



# CHALLENGES OF REAL NATIONAL DEFENCE

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## INTRODUCTION

National defence is a whole. In the course of its development, a number of decisions may be taken which are right when taken separately but, as far as the big picture is concerned, lead to a dead end. The result is hollow national defence that exhibits grand words and structures, while either partially or completely lacking in real combat power. An ineffective paper army is also useless for deterrence.

### *An ineffective paper army is also useless for deterrence*

In recent years, a comprehensive approach has been taken to the development of national defence and the goal has been set to develop real national defence, not just on paper. The following analysis will focus on the developments over recent years and future challenges.

Estonian national defence is focused on the deterrence of potential threats, but first and foremost on their prevention through the use of a convincing deterrent posture. Deterrence is a process in which one side tries to convince the other that taking a certain step is inadvisable, as it would be detrimental to it. If one country wishes to prevent an armed conflict with another, deterrence does not need to convince a potential attacker that the attack would fail – it is sufficient for the attacker to believe that the cost of even a successful attack would in the end prove higher than the value of the desired goal. This constant message-sending is called a deterrent posture and comprises, in general, three important components:

- 1) It must be clear to everybody what is being prevented – what is the red line that must not be crossed, and what would happen when it is.
- 2) Everyone must believe that the deterrer has the capability to cause sufficient harm to the aggressor if the red line is crossed.

- 3) The most difficult part is that the deterree must believe that any crossing of the red line will invoke a reaction from the deterrer without hesitation.

There are two ways to send deterrent messages. The message we want to convey is supported by the standpoints we express – speeches, agreements, conversations between diplomats – as well as our actions, which are at least equally important: military exercises, infrastructure and other things happening in the physical world that indicate our intentions and capabilities. Actions and words are part of international communication – a dialogue in which parties try to protect and further their interests with the messages they send each other.

In recent years, European security circles have often discussed whether NATO's relations with Russia should focus more on deterrence or dialogue. In reality, the choice is far from easy – deterrence presupposes the presence of a dialogue, yet not every type of dialogue is useful for deterrence.

If the goal is to maintain the stability of international relations, the credibility of your own and your potential opponent's deterrent posture is everything. Weakening this is not necessarily in a country's interests, as it may lead to dangerous destabilisation. In order for two sides to coexist peacefully, both need to believe that peace is more profitable than conflict. This can only be believed as long as a country thinks it is capable of guaranteeing its security during peacetime, primarily due to confidence in its deterrent abilities. Losing that faith commonly leads to an attempt to change the international situation rapidly and fundamentally, often by military means.

Of course, creating a convincing deterrent posture in practice is complicated and needs constant adjustment, including in areas that may seem simple at first glance. For instance, let us consider the "red line". NATO member states have promised to collectively protect one other; driving tanks over the NATO border would therefore obviously be a clear violation of the red line. What about cyber-attacks? Or using chemical weapons to kill a single individual in a NATO member state? What should be our reaction then, and how do we make sure everyone understands it even before

the attack is committed? Or if not before, how do we ensure they will in the future?

These are just a handful of questions people involved in national defence tackle every day, in Estonia and abroad. This is also why it is wrong to think that a country does not use the armed forces it has acquired and developed in peacetime, as if everything acquired for national defence were an insurance policy that would hopefully never see any practical use. On the contrary – each weapon and serviceman is used for deterrence, every day. If it is done well, there will be no war.

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## 1. THE STRUCTURE OF ESTONIA'S DETERRENT POSTURE

Estonia's national defence – and, of course, its deterrent posture – consists of two pillars: an independent defence capability (or the capabilities we develop ourselves), and NATO's collective defence or the knowledge that we are not alone in defending the country. These pillars function together and depend on each other.

For deterrence to work, the potentially hostile opponent must believe that an attack on Estonia would be followed by an immediate, substantial reaction. An immediate response would firstly derive from Estonia's own military capabilities. Their aim is, among other things, to ensure that there would be a reaction to an attack so that the attacker would not be able quietly to accomplish its aggressive goals.

However, Estonia does not stand alone in national defence; this message must be conveyed by the presence of allied forces and their integration into Estonia's own capabilities. This presence must be smart; bigger is not always better.

That the reaction would indeed be substantial is demonstrated by NATO through the development of extensive military capabilities

to support its allies when necessary. I will elaborate on this later; however, here it must be stressed that a common misconception – that a government needs the consent of other member states to fulfil its obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty and come to the help of an ally in trouble – is not true. And naturally, no ally needs the consent of others to offer military assistance to its own troops who are already in Estonia. The deterrent capability of NATO's collective defence is, therefore, not diminished by the organisation's dependence on consensus between allies.

The NATO treaty is intentionally vague when it comes to defining an attack and allies' reaction to it, leaving plenty of room for interpretation. More clarity comes from everyday activities and constantly communicated messages: defence starts right at the border; the reaction is collective and, if necessary, effected by a coalition of the willing. However, these messages can only be communicated if speeches and declarations are accompanied by a physically extant, real defence capability. A few years ago, both Estonia's independent and collective defence capabilities existed only on paper, at best. Today, the situation has changed.

## 2. REALISTIC PLANS

I will start by exploring Estonia's independent defence capability and the equipment, manpower and supplies that constitute it.

In 2012, Estonia began work on its next ten-year plan, the National Defence Development Plan (NDDP) 2013–2022. For the first time, this used a methodology that, in addition to describing threats and military needs, also took into account the costs of the capabilities. This plan accounted for not only the purchase price of the weapon systems, but also maintenance, which forms the main part of a capability's cost. This methodology has now taken root and become the norm.

The first steps in capability planning focus on threat scenarios and the capabilities necessary for neutralising threats. Next, a thorough audit of existing capabilities is conducted, after which the costs of both existing and potential

new capabilities are calculated. Finally, possible solutions are tested in war games, after which it is time to make choices – not between necessary and unnecessary, but between required capabilities. The question is therefore not only what is needed to protect Estonia, but also what can realistically be created and maintained with the resources allocated for national defence.

In discussion in 2012 of threat scenarios and military capabilities arising therefrom, no significant differences from earlier plans emerged. Neither did the threats and military requirements differ much from the plans that were in place at the time, providing for tanks, medium-range air defence and helicopters, and a total of over 40,000 personnel in the army by 2018.

The differences appeared in the next phase, when we considered the current structure. It was depressing: not a single unit of the Estonian Defence Forces was combat-ready and every unit was undermanned. As far as equipment was concerned, ammunition and communication tools were in the most critical condition, but there were also extensive shortcomings in transport capability. Combat engineering technology was almost non-existent. Many existing weapons systems were not in working order, and there were no resources to improve the situation. The handheld firearms and machine guns purchased in the early 1990s were beginning to show signs of wear and tear, but there were no realistic plans to replace them. Anti-tank equipment had become obsolete. Most of the largest (155mm) artillery did not work; the Artillery Battalion had never fired all its weapons at the same time (the first time it managed this was in 2015); the navy's flagship was unable to leave its berth; the air force base in Ämari could not host allied aircraft; conscripts lived in run-down barracks. The list went on and on.

