Report

Allies Help Those Who Help Themselves

How Estonia and Japan Approach Deterrence

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List of Abbreviations

A2/AD	anti-access/area denial assets
ACSA	Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
AP4	Asia-Pacific Four
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATACMS	Army Tactical Missile System
BRELL	Belarus, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania
CESA	Continental Europe Synchronous Area
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DBP	Defense Buildup Program
DDoS	Distributed Denial of Service
DOD	Department of Defense
eFP	enhanced Forward Presence
ESSI	European Sky Shield Initiative
FY	Fiscal Year
FDO	Flexible Deterrent Options
G7	Group of Seven
GDP	Gross domestic product
IAMD	Integrated Air and Missile Defence
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
IPS	Integrated Power System
JASSM	joint air-to-surface standoff missile
JSDF	Japan Self-Defence Force
JSM	joint strike missile
MSDF	Maritime Self-Defence Force
LRHW	long-range hypersonic weapon
NDS	National Defense Strategy
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPR	Nuclear Posture Review
NSS	National Security Strategy
PLA	People's Liberation Army's
PRC	People's Republic of China
Quad	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Japan-US-Australia-India)
RAA	Reciprocal Access Agreement
ROK	Republic of Korea
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPS	United Power System

Executive Summary

Up until the blatant act of Russian aggression in Ukraine happened, the West had been gradually shifting its attention towards East Asia, with China seen as the primary challenge of the first half of the 21st century. 24 February 2022 was a watershed moment that dramatically changed the security environment in Europe as much as in the Indo-Pacific, leading to major concerns that Beijing might draw certain undesired conclusions from the course of events in Ukraine. This new context has not only required a thorough re-assessment of the international security architecture by all the national stakeholders but also allowed both Estonia and Japan to enrich their security perspectives on the common strategic threats, as well as on the broader geopolitical shifts caused by Russia and China, resulting in this report.

The first chapter introduces the aspects of these revolutionary developments, their background, and their potential implications, some of which are the revisions that have already been manifested in the updated strategic documents recently unveiled by the US' and Japan's defence communities. They reflect the product of many years of deliberation – and not just the pivotal year of 2022. Taken together, they make a case for an enhanced partnership by Japan, the US, and Europe that would prepare like-minded allies to respond to any security crisis.

The second chapter sets to explore the areas where Japan and Estonia can seek more comprehensive cooperation – e.g., in diplomacy to align threat perceptions, and the defence industry which is recognised as a key to successfully realising Japan's revised defence strategy. When and where coordination with NATO might be difficult to achieve, the chapter argues that individual European nations should step up their efforts to contribute to security in the Indo-Pacific.

Should a crisis evolve into an actual military confrontation, the third chapter compares China's missile supremacy and Japan's long-range standoff maritime fire power strategies by grounding this analysis in the theory of victory. Within this scenario and in order to achieve one's strategic goals, this chapter advises Japan and its Western partners – with Estonia being one of them – to invest in developing a joint defence capability and conduct operations not only in the traditional combat domains of land, sea, and air but also in the "new domains" (space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum).

Attempting to map a more favourable road forward, the fourth chapter accesses the current state of deterrence in the Baltics by detailing the key developments in regional defence posture and planning – with the clear shift towards forward defence – that have taken place post the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It suggests that, in such an increasingly uncertain environment, US commitment to the allies' security remains the primary guarantee of small state security primary.

The fifth chapter centres on emerging cross-border risks posed by hybrid warfare that has long been preferred by Russia. Using Estonia as a case study for vulnerabilities – to cyber, energy, and border security, as well as societal cohesion – it proposes ways to mitigate them by advancing the role of deterrence.

The report thereby recommends:

- establishing a cooperative format between NATO and Indo-Pacific nations along the lines of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership and Cooperation Council and opening NATO's liaison office in Japan;
- creating the Baltic-Japan security and defence 1.5 Track dialogue forum;
- developing ties between the defence intelligence services of Estonia and Japan in order to better understand the threats posed by Russia and China;
- facilitate networking in the fields of concept development, capability planning, doctrine, and military education who are working to address the challenges of multi-domain operations;

- Explore possibilities for closer defence industrial cooperation and technology sharing between Estonia and Japan in cyber security, artificial intelligence, sensorics, robotics, and electronic warfare;
- engaging Estonia's knowledge and experience when adopting NATO's standards and practices in Japan's future capability development in pursuit of interoperability;
- holding joint exercises in integrated air and missile defence, coastal defence, critical undersea infrastructure protection, etc.

As Japan seeks to forge closer defence relations with Europe and European nations are enhancing their defence ties with the democracies in the Indo-Pacific area, a need to better appreciate how cooperation between Estonia and Japan adds value to the emerging Euro-Pacific deterrence agenda will, likewise, persist.

Introduction

Japan and Estonia are facing severe geopolitical challenges to their security that are related to the ambitions and actions of authoritarian state powers in their neighbourhood – China and Russia. To manage those, both nations seek to leverage multi- and mini-lateral frameworks and bilateral strategic partnerships. Estonia works through NATO and the EU, as well as through regional cooperation formats and initiatives such as the Nordic-Baltic Eight and the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). Similarly, Japan pursues closer ties with other democracies in the Indo-Pacific through such arrangements as the Quad. Likewise, the two nations have been cultivating close defence and security relationships with their key ally, the United States. They are also working to enhance national defence capabilities and their interoperability with allies to strengthen defence and deterrence posture in their respective regions.

Moscow's justification for its aggression tests the fundamental norms and principles of international law, upon which the security of countries such as Estonia and Japan rests

Russia's full-scale military attack on Ukraine, launched on 24 February 2022, has dramatically changed the security environment not only in Europe but also in the Indo-Pacific. Moscow's justification for its aggression tests the fundamental norms and principles of international law, upon which the security of countries such as Estonia and Japan rests. Moreover, Sino-Russian alignment is a significant factor in shaping the outcomes of the war in Europe, as it is instrumental in mitigating the impact of Western responses to Russia's actions, such as economic and technological sanctions. There are also major concerns that Beijing might draw certain conclusions from the course of events and developments in Ukraine. It might encourage China to use military force more overtly to pursue its political objectives in the Indo-Pacific as well, in the expectation of at least tacit support from Moscow.

This context requires thorough assessment and exchanges of views, allowing both Estonia and Japan to enrich their perspectives. The two nations should be acutely aware of the common strategic threats with which they are confronted because of the war and its consequences, as well as due to the broader geopolitical shifts caused by Russia and China. As Japan seeks to forge closer defence relations with Europe and European nations are enhancing their defence ties with the democracies in the Indo-Pacific area, there is a need to better appreciate how cooperation between Estonia and Japan could add value to the emerging Euro-Pacific deterrence agenda. This report explores the most significant responses – already being developed by Japan and Estonia – to the changes in their security environment and seeks to explain their rationale, as well as the main principles and risks ahead. Building upon the discussions of a webinar held in December 2022, it analyses Japan's fundamental shift in defence policy since early 2023 that will have a profound impact on security in the Indo-Pacific. It further highlights the efforts to bolster defence and deterrence – including against hybrid threats – in the Baltic area.

There is a need to better appreciate how cooperation between Estonia and Japan could add value to the emerging Euro-Pacific deterrence agenda

1. Japan, the US, and the EU: A Case for Enhanced Partnership

Yoko Iwama

2022 was truly a watershed year in the 21st-century world. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February changed the threat perception of the US and America's allies worldwide, which was reflected in their respective strategic documents released last year. In Japan, Russia's war of aggression might have triggered a complete overhaul of strategic thinking and defence planning that will guide the country's course and decision-making when it comes to national security and international cooperation for years, if not decades, to come. This chapter explains the key aspects of these revolutionary developments, their background, and their potential implications, while providing suggestions for a way forward to foster allied coordination and mitigate security threats that affect all of us.

1.1. A Western Decline or a Strategic Renaissance?

Up until this blatant act of Russian aggression happened, the West had been gradually shifting its attention towards East Asia. China was, therefore, seen as the primary challenge of the first half of the 21st century. The 2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States reflected that recognition in that it placed the strategic competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC) – more precisely its "coercive and increasingly aggressive endeavour to refashion the Indo-Pacific region and the international system to suit its interests and authoritarian preferences" – as the "most comprehensive and serious challenge to US national security."

Concurrently, it listed Russia as an "acute threat" and pointed out Russia's attempt to "use force to impose border changes and to reimpose an imperial sphere of influence."[1] However, all four strategic documents coming out of the Biden administration in the autumn of 2022 – the US 2022 National Security Strategy (NSS), the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS), the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), and the 2022 Missile Defense Review – were strikingly lacking in major initiatives to undertake in the remaining two years of Biden's presidency.

The American response to the war in Ukraine has, indeed, been remarkable. By leading the international coalition, the US has shown that it has the world's most powerful military and remains the most powerful industrial nation. It has dwarfed all other donors in terms of military aid and has emerged as the biggest financial and humanitarian aid provider to Ukraine.[2] The US has led NATO's collective response to the crisis and formed a multinational coalition. First convened at the Ramstein Air Base on 26 April 2022, it later came to be known as the Ukraine Contact Defense Group, with 54 attending countries that met for the eleventh time in April 2023 in the so-called Ramstein format.

Ukraine would not have survived had it not been for the American assistance. And yet, despite America's determined efforts in Ukraine, there are some aspects that worry its allies. First, American society is deeply divided. The attack on Capitol Hill on 6 January 2021 continues to reverberate across domestic politics. Although Donald Trump failed to deliver the "red wave" during the 2022 mid-terms, the election results exposed a division in American society. It might be the main reason why the Biden administration's foreign policy remains a "foreign policy for the middle class," with its primary focus on domestic politics.

Two years into Biden's presidency and with all the harsh words about the systemic challenge that China poses, the 2022 NSS was, however, devoid of any concrete arms build-up programmes and exact numbers. In contrast, the Department of Defense (DOD) – in its annual report commonly known as the China Military Power Report – put forward alarming data about the PRC's projected

[1] U.S. Department of Defense, *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States Including the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2022 Missile Defense Review* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 27 October 2022), 4-5.

[2] André Frank, Lukas Franz, Ivan Kharitonov, Christoph Trebesch, et al., "The Ukraine Support Tracker: Which countries help Ukraine and how?" *Kiel Working Paper* No. 2218 (Kiel Institute for the World Economy, February 2023).

military capabilities.[3] In early 2023, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released a "wargaming" report envisioning a Chinese invasion of Taiwan that sent shivers down the Japanese security expert community's spine. Of particular concern was the following advice: "Do not plan on striking the Chinese mainland" as an initial condition for the Taiwan Strait conflict.[4]

The manner in which President Biden repeatedly stated that the US was not going to enter into war with nuclear-armed Russia – although understandable – was rather distressing for the countries facing nuclear-capable Russia and China. Hence, despite the magnitude of American assistance to Ukraine, it soon became clear that the US was meticulously choosing the type of weapons to provide in order to avoid unwanted escalation.[5] Ukrainians have had to plead with Washington for months to gain longer-range and offensive weapons until the White House finally made a move to approve some of those capabilities, while still withholding other systems (most notably, the MGM-140 ATACMS missiles capable of striking targets 300km away). These reluctant and slow commitments in the face of escalation risks did not go unnoticed in Tokyo.

1.2. Surprising Strategy Documents

Released in 2022, Japan's three strategic documents – the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the Defense Buildup Program – were the biggest surprises, distinct in their clarity and concreteness.[6] It is worth noting that the materials prepared by the Ministry of Defense for the experts' panel had one interesting expression: "The world helps those who help themselves."[7] In reality, it probably implied that the US only helps those who help themselves. It was the lesson that Japanese defence officials had learnt from Ukraine's narrow escape from total eradication as a free and independent state.

Ukraine's near escape from total eradication taught Japanese defence officials that the US only helps those who help themselves

Accordingly, the NSS stated that "Japan's security environment is as severe and complex as it has ever been since the end of World War II" and that "we live in the world of a historical inflection point." Although such an acknowledgement that the country needs "defense capabilities, which enable Japan to firmly defend itself on its own," might have been trivial for other countries, it was a ground-breaking declaration for post-war Tokyo.[8] It was not only a product of 2022 but also of a decade of confrontation with increasingly assertive and hostile China under Xi Jinping. The Russian invasion of Ukraine brought home the idea that a real war was quite possible in the 21st century. It raised the sense of urgency by showing the extent of destruction and disruption a country would suffer under such circumstances. And thus, the changes were due.

