. *Vox.com* [online]. 17. 9. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.vox.com/2014/9/17/6259923/isis-isil-the-islamic-state-daesh-what-is-isis-why-does-obama-use-isil>>

⁶ TECHAU, op. cit.

⁷ Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. *Nato.int* [online]. 27. 2. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm>

⁸ STOUP, David. NATO Unveils Rapid-Response Force to Counter Russian Troops in Ukraine. *Time.com* [online]. 2. 9. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://time.com/3254711/nato-ukraine-russia-war-summit/>>



*strengthening of NATO's collective defence in decades."*⁹ Hence, it is a defensive step, which should strengthen the solidarity within the NATO and enhance the deterrence against external potential threats.

To be more specific, the so-called RAP includes a series of both short- and long-term measures. They are aimed at reassuring especially the Eastern and Central European allies¹⁰ and at adapting the force and command structure of the alliance in order to be better able to react appropriately to sudden crises.¹¹ Probably the most visible adaptation measure is the creation of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). It consists of around 5,000 troops and could be deployed on the territory of the NATO members as quickly as in 48 hours.¹²

However, NATO countries perceive resurgent Russia and the threats from the Middle East and North Africa with different level of concern. One of the main issues remains the potential establishment of permanent NATO bases on the territories of the new member states in Eastern Europe. The reason for this is different interpretation of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act.¹³ Some argue that this step would violate it since the Founding Act lays down the Alliance's promise that it will not engage in "*additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces*" in the areas of the former Eastern Bloc.¹⁴

However, others argue that, firstly, it is not even a legally binding treaty, and secondly, that the conditions under which it should apply are long gone.¹⁵ Specifically, NATO pledged this while also explicitly stating that this applies only in the current and foreseeable security environment.¹⁶ What added to the confusion was former Secretary General Rasmussen's

⁹ The Secretary General's Annual Report 2014. *Nato.int* [online]. 30. 1. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_116854.htm

¹⁰ GLAVIN, Nicholas A. NATO's New Readiness Action Plan: Allied Response To Hybrid Warfare. *Atlantic Voices* [online]. 2015, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 7-11 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.ata-sec.org/index.php/publications/atlantic-voices/61-nato-readiness-action-plan-1/file>

¹¹ The Readiness Action Plan. *Nato.int* [online]. 25. 6. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ KARNITSCHNIG, Matthew. Pact With Russia Keeps NATO Bases at a Distance, But Should It? *Real Time Brussels – WSJ.com* [online]. 3. 9. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://blogs.wsj.com/brussels/2014/09/03/qa-1997s-nato-russia-founding-act/>

¹⁴ BLOME, Nikolaus et al. Failed Diplomacy: NATO Hardliners Push for Firmer Stance against Russia. *Spiegel Online International* [online]. 1. 9. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/pressure-mounts-for-more-aggressive-stance-against-russia-a-989216.html>

¹⁵ KARNITSCHNIG, op. cit.

¹⁶ STRAUS, Ira Louis. The Myth that NATO Committed to Having No Permanent Troops in Eastern Europe. *Atlantic Community* [online]. 4. 9. 2014 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.atlantic-community.org/-/the-myth-that-nato-committed-to-having-no-permanent-troops-in-eastern-europe>



proclamation before the Wales summit that NATO sticks to the Founding Act and all the measures taken will be in full accordance with it.¹⁷ And so whether to establish permanent bases in the East of the Alliance is still a problem to resolve. The Warsaw Summit in mid-2016 will be an important watershed in this respect.

2 General overview

The Readiness Action Plan has been officially approved by the Alliance's principal political decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, during the Wales summit in September 2014.¹⁸ Its basic purpose is to provide a clear reaction to the threats posed by Russia and the dangerous security spillover from the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁹

The two pillars of the plan are the assurance and the adaptation measures. The former is aimed primarily eastwards, to the Baltic region, Poland and other eastern allies (Bulgaria, Romania). The assurance measures should, as the name suggests, reassure the allies in this area with continuous air, land, and maritime presence and military activity, such as regular military exercises. They should also enhance deterrence against various forms of attack.²⁰