A quick calculation made it clear that the structures in place, let alone future plans, were not achievable with the defence expenditure target at the time (2% of gross domestic product (GDP), which had not then been achieved); neither would it have been possible with 3% or 4%. Money was being spent, but it did not result in combat-ready units, since inadequate

weapons and equipment were thinly stretched between numerous structural units.

How did Estonia get into that position? There were a number of reasons, the three most important of which were as follows.

First, Estonia had broken the cardinal rule of military capability creation: its structure and ambition considerably exceeded realistic capabilities, and instead of developing something affordable it tried to do everything at once. The same recipe had been used before in other countries, and will doubtless be used in the future, always with the same outcome – a hollow structure and units that are not combat ready. When Estonia's National Audit Office reviewed the earlier period in 2013 it, too, came to the conclusion that the Estonian Defence Forces had no realistic long-term goals, agreed priorities or approved long-term procurement plans for planning and procuring material resources.

*Estonian Defence Forces had no realistic long-term goals, agreed priorities or approved long-term procurement plans for planning and procuring material resources*

The second reason lies in the specifics of Estonia's reserve forces and the sensitivity of information about them. To be precise, most of Estonia's units consist of reserve forces, and if brigade-size and larger exercises such as SILL were not organised, nobody would know that most units did not even have enough personal equipment for every soldier, let alone more complex systems. The exact situation concerning weapons and ammunition is a state secret. This means that when there is no will or skill, there is also no public pressure to maintain a real army – a paper army will do, and it still manages to be quite impressive in a parade.

Third, strategic planning must be comprehensive. Every need must be weighed up, together with options for addressing them; it can then be decided what to develop and what not on the basis of available funding. If every question is approached separately, there is the risk that the capability need currently most prominent on the agenda is developed to world-class quality levels, using up all available

resources, while other areas are left completely unattended. As military capability is a whole, the end result in this case still comes to nought – even the world’s best weapons system is useless without ammunition and trained personnel. Since military capability does not develop overnight, comprehensive strategic planning must also include a long-term vision.

*Even the world’s best weapons system is useless without ammunition and trained personnel*

When compiling the ten-year plan in 2012 the choices were either to continue with a hollow paper army or to actually start creating independent operational defence capability. Five years after the Bronze Night revolt, four years after the Russo-Georgian war and three years after the first large-scale post-Cold War military exercise near Estonia’s border (*Zapad*), it was obvious that the latter was the correct choice.

In order to ensure real defence capability with proper equipment, personnel and guaranteed supplies, the structure had to be brought into line with what was actually possible. To reduce the chances of returning to a hollow paper army, defence planning was made more systematic and transparent, which is also useful in avoiding demagoguery and beating around the bush: just talking about engaging in practical capability development is the fastest way to return to defence incapability.

Alongside making realistic plans and establishing a structure conforming to them, the plans had to be realised. This meant that the resources used daily had to be brought under control, and detailed budgets, action planning and management systems introduced.

While ten-year plans identifying broad goals are prepared every four years, daily resources are managed by the Ministry of Defence using four-year plans that are compiled each year. A four-year plan does not ask what kind of army we need and can afford, since it gets those directions from the ten-year plan. However, four-year plans decide how every cent in the defence budget should be used on procurement, infrastructure and staff.

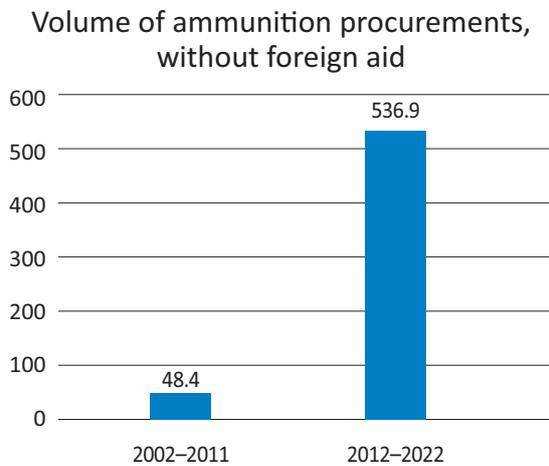
As part of four-year plans, all wartime units’ supplies are thoroughly examined, how they differ from requirements is checked at the level of every individual piece of equipment, and every single requirement and cost item is accounted for. Thus, keeping an eye on the actual situation and desired goals, decisions are made on how to use the defence budget for the next four years. This is also an important means to ensure clarity and transparency – with detailed planning, specific choices and ability to perform them matter, and there is no room for empty dreams in such conditions.

Taking control of resources made it possible to supply units in a focused manner. Substantial ammunition procurement began, and the decision was made to spend a total of over 500 million euros from Estonia’s defence budget on ammunition in 2013–22. This is ten times more than in 2002–11. We managed to convince our allies that our plans were realistic, which is why this procurement from Estonia’s budget was significantly boosted by the US. Those 500 million euros could have been used to buy plenty of things that look great in a parade but are useless in combat. In 2012, however, we chose real combat readiness.

*Those 500 million euros could have been used to buy plenty of things that look great in a parade but are useless in combat*

Developing military capabilities takes time, often many years, but (without revealing any state secrets) the results of some choices made in 2012 can already be seen. The first large-scale SIIL military exercise was organised in 2015, involving the entire 1st Infantry Brigade (as well as some parts of other units); in the past, this would have been impossible due to lack of equipment alone. In 2018, the next SIIL exercise took place, this time focusing on personnel from the Estonian Defence League’s territorial forces. This, too, would have been impossible in the past. Since 2016, the readiness of wartime units has been tested at unannounced additional training exercises – these too will be discussed in more detail later, but I underline here that the precondition of randomly selected unit gatherings is naturally

the availability of equipment for them. If the choices made in 2012 had not been implemented, the additional training exercises would have been impossible.



The National Audit Office of Estonia has evaluated the development of the defence field and in 2017 concluded that “the NDDP 2013–2022 has been one of the best examples of aligning long-term objectives with available means, thus allowing its gradual implementation”. It also found that “[t]he level of staffing and equipment of the Defence Forces’ units has improved in comparison to 2012 – mostly in conformity with the timelines set out in NDDP 2013–2022. The staffing and equipment of war-time structures ... has improved in almost all units over the last four years.”

Hence, Estonia is developing a real operational independent defence capability. If we can continue to stick to these plans, then by 2022 Estonia will have a completely armed, equipped and supplied army with approximately 21,000 troops, which by 2026 should grow by an additional two battalions and several companies, i.e. to around 25,000 troops; the largest components of Estonia’s defence forces are to be two combat-ready brigades and territorial forces; the Scouts Battalion will be equipped with modern infantry combat vehicles; the air defence of both brigades will have been comprehensively developed; and anti-tank units are to be state-of-the-art. Self-propelled artillery is on the way and both this and other systems providing indirect fire should be operational. And – most importantly – the entire structure of the Estonian Defence Forces will be equipped with at least the minimum required amount of ammunition.

Compared to 2012, every aspect of the current Estonian independent defence capability is completely different, giving Estonia the opportunity to actually use its capabilities should the need arise.