The NSS claimed that Japan was "maintaining exclusively national defense-oriented policy, not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, and observing the Three Non-Nuclear Principles" as it had done

[3] U.S. Department of Defense, *2022 Report on Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 29 November 2022).

[4] Mark F Cancian, Matthew Cancian, and Eric Heginbotham, *The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan* (CSIS International Security Program, January 2023), 4.

[5] Anthony H Cordesman, "United States Aid to Ukraine: An Investment Whose Benefits Greatly Exceed its Cost," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 21 November 2022; "Russia-Ukraine War State Department Walks Careful Line On Russian Attacks," *The New York Times*, 6 December 2022, last modified 3 May 2023.

[6] English-language provisional translation of 内閣官房 [Cabinet Secretariat], お探しのページが見つかりませんでした。[National Security Strategy] (Tokyo: Cabinet Secretariat, 2022); Japan Ministry of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 16 December 2022); Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense Buildup Program* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 16 December 2022).

[7] Japan Ministry of Defense, "「防衛力の抜本的強化」" (防衛省提出資料) 国力としての防衛力を総合的に考える有識者会議(第２回)令和４年１０月２０日資料1、["Drastic Strengthening of Defense Capabilities" (Materials submitted by the Ministry of Defense) Expert Panel for Comprehensive Consideration of Defense Capabilities as a National Power (2nd), October 20, 2020, Document 1] (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, October 2020), 3.

[8] Cabinet Secretariat, *National Security Strategy*, 2-3.

before. Although diplomatic efforts came first, strengthening Japan's defence architecture was placed second, whereas an emphasis was put on "fundamentally reinforcing defense capabilities as the last guarantee of national security."

The importance of "counterstrike capabilities" was stressed, in both the NSS and the NDS, as the key to deterring an invasion of Japan. For the first time, Tokyo admitted that relying solely upon ballistic missile defence would not be sufficient to address the missile threats and thus called for capabilities that "enable Japan to mount effective counterstrikes against opponent's territory."[9] Although the government has always admitted that this would be allowed within its constitutional interpretation, never has it tried to acquire such capabilities before.

The NDS set a clear timeline for Japan's defence build-up. Within five years, the country intends to have been "able to take primary responsibility for dealing with invasions against its nation and disrupt and defeat such threats with the support of its ally and others." Within ten years, Tokyo will have reinforced "its defense capabilities to the point where Japan is able to disrupt and defeat invasion much earlier and at places further afield."[10]

Japan prioritises its own defence capabilities to defend and deter against invasion

Overall, the strategy prioritises Japan's own defence capabilities to defend and deter in that it reads that the "key to deterring invasion against Japan is counterstrike capabilities." Specifically, the documents mentioned the Type-12 surface-to-ship missile, currently estimated to have a range of 200 km. The stated objective is to have acquired surface-launched and ship-launched missiles by 2027, as well as air-launched missiles, hypervelocity gliding missiles with irregular trajectories, hypersonic guided missiles, and other stand-off missiles within approximately ten years, by 2032.[11] The goal is to extend this range to over 1 000 km, which will probably require even more time. Moreover, it was rumoured for several months that Japan was looking into purchasing Tomahawk missiles from the US; in February, it was reported that Japan was considering ordering 500 Tomahawk missiles during the FY2023.[12]

The very admission that Japan needs to be able to defend itself on its own is refreshing. By contrast, the 2013 NSS described deterrence only in terms of joint Japan-US efforts as evidenced by the following paragraph:

> Japan will strive to enhance the deterrence and response capability of the Japan-U.S. Alliance through the following efforts: advancing joint training, joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities, and joint/shared use of facilities by the SDF and the U.S. forces; working closely with the U.S. on operational cooperation and policy coordination on issues such as response to contingencies and the medium- to long-term strategy; strengthening its security cooperation with the U.S. in such broad areas as BMD, maritime affairs, outer space, cyberspace and large-scale disaster response operations.[13]

Hence, the admission that the missile defence alone would most likely be insufficient to defend the homeland and that Japan would also need to possess "counterstrike capabilities" that could reach the enemy's territory in order to first deter and, if necessary, defend can also be interpreted as a break from the "exclusively defence-oriented" posture of the past (although the document does not explicitly say so). When these changes were being debated in the summer of 2021, such a success was by no means guaranteed. Indeed, Japan seems to have come a long way.[14]

1.3. Two Wings of the US Global Alliance System

The three strategy documents are ground-breaking in their honesty about the inadequacy of Japanese capabilities from defence industry to the cyber domain and civil defence. In contrast, it does not pay as much attention to international cooperation, with most of the

[9] Cabinet Secretariat, *National Security Strategy*, 18-19.

[10] Cabinet Secretariat, *National Security Strategy*, 12.

[11] Japan Ministry of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, 24.

[12] "Japan plans purchase of up to 500 U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles," *Nikkei Asia*, 14 February 2023.

[13] Cabinet Secretariat, *National Security Strategy* (Tokyo: Cabinet Secretariat, 17 December 2013), 22.

[14] Iwama Yoko and Murano Masashi, "Thinking about deterrence for Japan and stability in Asia," *Voice*, September 2021 via PHP総研 [PHP Research Institute], 10 October 2021.

proposals related to the US-Japan bilateral coordination.

It is dedicated to maintaining and developing a free and open international order and strengthening ties with its allies and like-minded countries, with the Quad (Japan-US-Australia-India) partnership being the only one specified in that context. Whilst other frameworks – such as the Japan-US-ROK or Japan-U.S.-Australia – are only briefly mentioned as a possibility to enhance security cooperation with a group of countries listed as "Australia, India, the Republic of Korea (ROK), European countries, ASEAN countries, Canada, NATO, the EU, and others."

Japan's recent strategy documents reflect the results of many years of deliberation – and not just the pivotal year of 2022

There is much room to improve strategic thinking in this area. Although the aforementioned documents repeat the term "like-minded countries" multiple times, the concept of the "West" is missing. The "Group of Seven" (G7) is used only once in both the NSS and the NDS, while the notion of the "Global South" is completely absent, too. This might be explained by the fact that these strategy documents reflect the results of many years of deliberation – and not just the pivotal year of 2022.

The war in Ukraine has clearly shown that the "West" is a value-cantered framework that has significance in today's world. The G7 framework has been revitalised as a security instrument, precisely because of the Russian war in Ukraine. Although the countries represented in these institutions now account for a shrinking share of the global economy and population, NATO, the EU, and G7 seem to have rediscovered their shared sense of purpose following the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Their leaders have repeatedly stated that Russia must not win this war because this would mean the fragmentation of the rule-based order. Similarly, Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons would bring about the breaking of the global nuclear order and the nuclear taboo.

Of these institutions, the EU and G7 play a more substantial political and economic role, whereas NATO remains the centre for military coordination. Therefore, it would be natural to think about coordination amongst global US-led alliances via NATO cooperation frameworks. In the aftermath of the Cold War, NATO developed several instruments to guide its relationships with former Eastern bloc countries. These fall largely into two groups: individual partnerships and multilateral council framework (e.g., the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council). NATO already has individual partnerships with all four Asia-Pacific allies – i.e., Japan, ROK, Australia, and New Zealand. Yet the council model has not been tried in this region, which could be applied to establish the North Atlantic and Indo-Pacific Cooperation Council (NAICC) by building on the NATO plus Asia-Pacific Four (AP4) format following the Madrid and Vilnius Summits.

The demand for such a forum has only grown.[15] The war in Ukraine has turned into a large-scale and protracted war of attrition into which the entire arsenals of the West are being directed. Neither Japan nor Europe has been prepared for such kind of wars. Once a crisis evolves into an actual military confrontation – which is possible in some potential hotspots in the Far East – Asian nations will probably need the full logistical support of their European partners.

Once a crisis evolves into an actual military confrontation, Asian nations will probably need the full logistical support of their European partners

In this regard, interoperability and synergies will be of the essence. For instance, Germany has already called together the European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) with 17 participating countries. The ESSI's aim is to strengthen NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) by "facilitating the multinational acquisition and integration of a broad range

[15] Yoko Iwama, "A World On the Brink: The Conditions for Rebuilding the Postwar Order: A Strategy of Linking NATO and the Indo-Pacific Order," *Discuss Japan* No. 72 (9 September 2022), translated from "Tokushu 'Setogiwa' ni chokumensuru Sekai: 'Sengo' chitsujo Saikochiku no Joken—Rendosuru NATO=Indo Taiheiyo chitsujo heno senryaku," Gaiko (Diplomacy) Vol. 73 (May/Jun. 2022): 6-13.

of air defence capabilities by European countries."[16] Since many of these air defence capabilities are compatible with the Japan Self-Defence Force (JSDF) and the ROK Armed Forces, it would be highly beneficial for both sides to develop connections and start talking about possible cooperation in times of crisis.

The procurement of long-range strike capabilities is another topic of mutual interest. As previously mentioned, Japan was reportedly discussing the purchase of 500 Tomahawks in the FY2023. It is worth noting in this regard that no American ally has ever acquired such a large number of these missiles at once. If realised, the magnitude of this plan would equal the NATO Double-Track Decision of 1979, when it was agreed to deploy 572 American middle-range missiles (Pershing II and Gryphon BGM-109G Ground Launched Cruise Missile) was taken. Apart from the US itself, only the UK currently operates a certain number of Tomahawks, while several countries, including Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands, have reportedly signalled their interest.

Sooner or later, continental Europe will start considering ground-based long-range strike capabilities

Sooner or later, continental Europe will start considering ground-based long-range strike capabilities. Because of the INF Treaty's legacy, there are currently no missiles of a range longer than 500 km on European soil. Now, having seen Ukraine struggle to reach Russian military assets with its scarce long-range precision strike capabilities, the issue will become pressing.

Japan plans to bring the total stockpile up to approximately 1 000 in ten years. If this build-up can be done in a coordinated way within the NATO-Indo-Pacific framework, there is a chance that the West will boost its conventional deterrence capabilities without individual countries undercutting each other's efforts by placing multiple uncoordinated orders with the same suppliers that are already struggling with their production capacity.

[16] "European Sky Shield Initiative gains two more participants," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 15 February 2023.

1.4. Reconstructing Multilateral Arms Control and Dialogue

In a more benign political environment, an ambitious expansion of long-range precision-strike capabilities in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region might lead to coordinated arms control proposals and fill the void left by the defunct INF Treaty that collapsed in 2019. It will also have to reflect the reality that one of the main developers of inter-mediate range systems is China – a country never bound by the INF Treaty in the first place.

These efforts need not aim for the annihilation of all intermediate-range missiles but attempt to put a cap on this class of missiles by a much wider group of countries, possibly including Japan and other American allies. A treaty negotiation process with many participants promises to be quite challenging. Yet, there is a precedent – the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) that was successfully negotiated amongst multiple parties in the late 1980s and adapted in the late 1990s despite all the political complexities and divergent interests.

However, we should be under no illusion about the attainability of such agreements. At present, we are probably at least a decade away from the next renaissance in arms control. It will have taken years until we can sit down with all the required participants at one table. Before any concrete arms control negotiations can even launch, Asia will probably have to hold a Helsinki-like dialogue so that a broader group of parties can convene and debate the principles of inter-state relations.

Before any concrete arms control negotiations can even launch, Asia will have to hold a Helsinki-like dialogue so that a broader group of parties can convene and debate the principles of inter-state relations

Neutral countries – such as Ireland, Sweden, and Finland – played a critical role in the early years of arms control negotiations in Europe because they felt that such efforts were warranted to increase their chances of survival in a world with nuclear weapons. Likewise,

Asia needs to find a place like Helsinki. There are some suitable candidates: Singapore or Ulaanbaatar.