The adaptation measures, on the other hand, have been prepared with more long-term goals on mind. They encompass the reinforcement of the NATO Response Force (NRF), creation of a "spearhead force" – Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) within the NRF, establishment of six multinational command and control centres called NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) in the eastern parts of NATO territory (e.g. Baltic states, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania), enhancement of the Multinational Corps Northeast (Headquarters in Szczecin, Poland) and other smaller-scale arrangements.²¹

*"It is remarkable that the RAP was set up practically for an indefinite time span. A review mechanism was built into the plan, but it will require all 28 member states to agree to abandon it, which in reality means it is there for good."*²²

¹⁷ Pre-Summit Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at Residence Palace, Brussels. *Nato.int* [online]. 1. 9. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_112238.htm

¹⁸ Wales Summit Declaration. *Nato.int* [online]. 5. 9. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

¹⁹ STOUT, op. cit.

²⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *NATO's Readiness Action Plan Fact Sheet* [online]. February 2015 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_02/20150205_1502-Factsheet-RAP-en.pdf

²¹ The Readiness Action Plan, op. cit.

²² TECHAU, op. cit.



Obviously, such plans require financial support and that is one of the downsides. Even though NATO members did once again pledge at the Wales Summit that they would aim for spending at least 2 % of their GDP on defence, most of them are far from the target.²³ Only the USA, UK, Estonia and Greece currently meet the target in 2015.²⁴ However, the defence spending budget did rise in many Eastern European member countries.²⁵

Throughout this year, these innovations have been further developed into detail and modified. This process is likely to continue.

3 Historical context

Both the Readiness Action Plan and the Ukrainian conflict have obviously their principal causations and it is important to understand them. Hence, this part will briefly cover the history of NATO, concentrating on its relationship with the great power in the east, Russia.

Russia itself, or more precisely the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), has even been one of the reasons for the creation of NATO, with its post-war expansion and the creation of the Eastern bloc. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been set up as an organization keeping nationalist militarism at bay, encouraging European integration and finally, countering and deterring the USSR.²⁶

Unlike NATO's eastern counterpart, the Warsaw Pact, NATO has survived the Cold War. As the USSR dissolved and the constituent states gained independence, some of the new leaders began to view NATO in a different light. The Baltic countries – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – have had a troubled history with the eastern neighbour. For many decades, they were part of the Russian Empire, gaining independence after the First World War, only to be occupied again during the World War II.²⁷ What we have seen after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991

²³ ERLANGER, Steven. Europe Begins to Rethink Cuts to Military Spending. *The New York Times* [online]. 26. 3. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/27/world/europe/europe-begins-to-rethink-cuts.html?_r=0>

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ DE FRANCE, Olivier. Defence budgets in Europe: Downturn or U-turn? EUISS [online]. May 2015 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_12_Defence_spending_in_Europe.pdf>

²⁶ A short history of NATO. *Nato.int* [online]. [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.nato.int/history/nato-history.html>>

²⁷ Echoes of the Sudetenland. *Economist.com* [online]. 29. 3. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21599828-baltics-look-nato-protection-echoes-sudetenland>>



was basically a dash westwards and away from Russia.²⁸ After just 11 years, former Soviet republics joined NATO in 2004.²⁹

Figure 1: NATO members by the period of their joining³⁰



Some changes also happened in Russia itself. After the disintegration of the USSR, Boris Yeltsin became the president of Russia and relations with the United States and other Western European countries improved significantly, as both sides were aware of the need for co-operation. The Russian president clearly perceived the changes in the European security architecture and did not want his country to be excluded because he thought co-operation would turn out to be beneficial. He even suggested his country might once become a NATO member.³¹ In 1997, NATO and Russia decided to found a forum (Permanent Joint Council) to discuss common security issues on the basis of a document called "NATO-Russia Founding Act".³²

²⁸ WINNER, Andrew C. The Baltic States: Heading West. *The Washington Quarterly* [online]. Volume 25, Number 1, Winter 2002 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/washington_quarterly/v025/25.1winner.pdf

²⁹ Member countries. *Nato.int* [online]. 20. 8. 2013 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm

³⁰ NATO membership in Europe. NATO flexes its muscle memory. *Economist.com* [online]. 28. 8. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/news/international/21614166-russias-aggression-ukraine-has-made-natos-summit-wales-most-important>

³¹ SMITH, Julianne. *The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?* [online]. Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2008 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/081110_smith_natorussia_web.pdf

³² Ibidem.