### 3. IS ESTONIAN NATIONAL DEFENCE ADEQUATELY FUNDED?

In recent years, the media have repeatedly published opinion pieces stating that Estonia’s army is too small; that it lacks capacity in the air and on the sea; that, without tanks, armoured forces lack manoeuvrability; that not enough self-propelled artillery units have been purchased. Are these opinions substantiated? Yes, they are! Our army is small, no doubt about it – you can ask any defence planner or serving high-ranking officer. We agree! With the current budget, it is possible to rethink priorities or tighten a few belts to take opportunities elsewhere, and it is also possible, to some extent, to be more economical with the current defence budget. But the big picture is that Estonia can only develop greater combat power if the defence budget is increased.

The size of the defence budget is a matter of political choice, made by individuals who have received a mandate from the people for that purpose. In order for the choice to be reasonable, it must be informed. However, when it comes to the choices involved in the defence budget, the problem is that detailed data in the field (especially its current status) is a state secret, which does not facilitate public debate.

Some basic truths are still publicly available in a somewhat generalised way: for example, the question whether our defence budget is big enough in comparison to other NATO states.

For years, Estonia has basked in the knowledge that, at 2% of GDP, it is among the top NATO defence spenders. The problem with this reasoning is twofold – first, the NATO 2% club has rapidly begun to increase and while last year Estonia had only three other allies to keep it company, it is expected that in a few years the club will comprise at least half of the member states. The symbolic separation from

the “low spenders” on defence is beginning to fade; but this is an image problem, not related to actual defence capability development.

*A percentage does not buy a single missile, armoured vehicle or radar. Procurement, infrastructure development and recruitment are done with euros (and sometimes dollars)*

Second, a specific proportion of GDP does not influence actual defence capability, since a percentage does not buy a single missile, armoured vehicle or radar. Procurement, infrastructure development and recruitment are done with euros (and sometimes dollars). In other words, in developing defence capability only the absolute value matters. However, in absolute terms, Estonia has one of the smallest defence budgets in NATO. In 2018 it is also the smallest in the entire Baltic region. Only four NATO member states spend less on defence: Luxembourg, Montenegro, Albania and Slovenia. However, the territory Estonia needs to protect using those funds is larger than Denmark, the Netherlands or Switzerland – not to mention its more difficult geographic location. The Ministry of Defence and the Estonian Defence Forces have naturally calculated the funds needed to create a bigger and better-

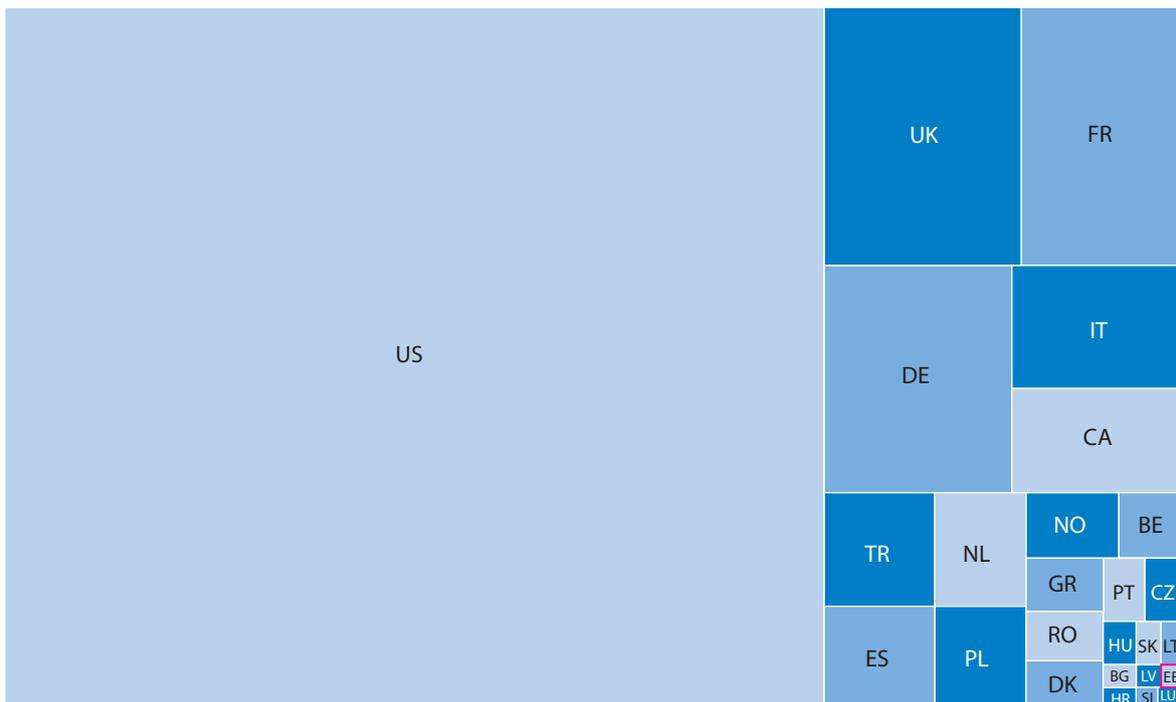
equipped defence force. One possibility is to equip units with better-quality weapons, which means better firepower, mobility and defence.

The second option is to increase the number of units, with more troops than in the current two brigades and territorial force units. We won’t even discuss a credible naval, air force and cyber capability here.

Given Estonia’s location and the personnel trained during conscription, the country could easily spend 3%, 4% or even 5% of its GDP on defence without having to worry that it is creating unnecessary or useless capabilities for national defence. Of course, the Defence Forces’ military assessment is crucial when it comes to deciding what to create and in what order, but the size of the funds available is a matter of political choice.

The time-critical nature of the debate concerning the size of the defence budget is also caused by another uncomfortable fact. That is, with the current “2%” defence budget, Estonia’s independent defence capability will peak in 2026, after which it will rapidly decrease. The reason for this lies in the rapid inflation conventionally associated with the defence field – in other words, when the time comes to replace weapons systems, one has

NATO defence expenditure in 2018



to take into consideration much higher prices. With Europe's growing defence budgets, the secondary market for equipment is constantly shrinking, which means that, when replacing equipment that was purchased pre-owned,

*If Estonia wants to maintain the level reached by 2026 or even surpass it, the defence budget will have to involve a consistently higher proportion of GDP than at present*

Estonia must take into account both the need to purchase new systems and their much higher prices in the future. This is a fact, not a prognosis; the effects of defence inflation can already be seen.

This means that, if Estonia wants to maintain the level reached by 2026 or even surpass it, the defence budget will have to involve a consistently higher proportion of GDP than at present. Since the creation of military capabilities takes time, it is high time that these discussions begin.

## 4. MOBILISATION

The material supplies of Estonia's units are only one component of an independent defence capability. The question whether and how fast the army can be mobilised to begin timely defence is at least equally relevant.

An independent defence capability must activate immediately or it simply will not work, either independently or as a starting point for collective defence. A schoolboy can be late for a few classes and still graduate successfully, as did the protagonist in the Estonian novel *Spring* by Oskar Luts; being late for a war to defend Estonia will not have such a good outcome.

