3. What the West Must Do for Itself

Eastern policy begins at home. The best way the United States and its European partners can act together vis-à-vis Europe’s east is by getting their respective acts together in the West. The EU’s seeming inability to deal with challenges to its unity and its vibrancy threatens to drain U.S. confidence in Europe and its institutions and derail American support for major transatlantic policy initiatives. Similarly, if the United States proves unable to revive its economy and break its debilitating political deadlocks, Washington is unlikely to be the type of consistent, outward-looking partner that Europeans need and want. Economic and political turmoil at home also undermines the influence of the United States and Europe elsewhere, since the normative appeal and continued relevance of Western models for others depends heavily on how well they work for their own people.

Andrey Kortunov makes the point:

...long term Russian attitudes towards Europe and even the West at large will, to a large extent, depend on the success or failure of the European project. For centuries, educated Russians looked to the West in search of modernisation patterns, best social practices, and intellectual inspiration. Today many critics of the EU in Russia argue that the European project is doomed, that Europe is losing its competitive edge, and that the future belongs to other regions and continents. I hope that Europeans can prove these critics wrong.50

That is why Putin’s challenge is as much about the West as it is about Russia. If we stand up for our values and give fresh life to our mutual commitments, Putinism will fade. The more people in Western societies feel secure about their own prospects, the more confident they will be about reaching out to those in Europe’s east. And the more robust our community, the better the chance that the people of the common neighborhood will find the courage they will need to make hard choices for reform.

In short, while we must deal with Russia realistically, and craft more proactive efforts with the countries of the common neighborhood, there is also much we must do for ourselves.

**NATO: In Area or In Trouble.** NATO’s old mantra was “out of area or out of business.” Today’s mantra must be “in area or in trouble.” Collective defense is back.

**Build “full spectrum” deterrence.** Deterrence has become more complicated and its scope much broader than during the Cold War. NATO allies and partners face an authoritarian challenge from Russia to their east and extremist challenges to their south. As Russia has challenged the West, it has used its full spectrum of integrated tools to invade neighboring countries, annex their territory, intimidate them via energy cutoffs and nuclear saber-rattling, generate insurgencies abroad via irregular forces, initiate surprise conventional force exercises, wreak havoc on air traffic; and exploit societal differences and generate political and economic instability within NATO member and partner states. Deterrence south of NATO is in many ways even more complicated when it comes to threats posed by Iranian missiles, attacks on Turkey by Syria, barbaric practices of the Islamic State, mass migration, and the instability that flows from failing and failed states. Many of these challenges are not NATO’s alone, but they are NATO’s as well.

NATO has been unprepared to deal effectively with many of these interrelated issues. Russia’s actions have exposed gaps in NATO deterrence and highlighted potential new gaps to come. Crimea-style tactics, which are localized, low-intensity and quick, are designed to be just below the threshold of triggering the commitment of NATO Allies to mutual defense in response to armed attack, as provided in Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty. NATO is neither structured militarily nor disposed politically to handle such challenges. Moreover, new doctrinal and technological challenges could further impair NATO’s physical ability to defend NATO members under attack.51

If Russia can poke a hole in Article 5, it would like to do so. The Alliance must adjust by expanding the way it has come to think about deterrence in the Cold War and by reemphasizing its importance. Strengthening deterrence and assurance requires NATO to raise the

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costs to Russia for bad behavior, establish a more robust military posture in NATO’s center and east, develop strategies to counter Russia’s approach to conflict, and help non-NATO states on Russia’s periphery improve their resilience to Russian pressure and efforts at destabilization.\textsuperscript{52} What NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has referred to as “Full Spectrum Deterrence” must be designed to deal with the full panoply of Russian provocations from low level hybrid warfare through nuclear blackmail. It requires a mix of new and old deterrent and defense instruments that can be applied 360 degrees around NATO’s borders. It will require the Alliance to be able to dissuade and deter threats to its members, from whatever source, while also reassuring allies and being prepared to defend all parts of the Alliance. NATO needs to become more agile, flexible, mobile, and creative. This will require cultural change.

