



NATO should consider exercising Advance Planning as well as Crisis Response Planning in order to be responsive to an

EMERGING RUSSIA



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NATO released satellite imagery showing Russian combat troops inside Ukraine — The satellite images released on 28 August 2014 showed Russian combat forces engaged in military operations inside the sovereign territory of Ukraine. The images depicted Russian self-propelled artillery units moving in a convoy through the Ukrainian countryside and then preparing for action by establishing firing positions in the area of Krasnodon, Ukraine. Photograph by Digital Globe.



The views expressed in this article are the personal opinions of the author and do not necessarily represent the official opinion of NATO or the Joint Warfare Centre.



Above, clockwise from left: Ukraine protests, photographs by Mykhaylo Palinchak and hurricane-hank, Shutterstock.com; USS Ross entering the Black Sea, photograph by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class John Herman, U.S. Navy; the joint press conference by the former NATO Secretary General and the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, during NATO's Wales Summit, 4 September 2014, photograph by NATO; "The Men Behind the Masks: what is happening in eastern Ukraine is a military operation that is well planned and organised", photograph copyright AlexandCo Studio, Shutterstock.com. Article can be read at <http://aco.nato.int/saceur2013/blog/who-are-the-men-behind-the-masks.aspx>.

At its core NATO is a defensive Alliance

Article 5 of the Washington Treaty states, "the Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area."

THIS ARTICLE MAKES CLEAR, and the history of the Alliance has shown, that NATO is primarily a defensive Alliance. Over the last twenty years, however, it could be reasonably asked, "defence against who or what?" That

question has been answered by the Alliance transforming into more than just defensive roles by engagement in and training for various non-Article 5 operations that have run the gamut of humanitarian aid to combating piracy. While these types of operations are certainly seen as necessary by NATO's political leadership and, to a certain extent, they keep NATO's institutions capable of conducting operational level planning and execution, they are not a substitute for training to defend against a peer competitor.

One might argue that NATO does not have a peer competitor — however, recent events in Georgia and eastern Ukraine indicate that Russia is emerging as that level of competitor. NATO's shift to a more crisis response-focused Alliance over the last quarter of a century has meant that NATO soldiers and leaders have gained a wide variety of experi-





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“ The current regime of exercises has led us to a place where NATO has transformed significantly in the face of a changing security environment.”

Right: Celebration of the Victory Day, Moscow, 9 May 2014.

ence in counterinsurgency, peace keeping and stability operations as well as a myriad of other "small war" type of disciplines. While Crisis Response Operations are not easy, they do not generally pose an immediate existential threat to the nations that are fighting them. This lack of threat necessarily gives militaries some reaction time to plan and execute operations. NATO's shift towards crisis response and humanitarian operations has meant that some of its Article 5 capability has deteriorated. Therefore, as NATO has accomplished much in recent years, it seems to be at a detriment to its responsiveness to conduct Article 5 defence of its Member Nations.

This assessment is shared by a number of voices within the Alliance. The United Kingdom Defence Select Committee issued a report on July 31 of this year, following Russia's illegal

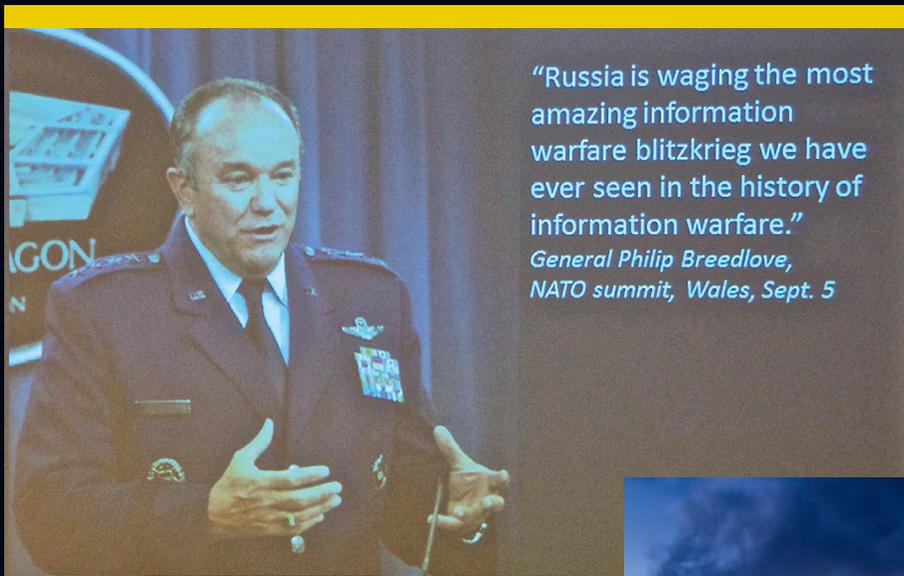
annexation of Crimea, stating that the Alliance "is not well-prepared for a Russian threat against a NATO Member State".⁽¹⁾