The Estonian Defence Forces are a reserve army. This means that Estonian troops are not the current uniform-wearing conscripts – those are units in training – but the men and women we see in the streets, at shopping centres and elsewhere: lawyers and teachers, builders, cooks and drivers, real estate agents and musicians, farmers and actors. Personnel trained during conscription remain in the reserve of the Defence Forces' rapid response units for three to six years, after which they

are mostly replaced by younger recruits, although in the case of some specialities and other special cases wartime units may include reservists with much longer experience.

Infantry battalions in Estonia usually only have a handful of active (professional) servicemen in certain positions; most of the leading positions (platoon and squad commanders) are filled by reservists, not to mention other ranks. Estonia is thus completely dependent on an effective mobilisation system.

Mobilisation capability begins with the right mindset: an understanding shared by the Defence Forces, the top of the Ministry of Defence, national leaders and society as a whole about the critical importance of mobilisation. In addition, mobilisation can only succeed if four important preconditions are met.

*Estonia is thus completely dependent on an effective mobilisation system*

First, the Defence Forces and every active serviceman and woman therein must be completely focused on performing their war-time tasks: proper preparation, training and planning. This may sound obvious, but far from it: in a situation where one's unit is in reserve but daily life keeps throwing countless bureaucratic challenges in the way, the risk of losing wartime focus is significant. Just a few years ago, many active service personnel did not even know what their positions would be in wartime, so deeply rooted was the focus on peacetime bureaucracy.

The matter was further complicated by Estonia's legal space: the Defence Forces did have a wartime structure, but it was scattered across three different documents (one of them classified), and even understanding the Defence Forces' actual (wartime) organigram needed all of them to be read in parallel. One's success as a member of the Defence Forces (or any other organisation) presupposes an understanding of one's role as a member and the ability to place one's activity in a wider context. Only then can initiative and target-based leadership be assumed.

In order to improve the situation, the logic of the Defence Forces' structure has now been

altered – in late spring this year, the Estonian parliament (*Riigikogu*) approved a legislative amendment, and subsequent changes to lower-level documents established a single structure for the Defence Forces, and all active service personnel have been appointed wartime positions and are expected to focus mostly on preparing for their wartime tasks.

For the Defence Forces to be able to organise military planning, active service personnel cannot have their hands tied when it comes to the supporting bureaucracy. Only service personnel who have received proper training and experience can prepare military plans, lead military units and perform military training. However, the daily peacetime routine consists of many other activities necessary for the functioning of the Defence Forces – someone has to build, heat and clean barracks, organise defence procurement, guard buildings etc. All of this can often be done by civilians. In fact, the less time active service personnel have to spend on support activities, the more they can spend on military ones.

Many of these support functions are now covered by civilian organisations under the Ministry of Defence. Procurement, infrastructure and maintenance have been moved under the responsibility of the Centre for Defence Investment; recruiting active service personnel and calling up conscripts, and keeping count of civil supplies necessary for mobilisation, is now the task of the Defence Resources Agency; introducing Estonian military history and tasks concerning war graves were passed to the Estonian War Museum. Naturally, this arrangement can only work if the Ministry of Defence can guarantee the daily coordination of the organisations under its jurisdiction – if things are procured without the Defence Forces' advice, or unnecessary people are recruited, the whole system will soon collapse. Of course, this area also needs further development: the Defence Forces still (sometimes a little excessively) play a part in the realisation of support functions.

The second important precondition for a successful mobilisation is reservist awareness of tasks and the Defence Forces' capability to quickly summon units even while communicating with every reservist individually. The first steps are being taken in this field. Modern means

of communication – especially social media – provide new possibilities for keeping in contact with reservists.

However, reservist awareness and the proper functioning of the mobilisation system as a whole can be no longer taken for granted without constant practice. Since the National Defence Act entered into force on 1 January 2016, additional reservist training (unannounced assemblies for individuals in reserve) may be organised for monitoring and practising mobilisation readiness. Given the key role that mobilisation plays in Estonia's national defence system, it is strange that this option was made legally possible only a quarter of a century after regaining independence, and on the initiative of officials from the Ministry of Defence, but it's a good thing it now exists.

Naturally, a legal right alone is not enough. In a way, laws are like development plans – if not implemented, even the best are of no use. Additional reservist training has now been tested in practice three times: once with one Support and Signal Battalion Company and a territorial defence company, second with the entire 1st Infantry Brigade battalion, and third with one air force company.

Organising additional reservist training is critically important for a number of reasons. First, it is the only real opportunity to test actual defence readiness and discover shortcomings and learn from them. Second, it is the best way to check actual communication with reservists and to ensure reservist awareness. Third, routine additional reservist training exercises involve the entire political establishment: every exercise so far has been organised without the prior knowledge of the ministry, the general staff or the government. This means that every time the exercises have taken place, all these institutions practised procedures that must work flawlessly in times of crisis.

Additional reservist training must become as normal a part of the national defence system as the annual call for conscript service, which comes as a surprise to nobody and is an ordinary part of the routine. We are moving in that direction. The first additional reservist training made front-page news, but the second and third didn't. This is the way it has to be: additional training is nothing out of

the ordinary, either for the people preparing the decisions or making them, organising the training or participating in it.

However, the three success stories are no reason to rest on our laurels; we can be truly satisfied only when every reservist in the rapid-response structures participates in at least one additional training session during his reserve service in addition to one normal training exercise announced well in advance. This means the Defence Forces need to organise several pieces of additional training for reserves every year.

*In that sense, a paper army is more convenient – reservists are left in peace and there are no noisy exercises. But no defence capability, either*

Naturally, additional reservist training is demanding, first and foremost for reservists and their families. However, as long as Estonia's independent defence capability is based on a reserve army, real capability requires additional training for them. In that sense, a paper army is more convenient – reservists are left in peace and there are no noisy exercises. But no defence capability, either.

The third important precondition for a successful mobilisation is the preparation of the Defence Forces, especially the proper storage of equipment and the capability to provide incoming reservists with equipment and weapons, in order to move out from rendezvous points to the field as soon as possible. This preparedness does not happen automatically – constant practice is the key here as well. This is why it is important that the aforementioned additional reservist training takes place and that active service personnel focus on wartime tasks.

The fourth precondition concerns the involvement of civilian resources. A reserve army that wants to be capable of a rapid response must have the majority of equipment ready at hand, but there is also plenty of equipment that the army does not need to maintain constantly, since it is much simpler (and ultimately cheaper for society) to use in wartime what is already available in the

civilian sector. This applies to some combat engineer equipment (tractors, excavators) and other heavy-duty vehicles, but also timber and other consumables, as well as some services – mobilised service personnel can be transported swiftly from primary rendezvous points by buses and drivers from peacetime intercity lines. This is the point of the National Defence Duties Act (which entered into force in 1995), but getting the corresponding system to work requires more than a law.

First, the exact needs of the Defence Forces must be identified, and it must be checked whether the country has the necessary provisions. It must then be decided when it would be appropriate to enter into wartime supply contracts with private enterprises, and when defence duties should be enforced. According to the law, the government will then approve the summary plan of national defence duties that lists every item taken on in times of crisis.