In an economically integrated and inter-dependent world of the 21st century, crisis management, confidence-building measures, and dialogue initiatives are needed more than ever. Europe and Japan are in a good position to help shape such a framework, but for the time being, their security requires more investments in conventional deterrence capabilities. Japan's strategic review of 2022 was a major step in this direction that echoed similar efforts to regenerate conventional capabilities in Europe – by Germany, France, the UK, Poland, and others. It will now take an even bigger leap forward given the past decades of restrained posture and minimal defence investments.

2. Ukraine's Present is East Asia's Future: A Case for Japan-Europe Cooperation

Tetsuo Kotani

On 16 December 2022, the Japanese government adopted three national security documents: the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the Defense Buildup Program (DBP).[17] The NSS has been revised for the first time since its issuance in 2013; the NDS (formally called the National Defense Program Guidelines) and the DBP (formally called the Mid-term Defense Program) has been revised for the first time in four years since 2018.

The new NSS recognises that the free, open, and stable international order that has prevailed since the end of the Cold War is facing serious challenges as the balance of power shifts and geopolitical competition intensifies. At the same time, various global challenges are mounting, creating a complex intertwining of conflict and cooperation in international relations. The strategy notes that the international community is undergoing rapid changes as the centre of gravity in global power tilts towards the Indo-Pacific region. Citing the example of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it states that unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force are now accelerating and contesting the international order.

As Prime Minister Fumio Kishida described, the three national security documents bring about a "major shift" in Japan's security policy.[18] It does not necessarily mean that the policy shift is revolutionary. The policy is rather an evolution that builds on the incremental transformations of the past decade. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Kishida believes that "Ukraine may be East Asia tomorrow" and that the security of Asia and that of Europe are "inseparable."[19] This indicates that Japan sees more opportunities, as well as necessities, to strengthen its ties with Europe. This chapter, therefore, overviews Japan's new national security policy under the three strategic documents and discusses the implications for Japan-Europe cooperation.

2.1. Diplomacy

The first pillar of the new NSS is diplomacy. Japan's priority is to prevent crises and create a peaceful and stable international environment by strengthening the Japan-US alliance, as well as cooperation with Australia, India, European countries, and other like-minded countries across the globe. This is not a novel approach. The 2013 NSS also emphasised the importance of working with allies and like-minded partners.[20]

Yet the 2022 NSS seeks substantial, rather than symbolic, cooperation with various partners. It aims to promote enhanced engagement with like-minded countries through bilateral and multilateral dialogues; bilateral training and exercises; joint development and transfer of defence equipment and technology; capacity building; strategic communication; and Flexible Deterrent Options (FDO) to strengthen deterrence. It also envisages concluding information protection agreements, the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), and the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA).

With the revision of the NSS, the Japanese government has redefined its relationship with two big nuclear-armed neighbours: China and Russia. With Beijing's attempts to change the status quo in the Senkaku Islands and the South China Sea and its increasing intimidation of Taiwan, China is now regarded as the "greatest challenge" to Japan's security and the international order. Although the Kishida government continues to seek a "constructive and stable" relationship with China, there are obviously fewer areas of such cooperation as China does not hide its ambitions to

[17] English-language provisional translation of 内閣官房 [Cabinet Secretariat], お探しのページが見つかりません でした。 [National Security Strategy] (Tokyo: Cabinet Secretariat, 2022); Japan Ministry of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 16 December 2022).

[18] Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, "防衛3文書決定、岸田首相の記者会見要旨 [Three defense documents decided, Prime Minister Kishida's press conference summary]," *Nikkei*, 16 December 2022.

[19] "Japan PM: East Asia Could Be Next Ukraine," *Voice of America*, 14 January 2023.

[20] Cabinet Secretariat, *National Security Strategy* (Tokyo: Cabinet Secretariat, 17 December 2013).

challenge the liberal international order.[21] This stands as a major contrast to the 2013 NSS, which described China as a "concern" to the international community but advocated a mutually-beneficial relationship to encourage China to become a responsible member of the global community.

The view on Russia has seen the largest shift from the 2013 NSS. Given Moscow's continued aggression against Ukraine, the 2022 NSS defined Russia as a "threat" to Europe and a "concern" to Japan. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a clear violation of international law, including the UN Charter, by a permanent member of the UN Security Council. The new NSS even refers to the possibility that a serious armed conflict could occur in Asia as well and expresses concerns about strengthening strategic ties between China and Russia. Whereas the Shinzo Abe government, which adopted the 2013 NSS, regarded Russia as a partner not only to resolve the territorial dispute over the Northern Territories but also to avoid further rapprochement between Russia and China.[22] This was partly the reason why the Abe government was reluctant to impose sanctions against Russia after the invasion of Crimea in 2014. Clearly, Abe's strategy towards Russia has failed to drive a wedge between Russia and China as the two authoritarian regimes pledge "no limits" cooperation.[23]

Tokyo's realistic views on China and Russia illustrated by the 2022 NSS provide the basis for extending cooperation between Japan and Europe

Japan's realistic views on China and Russia illustrated by the 2022 NSS provide the basis for extending cooperation between Japan and Europe. Under the 2022 NSS, Europe is regarded as a more important partner not only to preserve the international order but also to strengthen deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. European countries have demonstrated their interest in security issues in Asia by adopting their respective Indo-Pacific strategies and dispatching military assets to the region. NATO's new Strategic Concept also states that China is a "systematic challenge" and expresses concern about the Russia-China ties. It might not mean that European countries would be involved in an armed conflict in Asia; however, it signals that Europe has a strong stake in preserving the rules-based international order in Asia.[24] Now with the Japanese prime minister's participation in the NATO summit meetings and the shared threat perceptions, Japan and Europe are positioned to deepen cooperation even further.

New strategic documents might not mean that Europe would be involved in an armed conflict in Asia, but they signal that it has a stake in the rules-based international order in Asia

The priority for Japan and Europe is on the diplomatic front – i.e., responding to the Global South. The countries of the Global South are not monolithic, but they tend to take neutral or cautious positions on the war in Ukraine and value their own national interests over the maintenance of the international order.[25] However, cooperation from the Global South is essential to force Russia to give up its position on continuing the war and to increase support for Ukraine. Japan and Europe need to coordinate their involvement in the Global South and change the region's perception regarding the international order through diplomacy and financial support.

2.2. Defence

The new NSS and NDS lay out the course that Japan should take as it faces a "three-front strategy" against its three nuclear-armed neighbours: China, Russia, and North Korea. In other words, in order to prevent the

[21] Leika Kihara, "Japan's Kishida calls for constructive relations in talks with China's Li," *Reuters*, 12 November 2022.

[22] "Interview with Shinzo Abe by Akihiko Tanaka," *Gaiko* [Diplomacy], Vol. 65, (January/February 2021): 97.

[23] Andrew Osborn, "Factbox: Moscow-Beijing partnership has 'no limits'," *Reuters*, 4 February 2022.

[24] Paul Meyer, "A New Strategic Concept And A New Outlook On China," NATO Association of Canada, 30 August 2022.

[25] Ryohtaroh Satoh, "'Global South' will not lend support in Ukraine war, Mahathir says," *Nikkei Asia*, 26 May 2023.

status quo from being changed by force in Asia, Japan must drastically strengthen its defence capabilities and deepen cooperation with the US and other nations to restore the balance of power in the region, which is becoming favourable to the revisionist powers.

To prevent the status quo from being changed by force in Asia, Japan must drastically strengthen its defence capabilities and deepen cooperation with the US and other nations to restore the balance of power

The US, which deploys its military globally, cannot concentrate its resources exclusively in Asia, while China has been expanding and strengthening its strategic and conventional capabilities in the region over the past two decades.[26] If the strategic balance between the US and China reaches parity in the next 15 years or so, a "stability/instability paradox" situation could arise. Thereby, a nuclear war becomes less likely whereas the status quo becomes easier to change with conventional forces. It would not be an exaggeration to say that avoiding such a scenario was the main consideration while revising the national security policy.

The key to the realisation of the new strategy is an increase in defence spending

The key to the realisation of the new strategy is an increase in defence spending. Japan's defence spending, which has been effectively kept at around 1% of GDP since the 1970s, is to be raised to 2%. The Cabinet has approved a total defence budget of 43 trillion yen for the five years through FY2027, which is 1.6 times the size of the current medium-term defence force development plan. This will enable Japan to strengthen its standoff defence capability as a combination of counterstrike capability, integrated air and missile defence, and unmanned strike systems, as well as sustainability and resilience in preparation for the "new battles" of missile attacks, hybrid warfare, asymmetric attacks, and nuclear threats, as indicated in the NDS.

Of these, the counterstrike capability is intended to supplement the existing missile defence system. It is difficult to respond only by introducing integrated air and missile defence as China and North Korea increase the quality and quantity of their missile capabilities. In other words, the counterstrike capability is positioned as part of a denial capability that neutralises the enemy's attack.[27] The Japanese government has been vague about what targets it will engage in its counterattacks. It is believed, however, that it will use fixed targets, such as air and naval bases, as well as incoming enemy naval forces in order to prevent the opponent from gaining air and sea superiority.

However, it will take several years to develop and acquire these indigenous standoff capabilities. In the meantime, it will be necessary to monitor whether the development of hypersonic missiles (which the US military is also struggling with) and the extension of the range of domestically produced anti-ship missiles go as planned. To mitigate these risks, Japan will introduce foreign-made stand-off missiles such as the joint air-to-surface standoff missile (JASSM), joint strike missile (JSM), and Tomahawk cruise missile that have already been field-tested.

As part of the efforts to enhance denial capabilities, the cyber defence will be strengthened throughout the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF). Additionally, the notion of active cyber defence will be introduced to penetrate suspicious access sources in order to prevent attacks before they occur. (It is widely recognised that cyberspace is already in a state of warfare and that passive cyber defence, which can only respond in the event of an emergency, is not sufficient.) It, therefore, requires a revision of the existing legislation to enable active defence while maintaining the confidentiality of communications as stipulated

[26] The U.S. Department of Defense estimates that China would possess 1 500 strategic nuclear warheads by 2035, see: U.S. Department of Defense, *2022 Report on Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 29 November 2022), 94.

[27] Ken Jimbo, "「防衛3文書」対中劣勢で打つ拒否・競争戦略の本質（神保謙）[Three Defense Documents: The Essence of Denial/Competitive Strategy to Overcome the Disadvantage against China]," *API Geoeconomics Report* No. 136 (26 December 2022).

in Article 21 of the Constitution. While cyber defence capabilities are expected to be enhanced, ensuring a sufficient number of cyber defence personnel will remain a major challenge.[28]

One of the primary goals for the 2022 NSS is dictated by an urgent need to resolve the shortage of ammunition, fuel, and parts. On the one hand, it is important to protect the defence production base. On the other hand, it remains unclear whether subsidies and expanded sales channels will be sufficient to achieve the desired effect amid the increasing withdrawal of defence-related companies.[29] The further relaxation of arms export policy is now inevitable to maintain the domestic defence production base. As the war in Ukraine shows, it is also necessary to establish a system to import weapons, ammunition, fuel, etc. from overseas partner countries in case of emergency.

The further relaxation of arms export policy is now inevitable to maintain the domestic defence production base

One area in which Japan should expand cooperation with Europe is defence industry. First, Japan should promote joint development, of which the next-generation fighter aircraft by Japan, the UK, and Italy is a good example. It is important to note that the UK has been deepening its involvement in the Indo-Pacific region within the AUKUS framework. While there may not be room for Japan to become involved in submarine development within AUKUS, Tokyo could contribute to hypersonic and other advanced technologies. By selling jointly developed defence equipment to third countries, Japan can also expand sales channels for its domestic defence industry. In addition, Japan and Europe should enhance interoperability and cooperate in stockpiling ammunition, including precision-guided munitions. In this regard, it is also necessary for Japan to accelerate the introduction of NATO-standard weapons in the future so that ammunition can be exchanged in the event of an emergency.

2.3. Challenges and Opportunities

With China and Russia deepening their strategic partnership, it is increasingly difficult for the US to commit its limited resources to both Asia and Europe. In order to maintain deterrence in both regions, America's allies need to improve conventional capabilities to supplement US military presence, while continuing to engage across the regions. As described above, Japan has taken a fundamental decision to strengthen its defence capabilities while developing security ties with like-minded partners in Europe. Japan's new security strategy and Europe's growing interests and engagements in Asia provide various opportunities to accelerate cooperation in multiple areas: cyber defence, intelligence, information warfare, economic security, and defence industry, as well as joint training and exercises in high-end operations such as air defence and anti-submarine warfare.