The Obama administration’s intention to quadruple its funding for Washington’s European Reassurance Initiative\textsuperscript{53} represents a significant upgrade of U.S. engagement in European security and will expand persistent rotational presence of U.S. air, land and sea forces in central and eastern Europe, enable more extensive U.S. participation in exercises and training, enhance prepositioned equipment stocks to reduce force deployment times and facilitate rapid response to potential contingencies, improve infrastructure, and further build the capacity of allies and partners to defend themselves and join with U.S. forces in responding to crises in the region. NATO has already taken a series of significant military steps since the Wales Summit to move in this direction. More are needed.

\textit{Enhance defense and deterrence in NATO’s east.} In the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, “NATO reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment the Alliance will carry out its missions” through means other than “by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.” Russia’s takeover of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine alter the security environment foreseen in 1997.\textsuperscript{54} Russia is

\textsuperscript{52}Bernstein, op. cit.
doing nothing to create a Europe “without dividing lines or spheres of influence limiting the sovereignty of any state.”\textsuperscript{55} Measures beyond NATO’s Readiness Action Plan can be implemented which would further enhance deterrence, not violate the letter of the Founding Act and not give Russia any pretext for taking further counter-measures.

Numerous steps have been taken since Russia’s annexation of Crimea to reinforce NATO’s will to implement its Article 5 collective defense clause, reassure NATO’s eastern allies, and deter Russia from taking aggressive steps on NATO territory. They range from creation of a so-called “Spearhead Force” (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, VJTF) able to deploy on short notice at the head of a more capable NATO Response Force (NRF), boosting the size of the NRF from 19,000 to 40,000 soldiers; the adaptation and expansion of NATO’s German-Danish-Polish Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin (Poland), stockpiled military equipment in front line states, reinforced Baltic Air Policing and NATO AWACS missions over Poland and Romania, as well as deployment of eight permanent multinational reception bases (NATO Force Integration Units) in the Baltic states, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia to facilitate VJTF operations and coordinate delivery of reinforcements, Enhanced Standing Naval Forces and persistent naval deployments in the Baltic and Black Seas, and ambitious NATO exercises.\textsuperscript{56} At present, the United States provides one company in each of the Baltic states and Poland on a persistent rotational basis. Germany and the United Kingdom have also committed to deploying rotational forces in the Baltic states and Poland for longer periods and on a regular basis. European allies have been deploying rotational forces on an ad hoc basis, for one- or two-month drills.\textsuperscript{57}

Nonetheless, stronger measures must be adopted, including at NATO’s Warsaw Summit in July 2016.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
• **Forward deploy NATO multinational forces in the Baltic region on a rotational basis, starting with a Multinational Battalion in each of the Baltic states and in Poland.** Those Multinational Battalions might be composed of the one U.S. infantry or armor company already deployed rotationally in each of these nations, a second company from a major European ally (e.g. UK, Germany, France), and a third company drawn from the host country, combined with a host nation battalion headquarters elements and multinational logistics. Such a multinational force would have sufficient fighting capabilities to remove any Russian doubt that the full Alliance would respond to any provocation, ranging from the ability, in conjunction with national defense forces, to counter a limited incursion to the ability, in the unlikely event of a robust attack, to be able to delay the opposing forces until allied reinforcements arrive.58 At the same time, the relatively modest size of these forward deployments and the fact that they would be rotational rather than permanent makes the initiative completely consistent with the NATO Russia Founding Act. These three multinational battalions should be commanded by a multinational brigade headquarters in an appropriate location in one of these four states.

• **The United States should move towards the deployment of four Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) in Europe.** That was the deployment profile a decade ago. The United States is already moving in this direction. Two BCTs are stationed permanently in Europe today, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) in Italy and the 2nd Calvary Regiment in Germany. A third BCT will now be deployed from the United States to NATO states in eastern Europe on a continuing ‘heel-to-toe’ rotational basis for the foreseeable future. A fourth U.S. Army heavy BCT equipment set is slated to be prepositioned in Europe within the next few years. It will be placed in operational-ready storage for short notice contingencies. Progress towards this last mentioned requirement must stay on track over several budget cycles. It will need to be kept a high priority.