The first time the Estonian government approved such a summary plan was in 2016 – over 20 years after the act had entered into force. However, the master plan alone is not enough. Property owners must be notified, operational information systems must be created and the entire procedure should be constantly practised, like additional reservist training. This work is ongoing.

## 5. HUMAN RESOURCES

Reservists can only come together in the case of a mobilisation if they exist in the first place. Here, Estonia's national defence system appears simple at first glance: the constitution states that all citizens of Estonia have a duty to participate in national defence; other laws specify that compulsory conscript service applies to male citizens.

What is it, then, that Estonia is really asking for from the individuals liable to the national defence obligation when it comes to national defence? First, 8–11 months of their time to complete conscript service, as a result of which a citizen is trained to be a soldier, non-commissioned officer or officer; these are then formed into a unit. For most people,

conscript service ends after completing the annual *Kevadtorm* training exercise, when they become reservists. Even though active reserve service usually lasts for a shorter time for the wartime units of the Defence Forces, the law states that a citizen who has completed conscript service remains in reserve, and therefore a member of the national defence system, until the age of 60.

However, this is not all. For independent defence to work, Estonia expects its citizens who have fulfilled their civic duty and completed conscript service to be ready to participate in additional reservist training at any given moment. What is even more important, Estonia also wants the same citizen to be ready to come to additional reservist training exercises or respond to mobilisation when our security is under real threat, when war may break out. The country also wants the citizen to be prepared to fight bravely in that war as part of their unit.

At any given time, the Estonian Defence Forces have 13,000 conscript-trained reservists in armed, equipped and rapid-response wartime units; by 2026, this number will grow by a few thousand; there are also territorial defence units manned by the Defence League, and active service personnel. This is Estonia's army. These are the people who are asked, to paraphrase Winston Churchill, to be the few to whom so much is owed by so many, and we substantiate this with a general obligation – something everyone must contribute to, as the constitution demands.

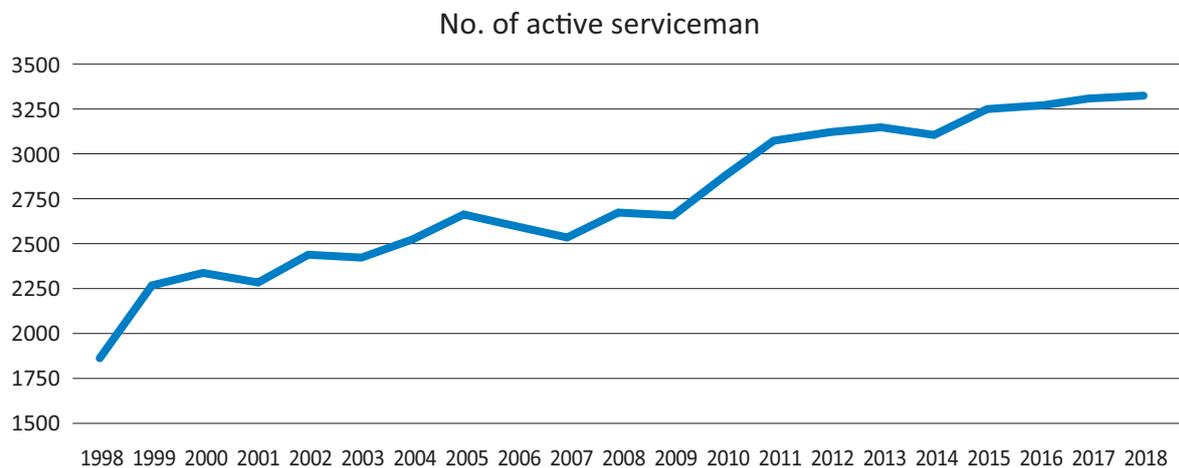
Of course, practice is very far from theory. For years now, only about a third of the young

men subject to conscript service in a particular year actually attend it. Voluntary conscription for women is gaining popularity and support, but the number of women in conscript service remains marginal. This means that the general national defence duty is a real obligation for less than one-sixth of the population.

This is neither fair nor sustainable. If a reservist must appear at his or her unit's assembly point in a crisis, abandoning family, work, friends and hobbies, it is hard to explain to them why most of their peers, class- and course-mates will probably not have to do the same. As the saying goes, it doesn't matter who you have to face when you know who's standing next to you. The uniform national defence duty works on the principle that everyone stands by our reservists. In practice this is not so, since only a minority of each year's call-up selectees actually attend service. Why is that?

For years, the small number of people attending conscript service was blamed on the poor health of young Estonian men. This was untrue then and it is untrue now. First, conscript service must be and increasingly is flexible enough to allow (with small exceptions) almost everyone to attend it. There is no desire or need to train an entire army of Rambos. If a large majority of Estonia's young men are able to obtain lower secondary education, there are no reasons why almost the same proportion could not attend compulsory conscript service. Second, telling the Estonian public for years that the new generations of males are weak and sickly is simply wrong and undermines society's confidence.

In order to have a sustainable conscript service-based reserve army, this situation needs to



change; for a system based on general duty to continue, the duty itself must become either common or at least widespread. We are moving in that direction, but there is still a long way to go.

*Telling the Estonian public for years that the new generations of males are weak and sickly is simply wrong and undermines society's confidence*

Let me start with resources. In 2017, a new NDDP was approved, with which it was decided to raise the number of conscripts from the current 3,200 per year to 4,000. Combined with demographic trends this means that, from 2022, instead of the current one-third, some 60% of a year's young call-ups (and, it is to be hoped, a growing number of young women) will attend conscript service. For this purpose, additional barracks and a growing supply of instructors for service personnel will be needed (the number of active service personnel in Estonia has constantly increased, but must increase even faster; see Table 1).

Second, society must show much greater appreciation for people in conscript service and in reserve. Given the contribution expected of reservists, their current role in society is embarrassingly underappreciated. It has been decided that, from 2018, people who have completed conscript service will receive a certificate and a badge confirming the fact; the role of reservists will receive greater emphasis in public, similar to how, a few years ago, an appreciation campaign was initiated for veterans of the Estonian Defence Forces. Much can now be done in cooperation with the heads of enterprises and national authorities, who could set the completion of conscript service as a possible criterion for preference when deciding between otherwise equal candidates for employment. This is useful for the businesses and institutions, as completed conscript service first and foremost speaks of a person's sense of duty, courage and consistency.

Several companies already provide discounts on their goods and services to participants in the large-scale training exercise SIIIL, thereby showing their respect for reservists and at the same time improving the company's image. This

approach should be extended to all reservists who have completed conscript service.

Third, we have reduced the number of legal options for evading conscript service. A long time ago, even acquiring higher education exempted one, but this is no longer the case. In 2017, health requirements were jointly reviewed with doctors, and a number of obsolete and unnecessary disqualifications were removed.