Japan has taken a fundamental decision to strengthen its defence capabilities while developing security ties with like-minded partners in Europe

However, these Japan-Europe cooperation arrangements dwell on peacetime and do not necessarily envisage mutual support in the event of a contingency. In this respect, EU-Japan security cooperation remains more symbolic than substantive, largely because of the possibility of military conflicts unfolding in Europe and Asia simultaneously as China and Russia deepen their strategic coordination.[30] In addition, it can be pointed out that there is no consensus among NATO members about how to deal with the China threat by the Alliance

[28] Japan plans to increase the number of cyber defense personnel four times to 20 000 by 2027, but Japan's Ministry of Defense needs to educate and train its own personnel as there is a shortage of well-trained personnel in the private sector; "Japan boosting efforts to increase cyber defense personnel," *Jiji*, 1 May 2023.

[29] Gabriel Dominguez, "Why bolstering Japan's defense industry is a matter of national security," *Japan Times*, 9 May 2023.

[30] "Japan, NATO interests increasingly align but ties still just symbolic," *Kyodo*, 13 July 2023.

as a whole, with France's opposition to the establishment of a NATO liaison office in Tokyo being one example.[31]

Nevertheless, deterrence will not be strengthened without substance added to Europe-Japan security cooperation – i.e., without stepping in to support each other in the event of a contingency. Even if NATO-Japan cooperation might be rather difficult to achieve at this point, nothing prevents individual members from contributing to security in the Indo-Pacific. For instance, the United Kingdom has been the most actively involved in the region's security and proactively deploying its military assets. As a member of NATO, France may have been cautious, yet it has considerably deepened its military involvement in Asia as an individual state. Similarly, even if it is difficult to deploy direct military resources, the Baltic states are willing to engage with Asia in cyber defence, countering disinformation, and economic security.

Rather than emphasising the symbolic gestures between Asia and Europe, it should be re-affirmed that reinforcing substantive aspects of security will lead to greater deterrence against China and Russia. Such cooperation is a two-way street and thus requires reciprocal efforts from Japan.

[31] Justin McCurry, "France opposed to opening of Nato liaison office in Japan, official says," *The Guardian*, 7 June 2023.

3. China's Missile Supremacy vs Japan's Long-Range Stand-Off Maritime Fire Power Strategy

Sugio Takahashi

With the end of the Cold War, the fear of human extinction through nuclear war had passed. For over three decades, the world lived with a sense of peace, combined with economic prosperity through globalisation. It was believed that the greatest contemporary threat was extremist terrorism, as exemplified by the 9/11 attacks, and that major wars between nations were a thing of the past. However, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the world has changed. For the years to come, the world will have to live with the shadow of war as great power competition is unfolding.

Japan, in particular, is facing one of the most challenging security environments in the world. China, backed by its rapid economic growth, has drastically expanded its military forces. North Korea has consistently pursued nuclear and missile development since the end of the Cold War and may have already deployed nuclear missiles within the range of Japan. Russia, following its invasion of Ukraine, has been increasingly assertive in military activities in East Asia.

For a long time, Japan was the world's second-largest economy after the US – i.e., the largest economy in East Asia. In those days, it was a sensible measure of restraint by an economic superpower to set defence spending at less than 1% of GDP. Today, however, Japan is no longer the largest economy in the region. It has been overtaken by China, and the gap between the two countries is now more than three times as large. At the end of the day, the reason why Japan has had to boost its defence spending is largely attributed to the fact that GDP growth has plateaued as the security environment has been deteriorating.

Establishing a deterrent in such a severe security environment would be a tough undertaking. This paper attempts to explain Japan's defence strategy for this challenging period by analysing the "Theory of Victory" of China and Japan, and the prioritised area of defence capabilities to reconstruct deterrence in East Asia.

3.1. Theory of Victory

The concept of the "Theory of Victory" has always been at the centre of military strategists' attention. It explains "how to fight" to achieve one's objectives after deterrence has failed and the war has broken out. In national security affairs, strategies form a hierarchical structure: grand strategy, military strategy, and operational planning. The Theory of Victory positions itself between military strategy and operational planning.

Once a strategic planner has constructed a Theory of Victory, they proceed to clarify which capabilities and platforms are essential to their strategy and thus identify priorities of defence investment. In the competitive world of today, strategy formulation should be an interactive process between major countries. Hence, it is necessary to design one's own Theory of Victory while taking into account that of the competitor.

In the case of Japan, China's Theory of Victory – since it is a major counterpart in the great power competition – needs to be considered. In this context, it should be obvious that the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) military strategy is aimed at Taiwan's "unification." Therefore, China's Theory of Victory would guide its military operations to invade Taiwan.

To conduct such an operation, the PLA needs to send landing forces across the Taiwan Strait, which is quite difficult to conduct across the ocean while retaining control of the islands thereafter. Furthermore, ground troops cannot cross the straits on their own and need to be carried aboard ships. If these vessels are destroyed, so will the ground combat troops before they even have an opportunity to engage with the enemy. They are easily detectable and thus vulnerable targets for anti-ship missiles (unlike the ground forces in trenches). Even if they have managed to cross the sea, they are confronted with the second tier of challenges: to land ashore under attack from the defence forces waiting for them at the

site; build a beachhead to secure their base; and move inland. China's Theory of Victory should, therefore, devise the winning formula to make such a venture possible.

The minimum prerequisite for the success of an amphibious landing operation is to gain air superiority. In the case of the US, which has multiple supercarriers, air superiority can be acquired by naval aviation. China, however, has a limited number of aircraft carriers, which makes it impossible to secure air superiority in the same manner. Ergo, the PLA must neutralise American aircraft carriers and ground-based air force to prevent the US from having air superiority. For this reason, China has deployed numerous ballistic and cruise missiles that will allow it to conduct precise strikes against Taiwanese and Japanese radar and runways of air bases.[32] If the PLA missile forces can destroy the US aircraft carriers or deny them passage to the Taiwan Strait, it will secure air superiority.

Having accomplished that, China will try to control the Taiwan Strait and the East China Sea so that its own navy carrying landing forces can safely cross the Strait. Absent air superiority, the defending side can conduct anti-ship strikes from both surface ships and submarines. The latter, therefore, need to be destroyed with aircraft, maritime patrol aircraft, and anti-submarine vessels.

Only after securing sea control of the Taiwan Strait and the vicinity of the East China Sea, the PLA will be able to launch amphibious operations. Although Taiwan's ground-based anti-ship missiles will attempt a denial strike against the amphibious ships, the PLA would utilise both manned and unmanned aircraft to neutralise them. The PLA Navy will then need to sweep mines.

China's Theory of Victory can be summarised as follows. First, to gain air superiority, China will destroy US forward-deployed air bases with ballistic and cruise missiles and neutralise US aircraft carriers with anti-ship ballistic missiles.

[32] Department of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2021. Annual Report to Congress* (Washington DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, November 2021), 60-63.

Next, the PLA will also seek to gain control at sea. Supported by space and cyber capabilities throughout the entire process, the amphibious landing force would eventually push across the Taiwan Strait and win the ground war in Taiwan.[33]

The mission will depend on China's ability to gain air superiority and neutralise both the air bases and aircraft carriers with its ballistic and cruise missiles. However, a missile attack in and of itself is a means of China's military strategy – not its objective. China's military operation will not achieve its political goals – i.e., "reunification" with Taiwan – without air superiority and sea control, as well as a successful landing operation following them. China's objective is to physically change the status quo by sending ground troops through the Taiwan Strait – and not to destroy airbases. This clarification of "means" and "objectives" is an important premise for the Theory of Victory as defined by both Japan and the US-Japan alliance. Even if Japan and the US have failed to stop the Chinese missile attack itself, the US and Japan could, nonetheless, prevent China from achieving its strategic objective in the case of the Taiwan Strait conflict.

China's objective is to physically change the status quo by sending ground troops through the Taiwan Strait

3.2. Japanese Perspective

As illustrated above in great detail, China's Theory of Victory is rather straightforward. First, China will launch the first strike against the US air power with ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles and anti-ship ballistic missiles. Then, it will follow with the operations to establish air superiority and control the waters near the Taiwan Strait. Finally, the PLA landing force would start pushing across the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, the priority for both Japan's and the US-Japan alliance's Theory of Victory is to prevent China from establishing air superiority and command of the sea, as well as to disrupt an amphibious landing operation.

[33] Ian Easton, *The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia* (Amazon Digital Services, 2017).

Hence, the first item on the agenda is air superiority. China is expected to begin by using cruise missiles against soft targets (e.g., radar sites) and ballistic missiles against hard targets. (As ballistic missiles fall from extremely high altitudes and have a high terminal velocity with penetrable warheads, they can destroy runways and bunkers.) Even if the air bases in the Western Pacific were to be neutralised in this manner, the US-Japan alliance would still be able to prevent China from establishing air superiority by, in turn, neutralising the air bases within mainland China.

The priority for both Japan's and the US–Japan alliance's Theory of Victory is to prevent China from establishing air superiority and command of the sea, as well as to disrupt an amphibious landing operation

Effectiveness is a major challenge in this regard. The main components of the allies' current theatre strike capability are the maritime and air-launched cruise missiles. Cruise missiles have less penetrating power against hard targets because their terminal velocity is not as fast as that of ballistic missiles, making it difficult to destroy airstrips and bunkers. In fact, the US strike on an air base in Syria in 2017 was delivered by 59 cruise missiles, yet the facility regained operational capability in only a few days. If the airbases continue to operate, China will likely be able to limit the damage from a cruise missile strike by manoeuvring its aircraft into multiple dispersed airbases. Although the US has been working on hypersonic weapons capable of penetrating hard targets, the most advanced long-range hypersonic weapon (LRHW) currently remains in the research and development stage.[34]

The second item on the agenda is to prevent China from establishing control of the sea by destroying its naval vessels with anti-ship missiles. The ironclad rule for an anti-ship missile strike is to launch a large number of missiles simultaneously to saturate air defence. The third item is the denial of amphibious landing operations, which is achieved with two specific missions and implies attacking the landing convoys, the landing force's equipment, and supply depots. For the first mission – as well as for sea denial– capabilities for the saturated anti-ship missile strike are essential. For the second mission, long-range cruise missiles play a decisive role against the logistic depot-like fixed targets.

This structured agenda adds clarity to Japan's Theory of Victory and its goals. The quantity and accuracy of the PLA's missile forces make it difficult to prevent Chinese missile attacks. Since the Chinese air bases are dispersed, taking advantage of the strategic depth of its mainland, it would be difficult to deny air superiority by destroying the air bases. With this calculation, Japan should instead aim to prevent the PLA from gaining air superiority and sea control so that a landing operation cannot proceed.

3.3. Multi-Domain Strategy

Based on the analysis of each side's Theory of Victory, this section outlines one direction for Japan's defence strategy. Instead of directly countering China's missile strike capabilities, it suggests preventing China from achieving its objectives by strengthening capabilities that would deny command of the sea and thus make an amphibious operation impossible.

On the one hand, it is worth repeating that it would be difficult to neutralise the initial massive missile attack (i.e., the first stage) or prevent the PLA from gaining air superiority in the first stage, and it would also be difficult to stop the acquisition of air superiority (i.e., the second stage) with the currently available ground attack capabilities employed against China's air bases.

On the other hand, destroying Chinese naval forces (i.e., the third phase) is more feasible than the alternatives. An effective ground strike requires thousands of missiles (e.g., over 1 000 missiles were used in the Iraq War; over 4 000 missiles were used in the Russo-Ukrainian

[34] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget Estimates. Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Army, Volume 2, Budget Activity 4. Justification Book Vol. 2a. Unclassified* (Washington, DC: Department of The Army, April 2022), 702-710.

war as of the end of 2022). However, several hundred missiles launched simultaneously would be enough to destroy a significant number of navy vessels. Therefore, focusing on a maritime strike – rather than a ground strike – is warranted as a cost-effective option.