The quality of the relations dropped occasionally, most notably during NATO's involvement in the Yugoslav Wars, as Russia strongly condemned NATO's strikes on Belgrade in 1999 and suspended ties with NATO for some time.³³ Nevertheless, even after Vladimir Putin replaced Yeltsin, Russia still wished to co-operate, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.³⁴

What caused probably the greatest concern of the Russian Federation was the enlargement of NATO. Particularly the second round (2004) – with Baltic countries joining – brought about significant Russian objections. President Putin declared that Russia would consider another round of enlargement as acceptable only if the alliance transformed itself from a military to a political organization.³⁵ Still, this round of enlargement resulted in a success.

However, when Georgia and Ukraine started to seriously contemplate NATO membership in 2008, Russian ambassador Rogozin threatened to point warheads at Ukraine if these countries were to become NATO members. This resonated in multiple Western capitals (particularly Berlin and Paris), together with the fact that there were domestic political disputes in Ukraine and even frozen conflicts and Russian “peacekeepers” in Georgia. Therefore, the Bush administration-led proposal to invite both countries into the Alliance was blocked. But NATO members still did agree to a final communiqué stating that the two countries will in the future join the alliance.³⁶ Just a few months later, the Russo-Georgian War broke out, further destabilising Georgia. As a result, the relations between NATO and Russia severely deteriorated although they improved again with the inauguration of the new American president Obama and his decision to “restart” the US-Russian relations that, among other things, resulted in the scrapping of Bush-proposed plan to deploy parts of missile defence shield on the territory of Poland and the Czech Republic.

The tactic used in Georgia is part of a broader Russian strategy of destabilising its “near abroad” (read sphere of influence) and creating and fuelling the so-called frozen conflicts. Some argue that this is being done in order not to let these countries constitute a good example of a successful democratic shift and also not to let them join the western institutions (mainly EU and NATO), which would seriously weaken the Russian influence.³⁷ This has happened in

³³ Ibidem.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Bucharest Summit Declaration. *Nato.int* [online]. 3. 4. 2008 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

³⁷ ORTTUNG, Robert; WALKER, Christopher. Putin's Frozen Conflicts. *Foreignpolicy.com* [online]. 13. 2. 2015 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/13/putins-frozen-conflicts/>

the separatist regions of South Ossetia, Abkhazia (both Georgia), Transnistria (Moldova) and most recently in Ukraine.³⁸

Figure 2: Frozen conflicts near Russia (Note: Nagorno-Karabakh has a different history)³⁹



The Ukrainian conflict is the perfect example. Ukraine was on the brink of signing the EU Association Agreement, which would create closer economic and political ties between the two entities.⁴⁰ But then the president of Ukraine Yanukovich decided in the last moment to rather seek closer co-operation with Russia (read loans to fuel corrupt economy).⁴¹ This triggered massive protests and a creation of a movement known as Euromaidan, named after the Independence square in Kiev (Maidan Nezalezhnosti), the epicentre of the protests.⁴²

After a brutal suppression of the protests, president Yanukovich fled Kiev. The opposition took power and, among other things, proposed to ban Russian as an official language.⁴³ Even

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ Breakaway territories set in a frozen conflict. Frozen conflict in east Ukraine stirs fears of repeating Georgia war. *World Review* [online]. 28. 11. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.worldreview.info/content/frozen-conflict-east-ukraine-stirs-fears-repeating-georgia-war>

⁴⁰ Association Agreements. *European External Action Service* [online]. [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://eeas.europa.eu/association/>

⁴¹ Ukraine crisis: Timeline. *BBC.com* [online]. 13. 11. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26248275>

⁴² Ukraine crisis in maps. *BBC.com* [online]. 18. 2. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27308526>

⁴³ Ibidem.



though the vote has been later overturned, it also helped trigger a wave of anger in the eastern part of the country, where the Russian language is usually a way more common than Ukrainian.⁴⁴