The work of the medical committees in the Defence Resources Agency (KRA) has also been made more effective, making it harder to abuse the system. Just a few years ago it was possible to evade conscript service by convincing the KRA's medical assessment committee of one's mental instability. At the same time, a person who had evaded conscript service due to mental health could still, for example, apply for a weapon licence by proving their mental stability to the Police and Border Guard Board.

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We may have an e-state, but the right hand didn't know what the left was doing. Thanks to the KRA now joining the e-health portal, the possibility of that happening is much smaller.

Another inescapable aspect of appreciating reservist service is society's condemnation of illegal conscript service evasion. It is like paying taxes – honest taxpayers are recognised by raising awareness, while tax evaders are condemned. However, until recently, both public condemnation and government sanctions were mild in relation to illegal conscript service evasion: the evader had to pay moderate fines until turning 27 (after which people are no longer called up for service). This means that a few thousand euros are enough to buy freedom from an obligation that will send honest citizens to battle in a crisis.

An even cheaper way to evade one's duties illegally is to "hide" and not receive the summons

from the KRA and the Defence Forces. In an e-state, this is of course absurd – one national institution is searching for a citizen to hand him a summons to appear at the medical assessment committee and cannot reach him, while another (e.g. the Estonian Road Administration) issues him a driver's licence, or the Estonian Tax and Customs Board returns excess income tax. That this kind of selective hide-and-seek is possible is a matter concerning not just national defence but the credibility of the entire state.

From the summer of 2018, the first of these problems has been resolved. By a large majority, the *Riigikogu* voted to change the law so that systemic evaders of conscript service would be subjected to other sanctions in addition to fines. To be more precise, they will be deprived of national benefits: a person who evades repeated summons and fines will eventually lose the opportunity to hold a driver's, weapon or hunting licence, and other benefits. This change sent a message from the state: we value our dutiful citizens, among other things by not allowing people evading their duty to enjoy the same benefits as those who do perform their duties.

However, the “hiding” problem still needs to be resolved. In an e-state, it should not be too difficult to establish a measure by which every message and notice sent to a citizen from the state is delivered through all government institutions, regardless of which one issues it. At present, state institutions are still separate islands in this respect; however, if national registers and the legal space are developed appropriately, in future a citizen's communication with the state should work the same, irrespective of which institution is being communicated with.

Real pressure from society that urges a person to do their duty will only emerge and become the norm when an overwhelming majority of citizens subject to the duty actually perform it in practice. In 2022, some 60% of male citizens of that year's call-up selectees will enter service; however, it would be premature to be content with this result. Work should also continue to create equal opportunities for women to enter conscript service. Since females account for over half of voluntary national defence programme participants in upper secondary and vocational schools, there is no reason why

the number of women in conscript service could not significantly increase.

It is to be hoped that these measures will soon create a situation where completing conscript service is the norm, not an exception. This way the current general duty-based national defence system will achieve a much more certain sustainability.

## 6. COLLECTIVE DEFENCE

Estonia's deterrent posture can function comprehensively if real independent defence capability is supplemented by real NATO collective defence. Collective defence is only real if it carries a message of both political readiness and military capability to react to an attack against an allied nation (in this case, Estonia). For this, three basic preconditions must be met.

First, it is of course important that NATO should function; the Alliance and the relationships framing it should be politically beneficial for Estonia and other allies. While Central and Eastern European member states see Russia's growing aggression as their main security concern, for countries situated further away the primary security issues lie elsewhere. In order for NATO to work, it must address both Estonia's and other members' security concerns.

When speaking of NATO's overall health, there is no point in ignoring the fact that international relations over the last few years have been turbulent, and this has put pressure on Western institutions. Several traditional institutions have found themselves in the biggest crisis of confidence of their lives; this, in turn, has been accompanied by growing polarisation in society and an increasing number of assorted irritants in Western international relations (different opinions about trade policy, Brexit negotiations or immigration are just a handful of examples that have tested Western unity). For NATO – and, of course, Estonia – it is important that these disputes are kept under control and do not carry over to security issues. This has generally worked so far, but it will take some effort in the future.

Paradoxically, the Western security system has in some ways even been strengthened by the storm clouds gathering above it. While just a few years

ago there was a real threat that NATO would only be of interest to small groups of security experts, without wider political attention, the trouble brewing over NATO in the media has mobilised the political circles in member states to pay attention to the Alliance, to appreciate it and to take steps to protect it. In these turbulent times, previous occasional ignorance has been replaced with the desire to act.

*Paradoxically, the Western security system has in some ways even been strengthened by the storm clouds gathering above it*

This does not mean that turbulence is not dangerous – it is, and mainly for two reasons. First, the overall confusion increases the risk of miscalculation, with potentially regrettable consequences. And second, while turbulence is generally not dangerous, the frailest passengers can still be hurt by it. The most important thing, as always, is to keep calm and focus on facts rather than emotions.

The current situation over NATO unity has some positive aspects, not only worrying ones. While the media like to speak of the gap that separates NATO into east- and south-oriented member states, the actual solidarity within the Alliance has proved stronger. Southern member states actively contribute against the threat from the east; among other things, they police Baltic airspace and participate in NATO battlegroups situated in these countries. Eastern allies contribute to operations in the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East; their per capita involvement is sometimes even more active than that of the other allies.

One of the Alliance's more acute solidarity issues in recent years has been over defence expenditure – “burden-sharing”, as it is often called. For years, both observers and American officials (including in the Obama and Bush administrations) have pointed out that US taxpayers covering a disproportionately large part of NATO defence expenditure is not politically sustainable. The cuts in European defence budgets have resulted in the US making up some 71% of all NATO defence expenditure, even though the combined

population and GDP of the European allies are on a par with those of the US. It has been pointed out that, sooner or later, US taxpayers will begin asking why they have to contribute so much to European security while Europeans do not seem to take their defence as seriously. These issues have now become the centre of discussions over NATO.

When discussing burden-sharing, it has been argued that not all US defence spending has been targeted on the security of Europe and the North Atlantic region; as a global superpower, the US actively participates in other countries' security policies, which

naturally consumes a large part of its defence expenditure, while in Europe defence is mostly focused on the NATO area. This is true, but it can also be said that European countries' defence spending is fragmented and used less efficiently than in the US, which is why actual military capability is weaker than the US in terms of every euro or dollar spent. This, too, is true. Since NATO's 2014 Wales Summit, this polemic is no longer an issue – it was unambiguously agreed that all member states would aim for the goal of spending 2% of GDP on defence, cuts in defence budgets would end and defence expenditure would be increased to ensure greater equality in burden-sharing. The question now is whether the allies will take this obligation seriously and actually move towards the agreed goal. The current trends are largely positive: the number of member states that have fulfilled the 2% requirement is growing, defence budget cuts have mostly ended and, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, the defence expenditure of the European NATO allies has begun to grow.

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Since collective defence is critically important to Estonian security, the country must provide everything for NATO to function and maintain its political importance for other member

states. In order to make that happen, Estonia must have its say in the development of the Euro-Atlantic security space. To achieve credibility, Estonia will need diplomats with a thorough knowledge of the situation in their host states who are able to participate in discussions there and on an international level; in addition, we need strong practical cooperation to strengthen ties with our allies.