Focusing on a maritime strike – rather than a ground strike – is warranted as a cost-effective option

Japan's defence strategy should, likewise, focus on defeating the enemy's maritime forces. This is not to say, however, that major resources should be allocated to the Maritime Self-Defence Force (MSDF). The priority is to develop the capability for saturation attacks with anti-ship missiles from all platforms (i.e., land, sea, undersea, and air) from a stand-off position against China's air-defence system.

This defence strategy underlines two critical elements. The first one is the survivability of the Japanese anti-ship missile force against Chinese missile attacks. To this end, it is necessary to impede the process of locating the moving targets within Japanese territory for the PLA – i.e., to give China the "fog of war." The second one is to accurately determine the positions of Chinese vessels at sea. In this sense, it is necessary to develop a joint defence capability and conduct operations not only in the traditional combat domains of land, sea, and air but also in the "new domains" (space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum) to make target acquisition more difficult for China and easier for Japan.

This defence strategy could be identified as Long-Range Stand-off Maritime Fire Power Strategy. Although it is premised on the superiority of China's missile attack capability, its aim is to guarantee that anti-ship attack capabilities survive, to conduct in-depth anti-ship missile saturation attacks (from land, sea, undersea, and air), to prevent the adversary from gaining control of the sea.

Since a status quo serves to achieve Japan's strategic objective, a stalemate would be an acceptable option, even if deterrence were to fail and war to break out

Were Japan to succeed in it, the war would turn into a stalemate. The PLA would not be able to cross the sea, while neither Japan nor the US would be able to launch a landing operation against mainland China. Since such a status quo serves to achieve Japan's strategic objective, a stalemate would be an acceptable option, even if deterrence were to fail and war to break out. Furthermore, a stalemate would allow the US forces to arrive from all over the world, leading to a more favourable outcome for the allies.

This Long-Range Stand-off Multi-Domain Strategy shall emphasise four investment and policy areas.

- First, the enhancement of space, cyber, and electromagnetic capabilities to attenuate the effectiveness of China's long-range precision strikes. The goal shall be to diminish China's situational awareness. These elements are expected to make the "fog of war" for China dense. Specifically, it requires strengthening jamming and ground-based laser dazzling capabilities to blind China's space-based sensors, as well as reinforcing military cyberattack capabilities to reduce the reliability of China's networks. Thereby, China's superiority in missile forces could be undermined to some extent.

- Second, the maritime multi-layered deep missile strike posture. Either in Taiwan, the Senkaku Islands, or the Sakishima Islands, China cannot achieve its strategic objectives unless it occupies the target islands across the sea. Even if Japan's and US' facilities and assets were to be destroyed by the PLA's missiles, that alone would not enable China to achieve its strategic objectives (as missile attacks are only intended to support an amphibious invasion). Consequently, even if the missile attack itself could not be stopped but the PLA's attempts to control the sea could be disrupted, China would not be able to achieve its strategic objectives. The critical capability for this purpose is the anti-ship missile forces to conduct saturation attacks with anti-ship missiles and destroy the Chinese navy.

- Third, the air counterattack capabilities. They are intended to prevent the Chinese side from gaining air superiority in the waters between China and Japan. For the reasons explained previously, Japan and the US will have to target the Chinese air bases to offset the enemy's attempt to gain air superiority by destroying their respective airfields. Thereby, neither side would enjoy air superiority, and a saturated anti-ship strike could be conducted unhindered.

- Fourth, the response to the grey-zone activities. The first responders to a grey-zone attack will likely be the national police and the Japan Coast Guard, neither of whom would be prepared to withstand a full-scale cyber-attack, which makes them more vulnerable than the Self-Defence Forces. Therefore, police and coast guard departments responsible for such crisis management need to strengthen their resilience related to space, cyber, and electromagnetic domains at a qualitatively different level.

Having rolled out its brand-new defence strategy in December 2022, Japan prioritised "stand-off" strike forces.[35] Dwelling on this assumption, Japan's grand strategic goal would be to maintain the status quo. To achieve this goal, a multi-domain strategy – that integrates space, cyber, and electromagnetic capabilities with land, sea, and air anti-ship strike capabilities – to prevent China from gaining control of the sea is warranted. To what extent it will deter China and lead to both regional and global stability is not yet clear at this point. However, as Japan's defence budget grows, so do its chances to avoid the outbreak of war through credible deterrence posture that is based on a sound Theory of Victory and a robust set of capabilities.

[35] Cabinet and National Security Council of Japan, *National Security Strategy of Japan* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 16 December 2022); Cabinet and National Security Council of Japan, *National Defense Strategy* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 16 December 2022).

4. Deterrence and Defence in the Baltic Region

Tony Lawrence

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, was not only an attack on the sovereignty and independence of a neighbouring state, but also an indirect attack on the arrangements and architecture that have underpinned Europe's security in the past decades. Ahead of the war in December 2021, as Russian forces amassed on Ukraine's borders, the Kremlin presented demands to the US and to NATO in the form of draft treaties for a new, legally binding European security architecture. The treaty provisions included the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from Europe, the withdrawal of NATO forces and weapons from the 14 states that became members of the Alliance after 1997, and a commitment not to enlarge the Alliance further.[36] Such arrangements would effectively encode spheres of influence on the continent and degrade the independence and security of many European states, especially those located on the eastern edges of NATO's area of responsibility.

The Kremlin must surely have recognised that these demands were so audacious that NATO Allies could not accept them, even as a starting point for any serious dialogue: they were designed to be rebuffed, providing Russia with another specious argument to justify its path to the full-scale invasion and submission of Ukraine. In the event, Russia's strategic expectations for and military performance in the invasion proved surprisingly poor.[37] Rather than being greeted as liberators, Russian troops met the courageous and determined defence of the Ukrainian people and Kyiv did not, as the Kremlin had anticipated, rapidly fall. Russia failed to establish air superiority in Ukraine's airspace, failed to provide proper logistic support to its manoeuvre formations, and failed to coordinate the various arms participating in the attack. Equipment proved inadequate, and a lack of abilities and professionalism was evident at all levels of the Russian armed forces. The military prowess promised by the 'new look' reforms – initiated after the poor performance of these forces in Georgia in 2008 and demonstrated in the war in Syria and in annual command-staff exercises – was not in evidence on the battlefields of Ukraine.

To the apparent surprise of the Kremlin, the shock and brutality of the war united Western states in their support for Ukraine and boosted the transatlantic relationship to a degree that would have been barely imaginable only months before.[38] Putting words into action, a coalition of willing states has placed deep sanctions on Russia and provided huge volumes of financial, humanitarian, and military assistance to Ukraine. Contrary to Russia's intent, the institutions that have long underpinned the West's security interests in Europe – NATO and the EU – have once again become undeniably relevant. Even so, facing a Russia that is, at least in public, unrepentant about its attack on Ukraine and apparently still determined to confront the principles and organisations that hold the West together, NATO and the EU will need to adapt; indeed, these processes have already begun. This chapter looks at the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine on defence and deterrence thinking in and about the Baltic region.

4.1. The Baltic Region, Russia, and NATO

Russia is the only country that could conceivably pose an existential threat to peace and security in the wider Baltic region.[39] Baltic defence and deterrence policies and postures are thus almost exclusively directed towards Russia. This is by no means a new position. Since the restoration of their independence, the Baltic states' foreign, security, and defence policy discourse has been dominated by consideration of the

[36] Stefan Meister, "The Future of European Security – What Does Russia Want?" *German Council on Foreign Relations*, 17 January 2022.

[37] Robert Dalsjö, Michael Jonsson, and Johan Norberg, "A Brutal Examination: Russian Military Capability in Light of the Ukraine War," *Survival*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (2022): 8-13.

[38] Lauren Speranza, "American Leadership in NATO: A Rocky Return but a Firm Future," *ICDS*, 1 December 2021.

[39] Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, *International Security and Estonia 2023* (Tallinn: Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, 2023), 11.

threat posed by Russia, often to the point of going against the grain of attitudes and policies prevalent in other European states. For example, Estonia's 2010 National Security Concept stressed Russia's preparedness to use military force and energy supplies to achieve its foreign policy goals, while NATO's Strategic Concept, issued in the same year, sought a "true strategic partnership" with Russia.[40]

Russia's self-image is that of a strong and important great power in a world of competing great powers. It believes it should expect smaller neighbouring states to accept limits on their sovereignty to serve its own interests. It regards military force as a legitimate means of imposing its will, as was evident, for example, in its war against Georgia in 2008, its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, and its aggression in eastern Ukraine from the same year. In the Baltic region and elsewhere, Russia has also frequently deployed military instruments below the threshold of war to spread fear and instability, for example, by harassing commercial and military shipping, and violating Baltic airspace with military aircraft.[41]

Despite Russia's poor performance in Ukraine and the enormous losses of personnel and equipment it has sustained there, policy makers in the Baltic states are clear that there is a continuing military threat to their own sovereignty.[42] However, the three states themselves have the capacity to mount only a limited defence against the military threat Russia presents. Their small economies and the complex defence requirements imposed by their vulnerable geographical location make it difficult – perhaps unrealistic – for them to develop the capability to defend against, and thus credibly deter, a large-scale Russian attack alone. All three states have defence concepts prescribing that their defence forces should at least be able to buy time for Allied reinforcement if they are attacked (initial self-defence capability), but since joining NATO in 2004, the overall deterrence posture they have presented to Moscow has been heavily dependent on the understanding that NATO Allies will unquestionably come to aid them militarily if needed. In other words, deterrence in the Baltic region depends greatly on the credibility of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.[43]

Deterrence in the Baltic region depends greatly on the credibility of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty

Russia's slide into authoritarianism at home and aggression abroad under the leadership of President Putin has been an important factor in steadily persuading the whole Alliance to also take the threat Russia poses more seriously. At a significant summit in Warsaw in 2016, NATO heads of state and government recognised that Russia's military posture and activities "are a source of regional instability, fundamentally challenge the Alliance, have damaged Euro-Atlantic security, and threaten our long-standing goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace."[44] In the succeeding years, NATO implemented several practical measures and initiatives designed to deal with this threat, including strengthening intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, remodelling the NATO command structure, augmenting response forces, improving readiness, and placing greater emphasis on the nuclear aspects of deterrence.[45]

The most visible measure, however, was the creation of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). Since 2017, multinational, battalion-sized NATO battlegroups have been deployed

[40] Government of Estonia, *National Security Concept of Estonia* (Tallinn: Government of Estonia, 2010), 7; NATO, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence* (Brussels: NATO, 2010), 29.

[41] Arelena Shala, Bradley Jackson, Johannes Hui, and Dave Sprague, "A Better Balance. Imposing Costs on Hybrid Aggressors in the Baltic States," *ICDS*, November 2022. 4-7.

[42] Arp Müller, "Estonian defense chief: Russia will attack if it knows we cannot fight back," *ERR*, 6 January 2023; Māris Andžāns, "Latvia Poised to Summon Conscripts as Russian Menace Grows," *CEPA*, 8 February 8 2023; "Wagner may test West's response by attacking Baltics – Lithuanian president's aide," *Euractiv*, 21 February 2023.

[43] NATO, *The North Atlantic Treaty* (Washington, DC: NATO, 4 April 1949).

[44] NATO, *Warsaw Summit Communiqué* (Warsaw: Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 9 July 2016).