The Committee Chairman, Rory Stewart, noted: "The risk of attack by Russia on a NATO Member State, whilst still small, is significant. We are not convinced that NATO is ready for this threat. NATO has been too complacent about the threat from Russia, and it is not well-prepared. Even worse, the nature of Russian tactics is changing fast, including cyber attacks, information warfare, and the backing of irregular 'separatist groups', combining armed civilians with Russian Special Forces operating without insignia. We have already seen how these tactics have been deployed by Russia and its proxies in Ukraine to destabilise a NATO Partner State, annex part of its territory, and paralyse its ability to respond."⁽²⁾

In a jointly authored opinion article in the Wall Street Journal, titled "A NATO for a Dangerous World", Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the former NATO Secretary General, and General Philip Breedlove, SACEUR, stated the following as part of a plan for a "fitter, faster and more flexible" NATO: "(...) We need the presence of NATO forces in Eastern Europe for as long as necessary; upgraded intelligence gathering and sharing; updated defence plans; and an expanded training schedule with more exercises, of more types, in more places, more often."⁽³⁾

Both of the articles above see a new security situation in Europe and a new NATO that needs to become more capable of answering what many today believe to be the most





"Russia is waging the most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen in the history of information warfare."

General Philip Breedlove, NATO summit, Wales, Sept. 5

Left: This year's NATO Bi-SC Information and Communications Conference focused on the new type of warfare that the Alliance is trying to prepare for: a type of hybrid and information warfare based on confrontation and aggression that targets the instruments of diplomacy, information, military and economy. Pictures show a presentation with SACEUR's quote and a briefing on "Russian Information Warfare", October 2014. Photographs by Paolo Giordano, ACT PAO and Henry Plimack. **Below:** New NATO and new exercises for the Joint Task Force. NATO's deployed headquarters for exercise ARCADE FUSION. Photograph by WO2 Ian Houlding GBR Army.



severe crisis in Euro-Atlantic security since the end of the Cold War, caused by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine.

Does the current focus of operational level exercises exclusively on Crisis Response Operations rather than on Advance Planning scenarios make sense?

NATO has been exercising Article 5 operations since 2012 in its SKOLKAN scenario for the NATO Response Force (NRF). These exercises, conducted mainly at the operational level, have focused on a response to a Member State facing a hostile neighbour. The exercises have been conducted in the Baltic Nations of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and to a lesser extent, in Poland. NATO will continue to conduct these exercises and expand their scope in the next two years to include a LIVEX with ground tactical

headquarters. These NRF Article 5 exercises are a step in the right direction towards adapting to a changed security environment, answering some of the deficiencies mentioned above, and beginning to train NATO to a better capacity to fulfill its Article 5 responsibilities.

However, despite the benefits to readiness of NRF exercises, they still are conducted under a crisis response scenario. This means that NATO's operational level staffs are conducting a planning and execution process that presupposes a relatively low knowledge of the situation, relatively long response times, and a relatively small response force. This is not the type of situation that planners should reasonably face in an Article 5 scenario, in an Alliance that has a long history of standing together.

NATO Allied Joint Doctrine for Operational Level Planning (AJP-5) includes both Advance Planning and Crisis Response Planning. Advance Planning includes Stand-

ing Defence Plans, Contingency Plans and Generic Plans. "Advance Planning is conducted with a view to preparing the Alliance to deal with possible future security risks," according to AJP-5. It seems clear to me that, given the recent events in the common periphery of Russia and NATO, practicing to "deal with possible future security risks" would be prudent. Whether NATO should practice Standing Defence Plans, Contingency Plans or Generic Plans would be a matter of decision of the Training Audience, based on what the operational environment is like at the time of writing the Exercise Specification (EXSPEC).