In the defence field, the most intensive form of cooperation is joint operations, which is why smart participation in international operations is an important way to raise Estonia's credibility, develop closer relations with allies and create opportunities to participate in international developments. As a small state, Estonia's contribution cannot be massive, so quantity cannot increase our credibility. This is why it is more important to focus on quality.

Estonia's advantages are speed and flexibility: when France needed help in Africa, Estonia was one of the first to show support in both words and actions, i.e. to make actual contributions. This helped to take Estonia's relations with Paris to a new level. Estonia has helped the British mission in Afghanistan, with Estonia's contribution calibrated to give the maximum political result. For this, it was important to demonstrate readiness to go in and do what the partner state was doing – contribute without national limitations, even in very dangerous areas. Cooperation in Afghanistan raised Estonia's relationship with London to a whole new level, both in the general political and the practical sense. Estonia has contributed to the US-led mission in Iraq. There are more examples, in operations under NATO, the European Union and coalitions of the willing.

All of this has given Estonia a more credible role in its relationship with its allies than the country's size would allow in other circumstances. As a result, it has become possible to expand bilateral military cooperation into other areas, from intelligence information exchange to cyber cooperation and joint military exercises.

The importance of foreign operations in increasing Estonia's international credibility requires the contribution of Estonian veterans to be recognised and appreciated. Operations

are dangerous; Estonian lives have been lost, many have been wounded and even more have been left with mental scars. However, the achievements of Estonia's troops, non-commissioned officers and officers during those operations have helped to ensure the security of the entire country. We can never be too grateful to and attentive towards them for their service.

Estonia's credibility largely depends on its international reputation. Here, a useful tool would be a serious contribution to solving other allies' and wider international security issues, as well as setting a positive example in general. Estonia's image as a successful and democratic small state is imperative to its security, as is everything that sets it apart from the general mass.

*The media are active 24/7, and Estonia must keep up with the pace, e.g. by responding swiftly to negative messages with the facts as needed*

The best image-creating argument is a fact – this means that if Estonia wants to stand out in any way, it has to practise what it preaches. This alone is not enough; Estonia must be able to have its say in the international media, and not only in Estonian and English. The media are active 24/7, and Estonia must keep up with the pace, e.g. by responding swiftly to negative messages with the facts as needed.

In addition, Estonia's trustworthiness and ability to participate in NATO developments also depend on whether Estonians fill their designated positions in NATO structures and the capability of those officials, officers and non-commissioned officers deployed to NATO structures. It will also depend on whether Estonia is able to get any key positions, since there are plenty of other small and medium-sized NATO states whose political strategy seems to include grabbing as many international positions as possible. This is a smart approach for a small country, one that requires determined work in choosing suitable positions and supporting its candidates.

Of course, NATO's political vitality is not enough for collective defence to work; it needs actual capability to realise collective defence, if

necessary. This depends on the second and third elements – a credible allied presence in NATO border states and the Alliance’s capability to support its distant border areas with additional military capabilities, i.e. follow-on forces.

## 7. ALLIED PRESENCE

When Estonia joined the Alliance in 2004, NATO had neglected its collective defence activities. For many it seemed at the time that conflict between states was a thing of the past, history was over for European security, and NATO – if it was still even necessary – had to concentrate on operations guaranteeing stability in more distant areas. NATO’s military leadership had been reduced and was significantly further decreased in subsequent years, a large part of collective defence planning had been neglected, and attempts to discuss deterrence were seen in Brussels as inappropriate. Even though Russia’s aggression in Georgia brought a certain awareness, it was limited in terms of extent and duration. The true breaking point came with the annexation of the Crimea.

*Even though Russia’s aggression in Georgia brought a certain awareness, it was limited in terms of extent and duration*

Estonia, however, constantly (first quietly, but then with increasing activity) worked to increase allied presence. The logic of this presence is simple – in order to convince somebody that allies would come to the aid of the region it is necessary to demonstrate a direct and constant allied integration into the area’s security. The more militarily convincing and integrated the presence, the more difficult it is for a potential aggressor to imagine an attack that would leave the allies neutral.

Preparations for creating a convincing presence began a long time before the topic began to be seen as acceptable. Let’s take the air force base in Ämari, for example. By 2009, the preliminary infrastructure needed for the operation of an air force base there had been completed with the help of NATO investment, but the base was not yet ready to accept allied aircraft. Additional infrastructure was needed for its completion along with, even more important, the procure-

ment of numerous elements, with a significant total cost. In 2010, it was decision time – whether to continue with the development of Ämari and bear the considerable additional expense or be satisfied with a half-completed base. In order to be able to receive allied aircraft, the base had to be completely developed.

At the time the topic was treated as bar-room chatter. There was criticism of both the Ämari base development and Estonia’s pursuit of allied presence in general after it openly raised the need for the deployment of army units at a 2014 conference in Washington. The criticism was both international and domestic.

Following the annexation of the Crimea, when the stability of Europe more broadly came into question, it was more widely understood that an allied presence was one of the more important underlying bases of a convincing collective defence. In order to prevent Moscow having misconceptions about NATO’s credibility, the US deployed both fighter aircraft and company-size army units to the Baltics. Their arrival was the result of a hastily made decision that was also executed with great speed.

However, it was clear that the restart of history was here to stay, which is why the credibility of NATO’s deterrence needed a long-term solution. The corresponding analysis focused on several issues – first, what would have to be done to make deterrence credible; second, on what scale; and third, how it should be done.

NATO soon reached a unanimous decision, formulated by heads of state and government at the 2016 Warsaw Summit: in guaranteeing deterrence, there is no option for credible collective defence other than an allied military presence.

The analysis showed that the presence must be visible on land, in the Baltic Sea and in the air, and as far as the army was concerned, at least a battalion-sized unit was needed in every Baltic state. There are two reasons for that size. First, a battalion is a unit that can independently (with its military staff) plan complex operations and therefore have a degree of military autonomy that a company lacks. This autonomy helps to send the message that a subunit of an allied

battalion can deploy to meet an attacking enemy in any part of Estonia, regardless of where it is situated in peacetime. At the same time, a battalion – or even four of them – is not a unit that could sway the regional let alone

*A subunit of an allied battalion can deploy to meet an attacking enemy in any part of Estonia*

the global balance and appear legitimately dangerous to a neighbouring state, therefore prompting it to irrational actions. In other words, deployment on this scale is a defensive activity by NATO which cannot be credibly seen as aggressive or dangerous.

In order to realise deterrence, the battlegroups must be militarily capable (which among other things means fully equipped and supplied) and integrated with the troops of the host state in every way (this also means they are part of the chain of command and involved in the country's defence planning). This is the case today.

In addition to military capability, allied battlegroups must carry a message of political credibility; they must involve as many states as possible in deterrence policy, without sacrificing their own capability to act militarily. Since multinationality is good from a political point of view but bad from the military efficiency standpoint, a suitable balance must be found.

The credibility of our analysis was supported by the fact that this approach was also approved at the Warsaw Summit, at which a heightened NATO presence in the Baltic states and Poland was decided. The aforementioned battlegroups are commanded by the UK, Canada, Germany and the US, and various other allies contribute to them. Allied units are completely integrated into the host states' national defence and constantly participate in planning and military exercises.