[45] Heinrich Brauss, Kalev Stoicescu, and Tony Lawrence, "Capability and Resolve: Deterrence, Security and Stability in the Baltic Region," *ICDS*, February 2020, 6-7.

on a rotational basis to each of the Baltic states (and to Poland). These contingents come under the leadership of a framework nation (the UK in Estonia, Canada in Latvia, Germany in Lithuania, and the US in Poland) but are integrated into local forces and commanded by local commanders. NATO has been guarded in its public statements regarding the intended deterrent effect of these deployments, and it has been left to analysts to speculate about whether they enhance deterrence by denial, deterrence by punishment, or a combination of the two.[46] Certainly, they supplement the combat capability of local forces, adding around 1 500 well-equipped troops to peacetime structures, and thus forcing a potential attacker to adjust his risk calculus. But in normal circumstances, Russia far outnumbers and outguns Allied forces, including the eFP, in the wider Baltic region.[47] It thus seems reasonable to view the eFP primarily as a tripwire presence: one that conveys the message that all Allies would have a stake in any conflict in the region and that large-scale Allied reinforcement would certainly follow to restore the territorial integrity of an attacked Baltic state. Thus, the eFP mostly provides deterrence by punishment.[48]

The eFP mostly provides deterrence by punishment

4.2. Russia's War in Ukraine

While NATO's collective response to Russia's 2014 aggression against Ukraine was rapid and robust, it remained the case that Allies in the eastern half of Europe continued to take the military threat from Russia more seriously than did Allies to the west of the continent and were more ready to act to address it. For example, between 2014 and 2022, the ten central and eastern European states that joined the Alliance in 1999 and 2004 (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland; Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) increased their defence spending relative to GDP by considerably more than did the founding members – average lifts of more than 65% and only around 20%, respectively.[49] The Baltic Allies also urged NATO to do more to strengthen deterrence on the north-eastern flank, including by planning properly for the defence of the region, supplementing the land-based eFP with air and maritime components, and developing a more credible strategy for reinforcing the region in crisis. A constant concern was the so-called *fait accompli* scenario, in which Russia would use its time and space advantages to rapidly seize Baltic territory, then attempt to prevent Allied reinforcement by deploying anti-access/area denial assets (A2/AD), or simply present NATO with only unpalatable options to resolve the situation.[50]

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was not entirely unexpected by the Baltic states but was still certainly a shock in its brutality and scale. In rejecting the rule of law and international norms and values to attack a neighbouring state without provocation, Russia vividly demonstrated the utter incompatibility of its own and Western conceptions of small state security. Estonia's most recent security concept, for example, notes that Russia's goals are "to destroy and reshape the European security architecture and the rules-based world order and restore the policy of spheres of influence" and further that these goals pose a threat to Estonia that is "existential" and "long-term" and that "the military threat to NATO, including

Russia vividly demonstrated the utter incompatibility of its own and Western conceptions of small state security

[46] Alexander Lanoszka, Christian Leuprecht, and Alexander Moens (eds.), "Lessons from the Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017-2020," *NATO Defense College Research Paper* No. 14 (November 2020): 5-6.

[47] Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, *International Security and Estonia 2021* (Tallinn: Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, 2021), 45-7.

[48] Brauss, Stoicescu, and Lawrence, "Capability and Resolve," 12.

[49] Author calculations based on NATO, "Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries (2014-2022)," Press Release (2022) 105, NATO, 27 June 2022.

[50] David A Shlapak and Michael W Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2016), 6-7; Guillaume Lasconjarias, "NATO's Response to Russian A2/AD in the Baltic States: Going Beyond Conventional?" *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 21 August 2019.

Estonia and other Baltic states as members of the alliance, has increased over the past year."[51] The Baltic states have put great efforts into strengthening their defences in the past decade, but Russia's war has demonstrated that even they will need to step up further to meet the current threat.[52]

Baltic officials have also seen the invasion as a vindication of their own perceptions of and policies towards Russia and an implicit condemnation of those Western states that had allowed themselves to be misled about Russia's nature. Germany, for example, whose Russia policy was for decades based upon dialogue and interdependence through trade, has been harshly criticised by its Baltic Allies, in particular regarding its energy policy.[53] There is, nonetheless, much evidence that the 2022 invasion has had a deep impact on the threat perceptions and responses of non-Baltic Allies, too. Striking examples have included Germany's announcement of a so-called *Zeitenwende*, resulting in a series of fundamental shifts to its longstanding foreign, defence, and energy policies (albeit that the slow pace in implementing many aspects of this shift has frustrated observers).[54] Finland and Sweden, meanwhile, reversed decades-long policies of neutrality and non-alignment with their decisions to apply to join NATO (Finland became the 31st NATO Ally in April 2023, while Sweden's accession is still pending). Collectively, the NATO Allies have elevated their rhetoric. They have declared that Russia is "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area" and have agreed "significant measures to further enhance NATO's deterrence and defence posture in all domains, including strengthening forward defences and the Alliance's ability to rapidly reinforce any Ally that comes under threat."[55] This has included rapidly deploying, additional NATO assets to the territories of vulnerable Allies. Many of these deployments, however, have been on a short-term basis: some assets deployed in spring 2022 have already been withdrawn despite no real improvement in the security environment, and later deployments have seemed somewhat ad hoc.[56] For air defence, at least, this situation may be improved by an agreement at NATO's July 2023 Vilnius Sumit to deploy air defence assets on a rotational basis to the eastern flank.[57] The deployment of additional multinational NATO battlegroups to Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia, extending eFP across NATO's entire eastern flank, has been a more coordinated and permanent addition to NATO's deterrence posture.

4.3. The US and Forward Defence

The practical implementation of NATO's deterrence posture in the Baltic region depends heavily on strong bilateral relationships between the eFP host and framework nations. The investment the three states have made in these relationships, however, does not detract from the value they continue to attach to US military presence in the Baltic region. The US is, by a considerable margin, the world's leading military power. It is widely believed that US military capability and intent can deter Russia in a way that Europe's armed forces alone cannot, and thus that US commitment to the defence of Europe, through NATO, is essential for a credible deterrence posture. For the Baltic states,

US military capability and intent can deter Russia in a way that Europe's armed forces alone cannot, and thus US commitment through NATO is essential

[51] Defence Ministry, *Eesti Julgeolekupoliitika Alused* [Estonian Security Policy The Basics] (Tallinn: Defence Ministry, February 2022)..

[52] Tony Lawrence, "Accelerated Growth: Developments in Baltic Defence," *ICDS*, 12 June 2023.

[53] "Baltic states and others condemn Nord Stream 2 pipeline," *LSM*, 2 August 2021.

[54] Constanze Stelzenmüller, "Germany's policy shift is real but still falls short," *The Financial Times*, 13 February 2023.

[55] NATO, "Vilnius Summit Communiqué. Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Vilnius 11 July 2023," Press Release (2023) 001, NATO, 11 July 2023.

[56] "Slovakia to lose Patriot battery," *The Slovak Spectator*, 11 January 2023; "Spain to send NASAMS air defense systems to Estonia in April" *ERR*, 14 February 2023.

[57] NATO, "Vilnius Summit Communiqué."

this translates into a desire for US boots on the ground, contributing to forward defence in the region. Recent decisions to enhance rotational, but relatively small deployments of US troops to the Baltic region have thus been welcomed.[58]

While the Allies are undoubtedly united in their resolve, it is less clear that they share a common understanding of the practical means needed

Overall, though, while the Allies are undoubtedly united in their resolve to deter Russia, it is less clear that they yet share a common understanding of the practical means needed to significantly strengthen NATO's deterrence posture. As far as the Baltic region is concerned, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have essentially rejected the tripwire deterrence posture that NATO has had in place since the deployment of eFP in 2017. They regard it as simply unacceptable for Russia's lawlessness and brutality in Ukraine – its massacre of civilians, its careless disregard for the environment, property, and infrastructure – to be repeated in their own states. Nor do they accept that their territorial integrity should be restored by NATO counter-offensives, rather they demand that it should be defended from the start. They have thus advocated a shift to a policy of deterrence by denial, or "forward defence."[59] In practice, they argue, this would mean more defence capability in the Baltic region.

4.4. Enhancing Deterrence

The three states thus sought agreement at NATO's 2022 Madrid Summit to improvements to NATO's posture in the Baltic region, including measures such as divisional structures established in each state, forward-deployed enablers (especially air defence assets), forward-deployed Allied brigades built upon the existing eFP battalions, the specific allocation of Allied forces to reinforce the region in times of crisis and war, and the prepositioning of stocks and ammunition, as well as enhancements in the air and maritime domains.

For their part, the three states committed to increase defence spending to further develop their own armed forces and to ensure appropriate levels of host nation support for deployed forces (for example, all three Baltic states are enlarging training areas or building new ones to provide training opportunities for the higher-level formations of their own and visiting armed forces). Estonia has already announced the creation of a "divisional structure under the framework of NATO" which will command Estonia's two infantry brigades and other local units, as well as an assigned UK brigade.[60] Allies have also deployed enablers to the Baltic region, although this too has so far mostly been on a short-term basis, for example to support training and exercises.[61]

The strengthening of the eFP deployments to brigade level has, however, proved somewhat more problematic. The relevant paragraph from the Madrid summit declaration states that

> Allies have committed to deploy additional robust in-place combat-ready forces on our eastern flank, to be scaled up from the existing battlegroups to brigade-size units *where and when required*, underpinned by credible rapidly available reinforcements, prepositioned equipment, and enhanced command and control.[62]

This is clearly a compromise text. In its implementation, it has been interpreted differently by the Baltic states on the one hand, who have sought the permanent forward deployment of combat-ready forces, and by the eFP framework nations on the other, who would be expected to provide most of these forces.[63] In the case of Estonia, early indications that the UK would not be willing to meet Baltic aspirations came towards the

[58] Darlene Superville and Zeke Miller, "US boosting military presence in Europe amid Russia threat," *AP News*, 30 June 2022; Ministry of Defence, "Statement on U.S. Rotational Presence in Estonia," Ministry of Defence of Republic of Estonia, 8 December 2022.

[59] John Grady, "Baltic Presidents: 'Forward Defense' Needed to Deter Russia," *USNI News*, 30 March 2022.

[60] "Estonian government establishes Defense Forces division under NATO," *ERR*, 8 December 2022.

[61] Ministry of Defence, "U.S. High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems deployed in Latvia during exercise 'Namejs 2022'," Ministry of Defence of Republic of Latvia, 26 September 2022; "UK's Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters return to Estonia," *ERR*, 17 January 2023.

[62] NATO, "Madrid Summit Declaration." Author's italics.

[63] Jacek Tarociński and Justyna Gotkowska, "Expectations versus reality: NATO brigades in the Baltic states?" *OSW*, 6 December 2022.

end of 2022, when the UK decided, rather suddenly, to withdraw the second battalion it had deployed to Estonia in an immediate response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[64] In a later joint statement agreed by the Estonian and UK ministers of defence, the UK committed to enhance the effectiveness of its existing eFP battlegroup, including by maintaining divisional-level assets in Estonia (short-range air defence and multiple launch rocket systems), periodically deploying extra capabilities and enablers, and augmenting exercises.[65] The UK also agreed to "hold the balance of a Brigade" (presumably two battalions) at high readiness in the UK, ready to reinforce Estonia and the Baltics at a time of need" – i.e., not forward-deployed but earmarked and prepared for reinforcement.[66] Estonian officials have since argued that deterrence through military capacity is more important than deterrence through permanent presence.[67]

Similarly, contrary to Lithuanian expectations and despite the investments in host nation support, Lithuania has pledged to make to accommodate deployed forces, Germany also intended that most of the brigade it has earmarked for Baltic defence would remain in Germany.[68] The differences between Germany and Lithuania in interpreting the Madrid text caused a rather heated political row in Vilnius.[69] Germany has since announced a plan to deploy 4 000 troops to Lithuania (with certain caveats) which may indicate a change of heart among Allies, but the official policy line of "where and when required" was still retained at the Vilnius Summit .[70]

For Latvia, the situation is perhaps more complex as the eFP there is the most multinational – eleven Allies contribute – and is led by Canada, for whom rapid reinforcement across the Atlantic Ocean is a harder logistic challenge. Shortly after the Madrid Summit, Canada agreed to "develop a sustainable plan […] to be able to surge a combat capable brigade [and to] work with Allies to generate these forces and to stage them appropriately."[71] Once again, this was apparently not the permanently forward-deployed brigade that the Baltic states had hoped for, although the Canadians too have since announced plans to increase their presence in the region.[72]

4.5. Prospects

Europe's defence and deterrence arrangements, including in the Baltic region, remain something of a work in progress. It is apparent that it will take some time and effort among Allies to build a shared understanding of what deterrence concepts are most appropriate in the greatly changed circumstances that have followed Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Europe's defence and deterrence arrangements remain something of a work in progress

More clarity should also be provided through the process of implementing NATO's new operational defence plans, which were endorsed by heads of state and government in Vilnius. These will be key inputs to the next cycle of the NATO Defence Planning Process and will result in new capability targets for all Allies, based on a sound military analysis of requirements.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's reconstruction will need to be funded, for which the US is likely to look to European states even as they continue to struggle to reverse the impact of the war and the COVID-19 pandemic on their own economies. The global economy, the course of

[64] Larisa Brown, "Britain to halve soldiers in Estonia force amid rising tension with Russia," *The Times*, 28 September, 2022.