One of such regions was Crimea, a peninsula in the south of the country, which had belonged to Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic prior to 1954.⁴⁵ Local protests gained serious momentum in March 2014, but this was intentionally encouraged by the Russian side, as Mr Putin admitted. He later proclaimed that there was a plan to annex the territory weeks before it actually did happen.⁴⁶ Unmarked Russian troops got involved in Crimea and helped to capture governmental buildings, surround the Ukraine's army units located on the peninsula and finally, to observe the illegal referendum on the status of Crimea that was followed by an annexation by Russia.⁴⁷

Separatism rose in Eastern Ukraine as well – in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, also known as Donbass. The separatist seized the local administration and declared independence as "People's Republics".⁴⁸ Subsequently, the Ukrainian government launched a military operation against the separatists and an armed conflict broke out.⁴⁹ NATO accuses Russia of supporting the separatists and that it militarily intervenes in Ukraine.⁵⁰ The United Nations proclaimed similar accusations,⁵¹ while the Russian Federation continuously refuses them.⁵²

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ LEWYCKA, Marina. Ukraine and the west: hot air and hypocrisy. *The Guardian* [online]. 10. 3. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/10/ukraine-and-west-hot-air-hypocrisy-crimea-russia>>

⁴⁶ Putin reveals secrets of Russia's Crimea takeover plot. *BBC.com* [online]. 9. 3. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31796226>>

⁴⁷ BERRY, Lynn. Putin Admits Russian Soldiers Were In Crimea, Slams West For Role In Ukraine Crisis. *The World Post* [online]. 17. 4. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/17/putin-ukraine_n_5165913.html>

⁴⁸ Ukraine crisis in maps, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ NATO-Russia relations: the facts. *Nato.int* [online]. 12. 1. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_111767.htm?selectedLocale=en>

⁵¹ MILES, Tom. U.N. finds growing signs of Russian involvement in Ukraine war. *Reuters* [online]. 1. 1. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/01/us-ukraine-crisis-un-idUSKBN00H2SK20150601>>

⁵² DEMIRJIAN, Karoun. Putin denies Russian troops are in Ukraine, decrees certain deaths secret. *The Washington Post* [online]. 28. 5. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-denies-russian-troops-are-in-ukraine-decrees-certain-deaths-secret/2015/05/28/9bb15092-0543-11e5-93f4-f24d4af7f97d_story.html>



The Ukrainian crisis has significantly increased the Baltic states' fears of Russia. These have ever been high, but this time other Allies did not play them down as easily as before.⁵³ All of the Baltic countries have significant Russian-speaking minorities (Estonia and Latvia around 26%, Lithuania 6%)⁵⁴ and their rights are not always as protected as those of the ethnic majority, especially in Estonia, where 100 000 ethnic Russians live without a citizenship.⁵⁵ Even though the situation slowly improves, it raises concerns as the Russian government articulated that it reserves the right to protect Russians anywhere in the world.⁵⁶ And so concentrating on the defence of these Allies rightfully seems more important than ever. Even more so that the Alliance began the development of appropriate contingency plans for the defence of the Baltic states only after the 2008 Georgian-Russo War, four years after they already became NATO members.

4 Assurance measures

NATO's first reaction has been quite fast. Already in April 2014, allies agreed to implement a series of so-called assurance measures.⁵⁷ Later that month, Secretary General Rasmussen called for an establishment of a "readiness action plan", which would integrate these measures into a comprehensive plan.⁵⁸

NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission has quadrupled at that time, from 4 to 16 fighter jets⁵⁹ and fighter jets have been deployed to Romania and Poland as well, directly as one of the assurance measures.⁶⁰

The Baltic Air Policing (BAP) mission is a part of a bigger NATO Air Policing programme – a collective system to preserve the safety and integrity of NATO airspace.⁶¹ Because Iceland,

⁵³ Echoes of the Sudetenland, op. cit.

⁵⁴ Echoes of the Sudetenland, op. cit.