The speed with which the presence was implemented is worthy of note. The Warsaw Summit took place in July 2016, most of the details concerning its implementation were decided by the autumn of that year, and the actual deployment, construction of the host

state's infrastructure and the entire complex set of legal agreements was completed by Estonia in less than six months. Thus, the *Kevadtorm* exercise the following year saw an equipped and supplied NATO battlegroup that also participated in the exercise's battles as part of Estonia's 1st Infantry Brigade.

In the air, the allied presence is mainly ensured through the Baltic air-policing mission, which (thanks to the completion of the Ämari base) now operates from bases in both Lithuania and Estonia. The naval presence is ensured mainly via allied navy vessels being a constant presence at training exercises on the Baltic Sea.

In addition to local military personnel, a further part of NATO's presence in the Baltics takes the form of staff elements and centres of excellence. The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn has now grown to be the biggest in NATO in terms of the number of contributing allies.

The progress made in allied presence in recent

*The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn has now grown to be the biggest in NATO in terms of the number of contributing allies*

years has generally been an impressive success. Naturally, this does not provide the luxury of being able to rest on one's laurels. An analysis of how the allied presence should be adapted as appropriate should continue (and does), both in Estonia and in NATO institutions. The issue of naval and air force presence needs the most consideration. In addition, the continuing implementation of earlier decisions should be ensured, which includes the continued staffing of allied battalions in the Baltic states and their integration into the defence of host states.

The allied presence and its military and political credibility have made the deterrent aspect of collective defence much more convincing than it was just a few years ago. However, a presence alone is not enough. NATO must have actual capability to militarily strengthen its borders to launch wider collective defence operations together with a member state's independent

defence capability, if necessary. In other words, NATO must be able to come quickly to the aid of units already in Estonia with additional forces if need be. This is the underlying principle of NATO's reinforcement strategy.

## 8. REINFORCEMENT STRATEGY

In order for the reinforcement strategy to be realistic, it has to meet a number of preconditions. This section lists the five most important.

First, NATO must have enough forces capable of rapid response, both in low- and high-intensity conflict situations. This first and foremost requires money, which is why the matter of increasing NATO states' defence expenditure should be seen as fair burden-sharing rather than an issue involving real combat readiness. A number of important decisions have been made in recent years, including at the last NATO summit, to create additional military response capability: it has been decided to expand the already existing NATO Response Force, as well as its rapid-response component – the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) – and place at NATO's disposal 30 heavy or regular army battalions, 30 fighter squadrons and 30 warships ready to deploy within 30 days of being alerted.

The topic of rapid-response forces is also connected to the issue of the US military presence in Europe. In this area, recent developments have been positive: the US military presence is on the increase, and US funding for participating in Europe's defence has grown consistently and considerably in recent years.

Second, NATO needs a working leadership structure that must be able to lead a highly complex extensive military operation if necessary. Consequently, the NATO command structure was once again amended this year, as has been done before, in order to reverse the cuts made in previous years.

There are two recent positive developments concerning NATO's military command capability that stand above the rest. First, the part of the NATO command structure responsible for maritime issues, especially the critically

important North Atlantic area, has been restored. Conducting any type of large-scale collective defence operation, such as the protection of connections between Europe and North America, depends on manoeuvrability on the North Atlantic. Although a structure focused on these issues did not exist for a number of years, it has been decided to restore it, under US leadership. The other positive change concerns logistics: Germany has decided to create a staff focused on rear operations, the importance of which cannot be overestimated in the eyes of Estonia, which is dependent on the rapid arrival of follow-on forces.

Positive developments have also taken place in the region's military leadership. For years, Estonia has pointed out the need to form a division-level staff focused on the defence of the Baltic states. In June 2018, Denmark, Estonia and Latvia decided to create such a staff, and various other allies will also contribute. A divisional staff responsible for the territory of Latvia and Estonia helps to bridge a gap that previously existed between the local brigades and NATO at corps level.

Third, NATO must significantly strengthen its operational planning capability. Here it is worth providing a short explanation of planning terminology. In Estonia, defence planning usually means an activity that aims to identify capabilities that may need development in the future, and operational planning looks at how to use existing capabilities in conflict.

Operational planning is less about a defence plan that eventually needs to be completed, and more about a constant process; it is also important that planning should cover even the most difficult challenges. No plan can stand up to the complexity of a possible real situation, but through constant and realistic planning it is possible to learn how to act in complex situations; it is a way to discover one's strengths and weaknesses, systematically work through various possible courses of action, and attribute actual substance to collective defence.

Collective defence in Estonia cannot be separated from collective defence in Latvia and Lithuania – strategically they form a single region. The collective defence of the Baltic region is also inseparable from a wider regional context: forces participating in Estonia's defence

must get to it and receive support from other areas of the Alliance. It is also natural that, in case of a conflict that triggers a collective defence operation in Estonia or anywhere else in the NATO area, other areas of the Alliance are directly or indirectly connected to it. Operational planning in collective defence must also take the regional aspect into account.

Planning is also what connects in one comprehensive entity the forces already in the area, follow-on forces arriving as part of the reinforcement strategy, leadership structure, and all peacetime activities, such as training.

Fourth, we must consider training exercises, both desktop strategic decision-making ones and those carried out with actual troops. There have been positive developments in both areas in recent years, but not enough. Estonia's collective defence has aspects that need much more thorough training with real troops. A better systemic approach to training is required; exercises are useful if they test actual plans and teach lessons that will be taken into account in planning.

Fifth, in order to quickly reinforce various NATO areas with follow-on forces, the international movement of armed forces in Europe needs to be smoother. This is referred to as military mobility and can be divided into two important components: regulations and physical infrastructure. Concerning regulations, Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, the former commanding general of the United States Army Europe, pointed out that the rapid movement of troops in Europe is impossible, mostly because of all the paperwork involved in crossing borders. Countries have different formalities, as well as rules concerning the transport of military vehicles by road, etc. All of this can slow down movement. There is also plenty of room for improvement in physical infrastructure to support the rapid movement of troops – taxpayer funding of roads, bridges and railways should at least partially take defence requirements into account.

The EU can make a big contribution to help military mobility: NATO often comes up short in the regulation and development of civil infrastructure. During Estonia's presidency of the Council of the EU, it managed to draw the

Union's attention to issues of military mobility among others. Now it remains to keep an eye on them, so that the promises made are kept.

## CONCLUSION

Finally, I would like to touch on a claim that has bothered me for a long time. It is said that, as a small state, Estonia should not have a say in the development of its security – that it is decided by others somewhere else. This is incorrect. We ourselves are primarily responsible for our security, and this applies to both independent and collective defence capabilities. A successful security policy requires knowledge and experience, as well as confidence and courage.

*We ourselves are primarily responsible for our security, and this applies to both independent and collective defence capabilities*

The latter may be especially important, since we are often the ones who must take the first step and guide security developments in a favourable direction before others even realise a certain action is necessary.

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