NATO Advance Plans are a repository of already existing sets of plans for the Alliance to continue Article 5 practice. Although the best practice would include exercising all facets of planning and execution of the Advance Plan in question, initially NATO could start by practicing the plans at the operational



BACKGROUND

headquarters level. Currently, NATO has three major operational level exercise series: TRIDENT JUNCTURE, TRIDENT JOUST and TRIDENT JAGUAR. The TRIDENT JUNCTURE series focuses on the NATO Command Structure (NCS) headquarters (JFC Naples and JFC Brunssum) as the NRF headquarters leading a crisis response force; this series is the certification exercise for the NRF HQs. NATO Force Structure (NFS) headquarters are being trained in the TRIDENT JAGUAR series of exercises to respond to a Small Joint Operation. TRIDENT JOUST is the opportunity for the Joint Force Commands (JFC) to validate their staff procedures during the NRF standby period. It seems reasonable that the TRIDENT JOUST series of exercises could be purposed to begin a systematic rehearsal of NATO Advance Plans, whether that is Standing Defence Plans or Contingency Plans. This allows the NCS to focus on NATO's primary mission of Article 5 and prepare for major crisis operations while the NFS maintains a focus on small Crisis Response Operations.

The benefits of using NATO Standing Defence Plans and Contingency Plans for operational level exercises

If NATO begins to exercise the Advance Plans described in AJP-5, there will be other benefits than just ease of use of an existing set of plans. The operational headquarters will be able to plan against a more advanced enemy than what can be done in a fictional scenario. This makes a deeper scenario for intelligence analysis as well as making the Comprehensive Approach more logical and easily understandable. Given classification levels of the Advance Planning, NATO organisations would have to begin to exercise in a real classified environment. This would push NATO to gain more consistent comfort when working with classified systems and put more urgency on the necessary processes and procedures for interoperability in a classified environment. Lessons that are learned when working with actual Standing Defence Plans and Contingency Plans will allow NATO to begin to work out the frictions that are inherent in written, but not practiced plans.

If NATO begins to practice Advance Planning scenarios rather than fictional crisis response scenarios, then the organisations participating would be learning about more



Changing international borders in Ukraine:

"Serious political unrest started in Ukraine in November 2013 with no simple solutions in sight. Russia attempted to make the Crimean peninsula a de facto Russian territory through hastily arranged local elections in March 2014, whose results favoured independence from Ukraine and joining Russia. It now appears that Europe's post World War II borders are not as permanent as most governments had anticipated when the Cold War ended in 1990." — **Excerpted from "NATO Review", from an article by Dr. Magnus Bjarnason**

"Russia has tried to change borders by force, to undermine the sovereignty of its neighbours, and to recreate a sphere of influence. Russia has resorted to a new type of 'hybrid warfare' that combines military intimidation, covert supply of weapons and fighters, economic blackmail, diplomatic duplicity, media manipulation, and outright disinformation. It may be withdrawing its regular troops from the Ukrainian border, but its aggressive behavior has not diminished and it continues to destabilise Ukraine in different ways." — **Panel remarks by NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow at the**

SDA Conference: Overhauling Transatlantic Security Thinking, 9 June 2014.

"The situation in Ukraine is not good right now. I think basically we have a ceasefire in name only. The number of events and the number of rounds fired and the artillery used across the past few days match some of the pre-ceasefire levels. And so the ceasefire is still there in name. But what is happening on the ground is quite a different story. We hope that this will change. And we heard today of some possibly new agreements that this will change. And it is our sincere hope and desire that the innocents who are being wounded and that the two combatants can come to agreement to again get to a ceasefire situation." — **Press Conference by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Philip M. Breedlove following the NATO Chiefs of Defence meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, 22 September 2014.**

Photograph copyright photo.ua/Shutterstock.com (Russian soldiers marching on March 5, 2014 in Perevalne, Crimea, Ukraine. On February 28, 2014 Russian military forces invaded Crimea peninsula.)

than just exercise planning throughout the exercise process stages. Currently, the personnel tasked with exercise planning and development, whether from the Training Audience (TA) or from training organisations, work to understand the fictional scenarios, use force structure guesses, and plan with unknowable political constraints. By exercising using real plans, everyone involved would be working with much more realistic resources, political constraints, Opposing Forces (OPFOR) and operational environments.

As an example, instead of a MEL/MIL⁽⁴⁾ scripting of a fictional crisis that has little

learning value for the JFC scripters, the event would be a learning experience of some usefulness due to those personnel coming away from the scripting with a deeper understanding of both the plan being rehearsed and the operational environment that the plan addressed.

There are also benefits to training organisations that accrue. Currently, JWC is struggling with how to deliver more NATO exercises with fewer personnel and more training tasks than the organisation had just a few years ago. Building a completely fictitious setting and scenario is expensive both in funding, manpower, and in time. This resource drain could



be significantly mitigated by using real-world scenarios as depicted in the various Standing Defence Plans and Contingency Plans. These real-world scenarios need just some tweaking to make them exercise-ready rather than a wholesale imagining of fictional states as is currently being done. This dividend in resources would then be able to be put back into Training Teams and Exercise Control (EXCON) to help the Training Audience build a better training event.