• **Enhance NATO’s current framework nation approach** by prepositioning, development of reception and other logistics requirements, and the establishment of an additional maritime framework for the Baltic.

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58 A combat brigade of 3,000 troops is basically comprised of multiple battalions, three of which are fighting battalions of either infantry or armor. A battalion is comprised of companies, three of which are its fighting infantry or armor companies.
• **Empower the SACEUR** to make rapid troop deployments. Russia’s reliance on strategic surprise and hybrid warfare poses acute risks for NATO allies. They fear a Russian snap exercise that could potentially result in encroachment on their territorial sovereignty. To counter this threat, NATO must empower the SACEUR to employ his best military judgment and order rapid troop deployments in the interest of Alliance security.\(^{59}\)

**Strengthen NATO’s Conventional and Special Operations Forces (SOF).** At Warsaw, the Alliance should set specific and higher goals for deployable and sustainable European conventional forces. European conventional forces have been badly depleted by budget cuts and stability operations in Afghanistan. Now there is a greater demand for higher intensity capabilities. The number of European ground forces now available for NATO operations can be measured in brigades rather than divisions. NATO’s SOF mission is more important than ever, both for hybrid threats from Russia and to deal with instability in the south. Nations should be encouraged to sustain their investment in SOF capabilities as a priority even with tight budgets. This has to include funding participation in NATO as well as bilateral and multilateral SOF exercises.

**Meet the anti-access area denial challenge.** A major element in deterring Russian aggression against NATO will be the Alliance’s ability to deal with the so-called anti-access area denial (A2/AD) problem without creating disunity in the alliance. A2/AD relates to the fact that forward deployed Russian missiles and aircraft can control areas along the NATO-Russian border in ways that would make initial defense and subsequent reinforcement of occupied NATO territory very difficult.\(^{60}\) The steps needed to counter this Russian capability could be seen by some allies as provocative and make a consensus NATO response difficult. Nonetheless, NATO must take the steps that are necessary to defend its territory. Russian bases in Kaliningrad, Crimea, and on Russia’s northern periphery provide Moscow with the opportunity to make NATO access to parts of the Baltic, Black and Arctic Sea difficult. Actually executing such a plan would ultimately prove folly for Russia, however, since it would surely lead to conflict with unpredictable conse-

\(^{59}\)Jones, op. cit.  
\(^{60}\)For more, see Lucas and Mitchell, op. cit.
quences. Designing a viable response to the Russian A2/AD problem will need to be a priority item for NATO.

**Design new NATO maritime capabilities.** NATO’s maritime flanks, stretching from the High North, through the Baltic Sea, and down to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, have become direct friction zones between the alliance and an assertive Russia. In 2015 Russia also demonstrated its growing maritime power by firing cruise missiles from surface warships in the Caspian Sea against targets in Iraq and launching missiles from a submarine in the Mediterranean against targets in Syria. While conducted in the context of Russia’s intervention in the Middle East, the potential of these capabilities should not be lost on NATO’s members. Russia’s vastly increased naval activity is underpinned by an ambitious naval modernization program, which is part of Moscow’s long-range modernization effort that was begun in 2008. In the maritime context, the northern fleet (where Russia’s submarine-based nuclear deterrent can be found) and the Black Sea fleet have received the bulk of new and future investments, including new submarines and guided missile surface warships. Russia also recently released an updated maritime strategy charting a further build up in the Arctic, as well as access to the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, much of Russia’s new assertiveness is expressed in the maritime domain, with close and dangerous encounters, shows of force, harassment of civilian ships, A2/AD capabilities, and probable submarine incursions deep into the territorial waters of NATO allies and partners.61

While maritime challenges are clear and urgent, NATO has to date found itself poorly equipped and oriented to deal with them. Its 2011 Allied Maritime Strategy places a strong emphasis on crisis management and counter non-state challenges that threaten commerce and flows across the global maritime domain. It says comparatively little about maritime forces’ contribution to collective defense and deterrence, and what the alliance needs to do to safeguard its interest in the maritime domain made more competitive and contested by regional and global powers. In order to better prepare the alliance and its members for a contested, congested, and competitive maritime domain NATO and its leaders should consider the following:

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• Revise the Alliance Maritime strategy to better focus alliance efforts on collective defense and deterrence in the maritime domain.