⁵⁵ HOCKENOS, Paul. Baltic Russians could be the next pawns in new cold war. *Al Jazeera America* [online]. 11. 4. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/4/in-the-new-cold-war-baltic-russians-could-be-the-next-pawns.html>>

⁵⁶ COALSON, Robert. Putin Pledges To Protect All Ethnic Russians Anywhere. So, Where Are They? *Radio Free Europe* [online]. 10. 4. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-ethnic-russification-baltics-kazakhstan-soviet/25328281.html>>

⁵⁷ ACO - Allied Command Operations. *Fact Sheet: NATO Reassurance Measures Ukraine Crisis* [online]. [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.aco.nato.int/land.aspx>>

⁵⁸ NATO Secretary General calls for readiness action plan. *Nato.int* [online]. 8. 4. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_108913.htm?selectedLocale=en>

⁵⁹ GLAVIN, op. cit.

⁶⁰ NATO's Readiness Action Plan Fact Sheet, op. cit.

⁶¹ ACO - Allied Command Operations. *NATO Air Policing* [online]. [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.aco.nato.int/page142085426.aspx>>



Albania, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania do not have their own supersonic jets, other allies agreed to take care of their airspace.

The airspace of the last three is protected as one in the Baltic Air Policing mission on a rotational basis. This means that the airspace is currently, since May 2015 until the end of August, patrolled by Belgium, Italy, United Kingdom and Norway, who now leads the mission.⁶² After four months, different nations will take charge. This mission has been set up immediately after the three countries joined the alliance in 2004 and has been continuously going on up till today.⁶³ Since the start of the Ukrainian crisis, NATO has registered a high number of its airspace breaches by the aeroplanes of the Russian Federation,⁶⁴ indicating the increased BAP readiness has its purpose. However, in August 2015, the number of the jets dropped from 16 to 8.⁶⁵

Apart from the Baltic Air Policing, NATO also started with regular Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) surveillance flights over the eastern members' territory.⁶⁶ Already in 1980, first NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force (NAEW&CF) was established. Today the NAEW&CF consists of two operational elements called Components: The multi-national NATO E-3A Component at Geilenkirchen, Germany and the RAF E-3D Component at Waddington in the UK with aircrafts manned and operated only by the British Royal Air Force personnel.

A single AWACS aircraft can continuously survey the airspace within a radius of more than 400 km of the aircraft and exchange information with ground- and sea-based commanders.⁶⁷ To better imagine this, if an AWACS aircraft was above Prague, it could gather information about what is happening in the airspace near Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Budapest at the same time.

Besides air patrolling, the allies have also agreed to intensify the sea protection. Two maritime groups have been ordered to carry this out – "SNMCMG1" (Standing NATO Mine Counter-

⁶² Norway takes the lead in NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission. *Nato.int* [online]. 30. 4. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_119113.htm>

⁶³ SMITH, op. cit.

⁶⁴ DEARDEN, Lizzie. Full list of incidents involving Russian military and NATO since March 2014. *The Independent* [online]. 10. 11. 2014 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/full-list-of-incidents-involving-russian-military-and-nato-since-march-2014-9851309.html>>

⁶⁵ JENNINGS, Gareth. NATO to scale back enhanced Baltic Air Policing Mission. *IHS Jane's 360* [online]. 4. 8. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.janes.com/article/53419/nato-to-scale-back-enhanced-baltic-air-policing-mission>>

⁶⁶ NATO's Readiness Action Plan Fact Sheet, op. cit.

⁶⁷ The NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force: Fact Sheet. *NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force, E-3A Component, Public Affairs Office* [online]. 4. 4. 2013 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.e3a.nato.int/common/files/en_factsheet_apr2013.pdf>



Measures Group ONE) for the region of the Baltic Sea and "SNMG2" (Standing NATO Maritime Group TWO) for the Eastern Mediterranean. In practice, they will regularly cruise these waters while conducting port visits and counter-terrorism patrols.⁶⁸

Last but not least, a part of the Assurance measures are the military exercises. We have seen many of them throughout 2014 and 2015, among them for example the exercise "Noble Jump" in Poland, which tested the newly-operational VJTF (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force)⁶⁹ or "Trident Joust", a headquarters exercise in Bulgaria, Romania and Italy.