Due to the necessity to understand the exercise environment, JWC Training Teams spend a significant amount of time reading and studying the various exercise scenarios that we work out together with the Training Audiences throughout the exercise-cycle. If NATO began to train on Standing Defence Plans and Contingency Plans, JWC would then become a repository of personnel that has in-depth knowledge of these plans themselves, rather than highly educated Subject Matter Experts in fictional scenarios. The Alliance would also find it easier to use these Standing Defence Plans and Contingency Plans' rehearsals to engage in the information environment more directly than our current exercises allow.

From a messaging perspective, practicing the plans for defence of periphery countries is more direct and succinct than attempting to send a message via an exercise, based on fiction and held in the Baltics. It would also be much more reassuring to those relatively new NATO countries that the whole Alliance is fully committed to their defence and is prepared to rehearse that defence on a recurring basis.

Although there are many benefits to practicing Standing Defence Plans and Contingency Plans as opposed to Crisis Response Planning (CRP), there would be some challenges as well. Currently, the CRP-phase of exercises is primarily a time for the J5 planners to gain understanding of CRP processes and procedures. As a result, Joint Task Force headquarters lose little if they minimally support this portion of the exercise cycle outside of the Joint Operational Planning Group (JOPG) personnel. If NATO began to train on real Advance Plans, the entire headquarters would need to be involved so that all personnel would gain from the insights into the Standing Defence Plans and Contingency Plans and the operational environment that working through the plan-

ning phase necessarily affords. This means that Joint Force Commands would need to fully support the CRP-cycle with their whole staff rather than just a JOPG and an Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT).

The strategic level would also need to be fully engaged during both the Crisis Response Planning and execution phases to ensure that the right political messages were sent as a result of the exercises. Organisations like the Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre (CCOMC) that have only just begun to be involved in the operational exercises would need to be fully engaged, so that the operational level commanders and staffs would have a good understanding of the stance of the political/military strategy given the realism of the scenario. Training organisations would also have to study standing Advance Planning documents to ensure that they have enough familiarity with the plans and the operational environment to act as effective Observer/Trainers and Exercise Controllers.

As we look towards a strategic environment that points out to have a resurgent Russia as a significant player, we must consider whether our current exercise programmes will be able to remedy the situation as described by the UK Defence Committee.

I would argue that more realism is a better route than a continued focus on the fictional. The current regime of exercises has led us to a place where NATO has transformed significantly in the face of a changing security environment. We are fortunate to have already begun practicing Article 5 scenarios. Russia's recent actions and bellicose attitude seems to present us with the need for more transformation still. While the debate for what that means for defence budgets, army sizes, and new aircraft carriers will be long and no doubt vociferous, in the realm of training there are changes that can be accomplished in a relatively short amount of time. The tools are available, the funding is largely agreed upon, and the organisations are already built. The change will be one of a few degrees rather than the need for a massive course correction. I believe that as resources constrain the Alliance to become more collective in its defence, it ought to do so with a flinty eyed realism rather than a fuzzy focus on the fictional. †

HYBRID WAR, HYBRID RESPONSE?

When a country is attacked by conventional land, sea or air forces, it is usually clear how to best respond. But what happens when it is attacked by a mixture of special forces, information campaigns and backdoor proxies? What's the best response? And, how can international security organisations like NATO adapt to these attacks? — **"Deterring hybrid warfare: a chance for NATO and the EU to work together?" NATO Review Magazine:**
http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Also-in-2014/Deterring-hybrid-warfare/EN/index.htm?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=smc&utm_campaign=141118+nr+hybridwarfare



END NOTES:

- (1) <http://www.janes.com/article/41381/nato-unprepared-to-deal-with-russia>
- (2) <http://www.janes.com/article/41381/nato-unprepared-to-deal-with-russia>
- (3) <http://online.wsj.com/articles/anders-fogh-rasmussen-and-philip-m-breedlove-a-nato-for-a-dangerous-world-1408317653>
- (4) Main Event List/Main Incident List

FURTHER READING

- For these related stories, visit www.nato.int
- * Russia's accusations: Setting the record straight, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_109141.htm
 - * A chronology of NATO Statements on the events in Ukraine, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/events_107755.htm
 - * NATO does not recognise the reported elections held on 14 September in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_113094.htm
 - * NATO leaders pledge support to Ukraine at Wales Summit, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_112459.htm
 - * JWC operational level exercises News Archive, <http://www.jwc.nato.int>