• Focus on high-end maritime capabilities including anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare, strike from the sea, and amphibious operations.

• Consider how maritime forces can become more survivable and contribute to breaking A2/AD capabilities.

• Create a NATO Black Sea fleet composed primarily of regional allies and perhaps an American contribution.

• Create a NATO consortium to enhance maritime domain awareness that would draw together and pool national assets.

• Organize frontline maritime powers in order to provide a “first response” capability in case of a crises or war.

• Serve as an advocate for good order at sea.

No excuses burden-sharing. East European NATO members have taken the lead in defense spending increases, and Poland has announced plans to double the size of Poland’s army. Other NATO countries are also turning their defense expenditures around. Germany approved a 4.2 percent increase in defense spending for 2016. Britain reversed its planned cuts to stay roughly at the 2 percent pledge and will maintain its armed forces at 82,000. France’s President has pledged to increase French defense spending by 12 percent by 2019. Overall, however, the United States continues to account for the lion’s share of NATO’s defense expenditures. Increased contributions from member states is essential for NATO to have the resources to meet its challenges.

Make use of Partnerships. Russian actions in Ukraine have intensified Sweden and Finland’s interest in closer cooperation with NATO, and given new impetus to the debate regarding possible Swedish and Finnish membership in NATO. Each country signed a host-nation support agreement with NATO at the Wales summit, indicating the readiness to receive assistance from Allied forces and to support them with their military assets, such as ships and aircraft, and NATO deepened its partnership with each country through an Enhanced Opportunities Program. The two countries have also solidified their own defense and security cooperation. Sweden and Finland are increasingly important to NATO’s defense planning and offer critical links for operations involving the Baltic states. Moscow has stepped up efforts to undo this coop-
eration, including through tactics of harassment and intimidation. If Moscow’s effort is successful, it would not only decrease security in the Nordic-Baltic region but weaken NATO’s credibility more broadly. Thus, there is an important linkage between Nordic-Baltic security and the broader security challenge posed by Russia’s actions in Ukraine.62

- **NATO should consider a further step by designating both countries as Premier Interoperable Partners (PIP)** that could bring each into the Readiness Action Plan, include them in the VJTF, and provide for structures and regular consultations at the political military and intelligence levels with the North Atlantic Council, the Military Committee, the International Staff and the International Military Staff. This would occur routinely on all levels, including ministerials and summits. These would not be plus-one models, but a practical and regular part of doing business at NATO headquarters, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and at the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk.

- **Extend Nordic Baltic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO) to the Baltic states.** This would cement the prominent role of Sweden and Finland as premier partners of NATO, strengthen the NATO aspect of Nordic-Baltic security, and facilitate security cooperation with the United States. The focus would be on defense planning, professional military education cooperation and training facilities, exercises, and defense capacity building.

**Maximize Resilience.** Transboundary arteries criss-crossing countries to connect people, data, ideas, money, food, energy, goods and services are essential sinews of open societies, daily communications, and the global economy. Yet they are also vulnerable to intentional or accidental disruption. Each in their own way, terrorists, energy cartels, illicit traffickers, cyber-hackers, internet trolls and “little green men” all seek to use the arteries and instruments of free societies to attack or disrupt those societies. Governments accustomed to protecting their territories must now also focus on protecting their connectedness. New approaches are needed that blend traditional efforts at deterrence and defense with modern approaches to resilience—building the capacity of societies to anticipate, preempt and resolve disruptive challenges to their critical functions, the networks that sustain them, and the connections those networks bring with other societies.

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• **NATO allies should each make a Pledge on National Resilience** at the 2016 Warsaw Summit pursuant to Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty, whereby allies commit to “maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.” This pledge would encompass protection of civilians and infrastructure; maintaining essential government functions and values; protecting and defending cyberspace; modernizing resilience capacities; and promoting transatlantic resilience across the Alliance.