[65] Ministry of Defence, "Joint Statement by the ministers of defence of the United Kingdom and Estonia," Ministry of Defence of Republic of Estonia, 8 November 2022.

[66] Ministry of Defence, "Joint Statement,"

[67] Joakim Klementi, "Decision to station Bundeswehr brigade in Lithuania no change for Estonia," *ERR*, 28 June 2023.

[68] "German, Lithuanian FMs agree to more military cooperation," *Deutsche Welle*, 11 November 2022.

[69] "Lithuanian president critical about German brigade debate: 'We shot ourselves in the foot'," *LRT*, 28 December 2022.

[70] Peter Wilke and Hans von der Burchard, "Germany ready to put 4,000 soldiers permanently in Lithuania" *Politico*, 26 June 2023; NATO, *Vilnius Summit Communiqué*.

[71] Artis Pabriks and Anita Anand, *Joint declaration between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia and the Department of National Defence of Canada concerning augmented forward presence Latvia* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 29 June 2022).

[72] Andrius Sytas, "Canada pledges to double its troops for Latvia in NATO reinforcement," *Reuters*, 10 July 2023.

the war, the Allies' different threat perceptions, China's intentions, and a host of other factors will have a role in continuing to shape NATO's new deterrence strategy and posture.

The Baltic states see the current situation as a brief window which must be urgently seized to rebuild Europe's defences before Russia's armed forces are reconstituted

It is very probable, given their geography and history, that Allies on NATO's eastern flank will continue to take the threat from Russia more seriously than Allies to its west. The Baltic states are keen to challenge ideas that Russia's war has been a strategic failure, that it has been weakened militarily, and that it poses no threat to NATO Allies – and thus to argue that Allies should increase their defence expenditure.[73] They see the current situation, in which Russian forces have been weakened and are no longer located on their borders, not so much as a pause in their perilous circumstances, but as a brief window which must be urgently seized to rebuild Europe's defences before Russia's armed forces are reconstituted. They want all Allies to spend more in order to regrow a conventional defence and deterrence posture that was weakened by the post-Cold War peace dividend and NATO's focus on expeditionary operations. But of the three eFP framework nations, the UK and Germany have stepped back from recent pledges to increase defence spending, while Canada has never come close to spending NATO's guideline of 2% of GDP on defence.[74]

Alliances offer the prospect of providing more collectively than their individual members can provide on their own. Inevitably, working together also requires debate and compromise. The Baltic states will next have an opportunity to shape the discussion in their favour at NATO's 75th anniversary summit, in Washington, in 2024.

[73] Ministry of Defence, *Russia's War in Ukraine: Myths and Lessons* (Tallinn: Ministry of Defence of Republic of Estonia, January 2023).

[74] Dan Sabbagh, "Ben Wallace steps back from Liz Truss's 3% defence spending target," *The Guardian*, 10 November 2022; Hans Von Der Burchard and Gabriel Rinaldi, "Germany backtracks on defense spending promises made after Ukraine invasion," *Politico*, 5 December 2022; Murray Brewster, "Canada still a long way from hitting NATO's defence spending target, budget watchdog says," *CBC*, 9 June 2022.

5. Hybrid Threats and Deterrence: Estonia's Case

Henrik Praks

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has led to some profound changes in the European security landscape. The military invasion of Ukraine has been accompanied by a variety of Russian non-military, hybrid-threat activities targeted against the external supporters of Ukraine. The Kremlin propaganda narrative, synchronised with its military activities, has consistently claimed that the war Russia is waging in Ukraine is actually a war against the "collective West."[75] It is, therefore, prudent to expect that such hybrid or grey zone attacks will only intensify.

Estonia has been among the staunchest supporters of Ukraine who had been lending both political and practical support to the Ukrainian nation already long before the launch of Russia's full-scale aggression that began on 24 February 2022. As of July 2023, Estonia´s military support to Ukraine has increased to over 1.2% of its annual GDP, complemented by humanitarian aid provided by the government and various NGOs.[76] In the international arena, Estonia has been at the forefront of nations arguing for tougher sanctions against and complete isolation of Russia, as well as for holding the Kremlin´s regime accountable for its war of aggression and the crimes committed therein.

Estonia – alongside its Baltic neighbours of Latvia and Lithuania – itself has geographical and historic vulnerabilities that can make it an attractive target for Russian interference efforts. It is among a small number of European countries that have a direct border and – due to its history of Soviet occupation – has legacy (energy) infrastructure connections with Russia, as well as of a large ethnic Russian community. Estonia is, on the one hand, rather used to an environment of malign interference activities, having witnessed its big eastern neighbour employing different elements from its hybrid activities toolbox since the very re-establishment of independence in 1991. Russian actions against Estonia in 2007 in the context of the so-called "Bronze Soldier crisis," for example, can clearly be classified as a case of a co-ordinated hybrid attack.[77] On the other hand, in the present context of the ongoing war, Russia can be expected to engage in hostile actions that would still have been considered unlikely before February 2022.

The purposes of this chapter are 1) to assess the current landscape of hybrid threats affecting Estonia; 2) to look at how deterrence can be calibrated to reflect the complex nature of hybrid threats and how conventional defence can support this effort; 3) to outline suggestions about how Estonia and Japan can collaborate to meet common threats.

5.1. Hybrid Threat Picture

Hybrid threats can be classified as coordinated and synchronised actions that deliberately target democratic states' and institutions' systemic vulnerabilities through a wide range of means. In particular:

> Activities can take place, for example, in the political, economic, military, civil, or information domains. They are conducted using a wide range of means and designed to remain below the threshold of detection and attribution.[78]

This chapter will look at four key domains that either are or could be targeted in Estonia by Russian hybrid threat activities below the threshold of an open military action: cyberspace, societal cohesion, border security, and energy security.

5.1.1. Cyber Domain

In cyberspace, both the quantity and severity of attacks against Estonian targets have noticeably increased since February 2022. Cyberattacks have been unprecedented in scale

[75] Tatiana Gomozova, "Putin evokes Stalingrad to predict victory over "new Nazism" in Ukraine," *Reuters*, 3 February 2023.

[76] "Ukraine Support Tracker," Kiel Institute for the World Economy, last updated on 31 May 2023.

[77] Ivo Juurvee and Anna-Mariita Mattiisen, *The Bronze Soldier Crisis of 2007: Revisiting an Early Case of Hybrid Conflict* (Tallinn: International Centre for Defence and Security, 2020).

[78] "Hybrid threats as a concept," European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, accessed on 2 February 2023.

and intensity in Estonian history, consisting mainly of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack campaigns by various Russia-affiliated groups, such as Killnet, against government, finance, transport, media, and other targets.[79] Attack waves have often been linked to specific events outside the cyberspace – e.g., decisions concerning the removal of Soviet monuments or parliament´s designation of Russia as a terrorist state. As such, they are increasingly used as a foreign policy tool, with Russia employing "DDoS diplomacy" alongside the usual angry rhetoric to express displeasure with actions by a foreign nation. However, they remain a part of the constant probing of cyber defences and overall digital resilience to find vulnerabilities that Russian hackers could exploit.

In cyberspace, both the quantity and severity of attacks against Estonian targets have noticeably increased since February 2022

Estonia´s advanced digital infrastructure means that there is no public service that does not depend on digital components in one way or another. So far, the attacks have resulted in little to no effect on everyday life and have passed largely unnoticed by the wider public. Yet, more serious cyberattacks can be launched without any advance warning as cyber capabilities remain one of the most potent, low-cost instruments in Russia´s toolbox.

5.1.2. Societal Cohesion

Propaganda and disinformation have a long-standing, prominent role in Russia´s hybrid arsenal. These information-manipulation and interference measures target societal cohesion and stability. In the context of the ongoing war, the Kremlin´s disinformation ecosystem has been struggling to reach and convince Western audiences. In Estonia, the general resonance of these Russian information and psychological warfare efforts has remained limited. Overall public and political sentiment is strongly supportive of Ukraine.

The Russian-speaking population remains the main target of anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western narratives. Similar to other Russian diasporas abroad, they are under constant information attacks by the Kremlin´s propaganda machine as this community is traditionally susceptible to the influence of the *Russkij Mir* (Russian World) narratives. This population group is, to a greater degree, prone to confusion and internal divisions with regards to their position on the war. While there is a noticeable willingness to distance themselves from the Kremlin's policies, their readiness to directly support Ukraine's fight is more moderate.

Estonia is one of the European countries most affected by the wave of Ukrainian refugees. As of late January 2023, the number of Ukrainian applicants for the temporary protection status had reached almost 3% of the overall national population, thus making Estonia´s share of war refugees proportionally the third highest after the Czech Republic and Poland.[80] Fears of a possible backlash, a rise in ethnic tensions, and social turmoil over benefits provided to new arrivals have not materialised. Public opinion surveys have constantly shown that the Estonian public remains supportive of Ukrainian war refugees, with over 70% of people approving their acceptance to Estonia.[81]

The steps undertaken by the Estonian government to counter Russian informational influence include measures against the distribution of Russian disinformation and propaganda channels in the country, prohibition of the display of symbols of Russian aggression, and removal of Soviet-era monuments glorifying the Red Army. Estonia has also expelled several Russian influence agents operating in the country by revoking their residence permits. Such enforced targeted actions are also meant to deter other potential provocateurs from engaging in pro-Russian activities. The state has, furthermore, minimised the Russian diplomatic presence

[79] Estonian Information Systems Authority, "RIA: The number of cyber attacks in 2022 was a hundred times higher than during the April Unrest," RIA, 6 February 2023.

[80] UNHCR, "Ukraine refugee situation," Operational Data Portal, accessed on 6 February 2023.

[81] "Survey: Support for Ukrainian war refugees remains high," *Estonian Public Broadcasting* (ERR), 29 December 2022.

by cutting down the personnel at Russian Embassy in Tallinn and closing consulates in other cities.[82]

5.1.3. Border Security

A shared land border with Russia brings challenges that are not limited to the military domain. In 2021, Belarus demonstrated how illegal migration can be instrumentalised as a weapon when it launched a hybrid attack on its neighbouring Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. Since Estonia is a key entry country to the EU for Ukrainian citizens escaping Russia and Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine, there is a risk that Russian security services may attempt to conduct a similar operation, for example, by mixing Ukrainian refugees traveling through Russia with migrants from the third countries. These fears have not materialised so far, but Russia retains the option of using refugees to put pressure on the Estonian border outside the official checkpoints, infiltrate its agents under the guise of refugees, or create humanitarian crises by massing refugees on the border, while simultaneously conducting information operations to blame the crisis on Estonia.[83]

As the possibility of internal instability in Russia grows, Estonia will certainly feel the implications as the country could yet be exposed to severe migration pressure

Estonia had closed its border for Russian citizens with tourist visas before the Kremlin launched its mobilisation campaign in September 2022. Therefore, the pressure from Russian citizens leaving their country has been limited. However, as the possibility of internal instability in Russia grows, Estonia will certainly feel the implications as the country could yet be exposed to severe migration pressure. Estonia has been building a fence on its eastern border for many years, but the process is time-consuming and remains unfinished.

[82] Andrew Rettman, "Estonia expels more Russian diplomats in model for EU," *EUobserver,* 11 January 2023.

[83] Anne Raiste, "FM: Estonia must be prepared for Russia to organize border provocations," ERR, 4 October 2022.

5.1.4. Energy Security

The Baltic states once used to be an energy island within the EU. As a remnant of the Soviet-era legacy, they were more connected with energy infrastructure links to Russia than to the rest of the EU, predicating Moscow's exploitation of energy supplies as a weapon. The situation has been changing in the last decade; in 2022, rapid steps were taken by the region to eliminate those dependencies on Russia. As a result, the Baltic area has nearly stopped using natural gas that originates from Russia.