*"Military exercises provide important opportunities to improve the ability of Allies and partners to work together and are a valuable demonstration of NATO's readiness to respond to potential threats. These exercises take place on land, at sea and in the air with scenarios based on collective defence and crisis management."*⁷⁰

It is also important to note that the steps mentioned here are only activities executed under the direct command of NATO. Some of the Allies decided to provide significant reassurances on a bilateral basis.⁷¹ Most notably, the US "European Reassurance Initiative", which should sustain a persistent, rotational presence of US forces in Central Europe, assist countries threatened by Russia with their security (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) and increase the responsiveness of the US forces already in Central Europe.⁷² The USA also deployed the B-2 bombers into Europe, which are able to carry nuclear bombs.⁷³

5 Adaptation measures

According to the United States Permanent Representative to NATO, Douglas Lute, for the past two decades, the main challenge for NATO was different than it is nowadays. In the past, the particular countries had to prepare their troops well in advance for scheduled deployments, as NATO's main concerns used to be the missions in Balkans or in Afghanistan. Today, however,

⁶⁸ Fact Sheet: NATO Reassurance Measures Ukraine Crisis, op. cit.

⁶⁹ NATO's Readiness Action Plan Fact Sheet, op. cit.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ Fact Sheet: NATO Reassurance Measures Ukraine Crisis, op. cit.

⁷² BRZEZINSKI, Ian. The European Reassurance Initiative's One Year Anniversary: Mixed Results. *Atlantic Council* [online]. 3. 6. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/the-european-reassurance-initiative-s-one-year-anniversary-mixed-results>>

⁷³ PAWLYK, Oriana. B-2, B-52 bombers deploy to Europe for military exercises. *Military Times* [online]. 7. 6. 2015 [cit. 31. 7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/06/06/b-52-bombers-deploy-to-europe-for-military-exercises/28598701/>>



the new security environment in the east and south calls for forces which can stay at a higher state of readiness to be potentially deployed in a couple of days.⁷⁴

That is why NATO came up with a different sort of measures as well. Apart from assurance (short-term) measures, the RAP consists of adaptation (or longer-term) measures. And these have a different purpose. They should reform the forces and command structure to *"make the Alliance better able to react swiftly and decisively to sudden crises, whether these arise to the east or the south"*.⁷⁵ The centrepiece of these efforts is to develop an improved and restructured NATO Response Force (NRF).⁷⁶

NRF is a highly ready multinational force made up of land, air, maritime and Special Operations Forces that can be deployed quickly and wherever needed.⁷⁷ Its main tasks are to be capable of securing collective defence in the case of a crisis, prior to the arrival of other forces. Moreover, it could be deployed also in peace support operations, disaster relief operations or help protect critical infrastructure.⁷⁸ It can now cover up to 40,000 troops.⁷⁹ However, each time the Allies would want to use the NRF, all 28 of them have to agree in the North Atlantic Council.⁸⁰

NATO Response Force has been established already in 2003, but it has been heavily criticised, mainly for not being utilized enough. *"It has been used only in non-combat operations of limited importance, like the 2004 Athens Olympics or the two disaster relief operations in September and October of the following year - first in Louisiana (Hurricane Katrina), and then in earthquake-stricken Pakistan."*⁸¹

At the Wales summit, NATO leaders decided to try resuscitate the NRF and enhance it. The decision was to create a smaller, even more ready "spearhead", the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) within the NRF.

⁷⁴ LUTE, Douglas. From Wales to Warsaw: NATO's Readiness Action Plan. *The Ambassadors REVIEW* [online]. Spring 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/caa-production/attachments/513/C_Pages31to32_Lute.pdf?1428599798>

⁷⁵ NATO's Readiness Action Plan Fact Sheet, op. cit.

⁷⁶ LUTE, op. cit.

⁷⁷ NATO Response Force. *Nato.int* [online]. 11. 5. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49755.htm>

⁷⁸ The Readiness Action Plan, op. cit.