• **Make Resilience a Core Task of NATO.** A key element of Russia’s strategy is the use of strategic surprise and hybrid threats to take advantage of weak states. Extremist threats from the south also challenge the fabric of Western societies. Greater societal and defense resilience can be an important component of an effective response. Creating a higher degree of resilience in vulnerable societies makes it more difficult for state or non-state actors alike to disrupt and create the instability they need for their success. Societies deemed indefensible in traditional defense terms can be rendered indigestible through resilience. Adding resilience as a core task would complement NATO’s current core tasks of collective defense, cooperative security, and crisis management. Initial activities could include the following:

  • **Allies focused on the east should establish a working group** to coordinate critical overlapping civil authority functions with an initial focus on the development of resilience to hybrid threats and strategic communications.

  • **Develop Resilience Support Teams,** small operational units that could offer support to NATO member national authorities in such areas of emergency preparedness including assessments; intelligence sharing, support and analysis; border control; assistance to police and military in incident management including containing riots and other domestic disturbances; helping effectuate cross-border arrangements with other NATO members; providing protection for key critical infrastructures including energy; and, in the cyber arena, support to and enhancement of NATO’s Cyber Response Team. In certain countries, Resilience Support Teams could be collocated with NATO Force Integration Units, and help national responses with NATO military activities including especially special operations activities.

  • **Increase support to NATO’s Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence** in Estonia, assist potential targets of cyber warfare in increasing their individual cyber security, and lead NATO in drafting a clear policy on responding to cyber attacks.
Develop a more robust strategic communications strategy to address Russia’s information operations, particularly where Moscow seeks to exploit social and political differences in allied states, including those with sizable ethnic Russian or Russian-speaking populations.

Reinforce NATO’s pledge with a U.S.-EU Solidarity Pledge, a joint political declaration that each partner shall act in a spirit of solidarity — refusing to remain passive — if either is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster, and shall work to prevent terrorist threats to either partner; protect democratic institutions and civilian populations from terrorist attack; and assist the other, in its territory, at the request of its political authorities, in the event of a terrorist attack, natural or man-made disaster.

Project resilience forward. The United States and its European partners share a keen interest in ensuring the societal resilience of other countries, particularly in wider Europe, since strong efforts in one country may mean little if neighboring countries, with which they share considerable interdependencies, are weak. Russia’s hybrid efforts to subvert Ukrainian authority are but the latest examples of this growing security challenge. The U.S. and its partners should share societal resilience strategies with allies and partners, and

Through a strategy of ‘forward resilience,’ the United States and its partners would identify—very publicly— their resiliency with that of others, and share societal resilience approaches and operational procedures with partners to improve societal resilience to corruption, psychological and information warfare, and intentional or natural disruptions to cyber, financial and energy networks and other critical infrastructure, with a strong focus on prevention but also response. Forward resilience would also enhance joint capacity to defend against threats to interconnected domestic economies and societies and resist Russian efforts to exploit weaknesses of these societies to disrupt and keep them under its influence.

Engage Turkey. Any effective strategy for wider Europe will have to include a special track for Turkey, an important Black Sea state and NATO ally, which is part of the West but not of the EU, and which has its own particular perspectives on the desirability and feasibility of transatlantic approaches to wider Europe, including the wider Black Sea region. Traditionally, Turkey has been skeptical of initiatives to extend
Western presence in the wider Black Sea area. It has preferred to protect maritime security in the region through Black Sea Harmony, its own multilateral initiative, than through NATO. It is particularly concerned that such activities could undermine Ankara’s claims of (limited) Turkish jurisdiction over the Turkish Straits as outlined by the Montreux Convention. Turkish-Armenian animosity is a further roadblock to enhanced regional cooperation. Moreover, there are many neuralgic aspects to Turkey’s accession negotiations with the EU that could easily affect Ankara’s willingness to be a constructive force for change in the broader region. Turkey could easily be a spoiler unless and until it is convinced that it has more to gain than lose from more vigorous Western engagement in the region. One relatively easy yet important step, as we have suggested, would be for Turkey to join the Energy Community as a full-fledged member.