⁷⁹ NATO Response Force, op. cit.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ LASCONJARIAS, Guillaume. The NRF: from a Key Driver of Transformation to a Laboratory of the Connected Forces Initiative. *NATO Defence College's Research Paper* [online]. January 2013, no. 88. Available at: <<http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/downloads.php?icode=363>>



*"Joint" (in VJTF) refers to activities, operations and organisations in which elements of at least two services participate (land, air, maritime)."*⁸² If needed, the VJTF should be ready to start deploying within 48 hours from their individual home countries, because it is a multinational force of 5,000 troops.⁸³ Its purpose is to quickly send a firm deterring signal to any potential aggressor that a decisive military response to protect an Ally will follow.⁸⁴

Although the VJTF is already operational, it is still an interim force led by Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway.⁸⁵ The regular VJTF should be ready by 2016 and the first leader will be Spain, with other allies participating. The unit's leadership will rotate on an annual basis.⁸⁶

The potential deployment of the NRF will be supported by six small multinational command and control centres – the NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) – helping them to accomplish the deployment as quickly as possible. Another task of these centres is to improve co-operation and coordination between NATO and national forces. They should be first established in Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, then in Hungary and Slovakia.⁸⁷

Besides the NRF and its sub-components, one other innovation is the higher readiness level of the Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin, Poland.⁸⁸ This headquarters is being developed together by Denmark, Germany and Poland to command, if needed, forces deployed to the Baltic States or Poland. It should also serve as a hub for regional co-operation.⁸⁹

6 Conclusion

In a reaction to the Ukrainian conflict and Islamic fundamentalism spreading, NATO had to come up with a comprehensive plan to be ready for the new threats that have emerged in the east and south of the Alliance. The 2014 Wales summit produced the Readiness Action Plan, which covers both short-term steps to reassure the Allies that others are ready to protect them, and long-term adaptations. The centrepiece of the Adaptation measures is the NATO

⁸² Special Operations Forces. *Nato.int* [online]. 24. 2. 2015 [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_105950.htm>

⁸³ The Readiness Action Plan, op. cit.

⁸⁴ ACO - Allied Command Operations. *Fact Sheet: NATO Response Force / Very High Readiness Joint Task Force* [online]. [cit. 31.7. 2015]. Available at: <<http://www.aco.nato.int/page349011837.aspx>>

⁸⁵ The Readiness Action Plan, op. cit.

⁸⁶ NATO Response Force, op. cit.

⁸⁷ Fact Sheet: NATO Response Force / Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, op. cit.

⁸⁸ NATO's Readiness Action Plan Fact Sheet, op. cit.

⁸⁹ The Readiness Action Plan, op. cit.



Response Force and its "spearhead", the VJTF, created as a rapid-response force. NATO, however, still has differences to settle, which are in close connection with the RAP. Most notably the interpretation of the NATO-Russia Founding Act and consequently the intensity of the changes.

More useful information:

This is where the Background report ends, but in no way this is the end of the research process. A recommended first step in this part, before studying the individual state-policy, is this factsheet about RAP. It summarises the most important information from this report:

Factsheet – NATO's Readiness Action Plan:

http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_05/20150508_1505-Factsheet-RAP-en.pdf

Allied Command Operations: <http://www.aco.nato.int/operations.aspx>

Portal with many pages containing in-depth information about individual parts of RAP, including news and up-to-date information. Since the situation will probably change to some extent, it is recommended to check regularly.

NATO-Russia Founding Act: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm

Full text of the agreement from 1997. Important for discussion about the possibility of permanent bases on the territory of new members.

"The Myth that NATO Committed to Having No Permanent Troops in Eastern Europe":

<http://www.atlantic-community.org/-/the-myth-that-nato-committed-to-having-no-permanent-troops-in-eastern-europe>

One of the viewpoints on the controversy surrounding the NATO-Russia Founding Act and on the permanent stationing of NATO bases in Eastern Europe.

"The Baltic Balance: How to Reduce the Chances of War in Europe":

<http://www.rand.org/blog/2015/07/the-baltic-balance-how-to-reduce-the-chances-of-war.html>

An article published in the Foreign Affairs discussing, besides other things, recommendations for the NATO member countries.

When researching the positions of the particular states, it is highly recommended to start at the official governmental sites, such as of the ministries of foreign affairs or defence.



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Generální partner
Pražského studentského summitu



Hlavní partner
Modelu OSN



Hlavní partner Modelu NATO



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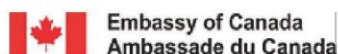
Partner jednání



Partner zahájení



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