However, one important legacy dependency persists and poses a serious security risk. The Baltic states electricity grid remains connected to the Integrated Power System / United Power System I (IPS/UPS) synchronous operation area managed from Moscow through the so-called BRELL arrangement, and the three countries continue to depend on Russia to maintain the stability of their electricity network. This exposes the Baltic states to the threat of Russia's attempts to destabilise the Baltic electricity systems.[84] This concern is further aggravated by the fact that in Ukraine, Russia has intensively targeted power stations and lines to apply pressure on the Ukrainian people.[85]

The Baltic states have had a long-standing plan to disconnect from the Russian system and become part of the European grid – Continental Europe Synchronous Area (CESA) – by January 2026.[86] However, Russia could decide to prematurely cut off the Baltic states from its grid – a process which, technically, could take only a couple of minutes. If this unexpected de-synchronisation were to happen, emergency contingency plans – already in existence – would be activated to connect the Baltic grids to the European grid

[84] Emmet Tuohy and Anna Bulakh, "Desynch or Sink: A Political Analysis of Baltic Electricity Desynchronization," the ICDS, 13 May 2017.

[85] One of Russia's main propagandists, Margarita Simonyan (@margaritasimonyan), "Электричество - не право, а привилегия [Electricity is a privilege, not a right]," Telegram, 11 September 2022. For more on the attacks against the Ukrainian power system, see: Tomas Jermalavičius, Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen, Andrian Prokip et al, *War and Energy Security: Lessons for The Future* (Tallinn: ICDS, May 2023).

[86] "Synchronization with Continental Europe," Elering, accessed on 7 February 2023.

in a matter of hours. (Similarly, Ukraine's grid was linked to Europe in March 2022.) However, as not all the extensive technical preparations for the process have been completed yet, this step would expose Estonia and its Baltic neighbours to the risk of power outages and skyrocketing electricity prices. Such type of a unilateral cut-off of the Baltic states from the Russian system presupposes Russia´s confidence in the independent operating capability of its Kaliningrad exclave's grid. Kaliningrad has – reportedly successfully – tested independent operation. With regards to this risk and as a result of intensive discussions, the Baltic states have recently decided to expedite the preparations and bring forward the date of the synchronisation with the CESA to February 2025 (i.e., one year earlier than originally scheduled).[87]

Russia can also aim to disrupt power supplies in the region by other means. For example, Estonia´s largest Narva power plants depend, for their operation, on the cooling water from a reservoir on the border river that Russia could drain, also unilaterally.[88] Furthermore, the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines in September 2022 revealed the energy infrastructure's vulnerability to kinetic attacks; it is impossible to protect every kilometre of gas pipelines or electricity cables, especially in international waters. In Estonia's case, the secure operation of the Baltic Connector gas pipeline and two Estlink electricity cables linking Estonia and Finland in the seabed of the Gulf of Finland is particularly important in this respect.

5.2. Role Of Deterrence Against Hybrid Threats

The nature of hybrid threats brings particular challenges to the application of deterrence theory to counter hybrid threats.[89] Hence, it is not possible to replicate similar classical stable deterrence relationships, as established in the context of nuclear deterrence, and one can never deter all possible hybrid threats. Likewise, it is not possible to deter the hostile intent of a revanchist imperialistic country such as Russia. One thus has to adapt to certain unwanted but largely tolerable activities. For example, open societies have to learn to live with some types of disinformation activities, while trying to prevent them from disrupting societies.

It is not possible to replicate similar classical stable deterrence relationships, as established in the context of nuclear deterrence, and one can never deter all possible hybrid threats

However, classical deterrence theory is still relevant when confronting hybrid threats.[90] Both deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment have an important role to perform in responding to them and in shaping the attacking party´s perception of cost and benefits, which changes the hostile actor´s calculation and thereby dissuades threatening behaviour.

Deterrence by denial requires an ability to show to the opponent that a nation can easily absorb the attack with minimal costs. In this context, a hybrid attack – be it a cyber-attack, pressure on the border, attempt to destabilise the electricity system, etc. – is either resisted or absorbed; an attacked nation is thus capable of adapting to a new environment quickly. At the core of this effort is resilience building.

Yet even the most resilient states have to deal with different challenges emanating from hostile activities. Therefore, resilience building is not sufficient on its own. For deterrence to be effective, there is a need to demonstrate an ability to impose costs on hybrid aggressors that are higher than the perceived benefits from such aggression. Here, another type of deterrence – deterrence by punishment – becomes relevant. The goal should be to target the interests and vulnerabilities of the attacker, like Russia, either in the same domain(s) that it uses for the attack or – since

87 "Baltics agree to move up European power grid synchronization target," *ERR,* 25 July 2023.

88 "Back up plans exists for Russia shut off of Narva reservoir scenario," *ERR*, 7 September 2022.

89 This chapter builds on work done in Hybrid CoE on the issue of conceptualizing how deterrence applies against hybrid threats. See: Vytautas Keršanskas, "Deterrence: Proposing a more strategic approach to countering hybrid threats," *Hybrid CoE Working Paper* No. 2 (Hybrid CoE: March 2020).

90 Thomas C Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (London: Yale University Press, 2008).

the response can often be asymmetrical – across different domains.

It is probably true that this is easier said than done. NATO has declared that hybrid operations against Allies could reach the level of armed attack and could lead to invoking the collective defence clause – i.e., Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.[91] In the real world, it is, however, hard to see how a hybrid attack would trigger a military response unless it results in catastrophic damage and casualties. Sanctions are a preferred Western way of responding to hostile activities, but they are slow to enforce and have limitations, as we see with sanctions currently imposed against Russia. The cyber domain is another possible area wherein to respond to hybrid attacks. It is no longer taboo among Western nations to speak about offensive cyber capabilities. In the end, a combination of tools (political, diplomatic, economic, financial, cyber, etc.) should have a cumulative effect.

Effective deterrence blends resilience and crisis response with the ability to impose costs on a hybrid aggressor

Effective deterrence blends resilience and crisis response with the ability to impose costs on a hybrid aggressor. Strategies to deter hybrid activities should aim to mitigate (low-level) hostile activities by denying (or minimising) their negative effect, while simultaneously aiming at fully dissuading hostile actors from high-level hybrid activities, which could potentially cause catastrophic damages.

Below are the key aspects in deterring hybrid threats.

- **Political resolve**. A hybrid threat actor has to be convinced that there is a political will to deny it the benefits thereof and impose costs. Lack of resolve or inaction can undermine a deterrent strategy from the very beginning. There is ample historical evidence that appeasement will not work. Not imposing costs on a hostile actor for antagonistic behaviour usually invites such behaviour. Reputation is a key factor in these calculations. An actor like the Kremlin does not believe in words but only in deeds.[92] Resolve partially consists of the need to display strategic patience. For instance, in order to inflict serious pain on the Russian economy, multilateral sanctions will have to be kept in place for a considerable time. Estonia has been actively campaigning, together with its allies and partners, for further restrictive measures (e.g., transferring frozen Russian assets to support the reconstruction of Ukraine) and Russia´s leadership´s accountability for the crime of aggression.

- **Communication.** Communicating – publicly or privately – the will to punish a hostile actor, even when it comes at a cost to oneself, is critical. Messaging, including that towards international partners and allies, must be consistent and clear. The same applies to communicating with one´s own population as public awareness about hybrid threats helps build a more resilient society. The new Estonian National Security Concept (adopted in February 2023) openly describes a number of domains where the Russian Federation conducts asymmetric hybrid attacks against Estonia.[93]

- **Attribution**. There is an urgency to sweep aside the perceived anonymity and immunity of hybrid actions. Adversaries often try to exploit the decision-making processes of democratic countries. The often-discreet nature of hybrid actions implies that there may not be 100% certainty as to who has committed a hostile act.[94] If these activities are conducted via proxies, attributing the patron-agent links is necessary. A state like Russia should not be able to hide behind cybercriminal organisations or ostensibly private

[91] NATO first made that public statement at its 2016 Summit; this pledge is contained also in the new NATO Strategic Concept. See: Heads of State and Governments, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept* (Madrid: Heads of State and Governments, 29 June 2022).

[92] Kier Giles, *What deters Russia. Enduring principles for responding to Moscow* (Chatham House, September 2021).

[93] John Grady, "Baltic Presidents: 'Forward Defense' Needed to Deter Russia," *USNI News*, 30 March 2022.

[94] Bernard Siman, "Hybrid Warfare: Attribution is Key to Deterrence," *Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations* Institute, 30 January 2023.

military formations such as Wagner. In 2022, Estonia joined several statements by international coalitions in attributing specific cyber-attacks against Ukraine to Russian military intelligence.[95]

- **Readiness to escalate**. When responding to attacks, the perceived constraint is the fear that such a response to a malign action will escalate into a more intense conflict. Yet, escalation can be both a necessary and appropriate part of deterrence. It may be needed to show the hostile actor that the cost will be higher than expected and that the path ahead will be even costlier. For example, when confronting ambiguous hidden warfare – a type of which Russia successfully employed in Crimea in 2014 – it may be useful to make the situation clearer by lifting it out of the grey zone. A year after the annexation of Crimea, the Estonian Chief of Defence, when asked how Estonia would deal with the so-called "little green men," answered, "[B]y shooting the first one to appear."[96] It is worth noting that Moscow is provoked not by resolute actions but by weakness.

- **Solidarity**. Combing different national capabilities makes deterrence more efficient. Especially since in Europe or within the broader democratic world, no individual state is the sole target of hybrid threat actions. Therefore, collective action in political, diplomatic, or economic domains, as well as multinational attribution or strategic messaging, is, as a rule, more effective than national efforts. In 2021, when Belarus started to apply artificial illegal migration pressure against its EU neighbours, Estonia provided various forms of political and practical support to the countries under attack. This included material support to Lithuania for building up border defences and deployment of troops to Poland to support border security operations.[97]

In Europe or within the broader democratic world, no individual state is the sole target of hybrid threat actions

- **Role of conventional military deterrence and defence**. The invasion of Ukraine serves as a clear reminder that hard military power retains its central place in the Russian toolbox. Moscow is ready to resort to the use of brutal force should the target refuse to submit to Russia´s demands. Non-military means are an addition to – not a replacement of – Russia´s military means.

Credible conventional defence posture within the framework of NATO (or other alliances and partnerships outside the Euro-Atlantic area) also plays a key role in ensuring that a hybrid conflict will not become a hot conventional war. Russia should be aware that because of the strong opposing conventional military posture, it will not, in the end, be able to achieve its ultimate goals in targeted countries by military power. This understanding should, therefore, deter Russia from using its full toolbox of hybrid tools against these countries.

5.3. Engaging Japan

Russia shows no signs of stopping its war of conquest in Ukraine and continues to pursue other aggressive policies. It is highly likely that hybrid attacks against the democratic world will not only persist but also escalate and intensify. The Kremlin will seek to interfere in the internal affairs of other states, influence their politics, inflict pain on their populations, and stoke fears in societies. Frontline states like Estonia are particularly exposed to a multitude of means from the Russian hybrid toolbox and are, therefore, the prime targets for Russian interference and pressure. A credible deterrence posture against Russia will have to include the capability and the will to withstand and respond to non-military attacks. The present environment has generated political momentum to counter all kinds of Russian hybrid threat activities and build resilience and deterrence posture against these threats. This momentum should be used to the maximum.

[95] "Estonia joins the statements of attribution on cyber attacks against Ukraine," Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 February 2022; "Estonia joins the statement of attribution on cyberattacks against Ukraine," Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 10 May 2022.

[96] Sam Jones, "Estonia ready to deal with Russia's 'little green men'," *The Financial Times*, 13 May 2015.

[97] "Estonia sending almost 100 Defense Forces members to Poland," *ERR,* 19 November 2021.

The challenge posed by Russia´s war in Ukraine is not limited to Europe. Other authoritarian powers, like China, are closely following it, as well as the international community's reactions. Moreover, China uses many similar hybrid tactics as Russia does. Therefore, the present situation should also be used as an opportunity to strengthen cooperation and partnerships among likely-minded democratic countries irrespective of their geographical location.

Estonia and Japan – albeit geographically distant and of very different sizes – belong to the same community of liberal democratic states who value international rules-based order. As such, they are targeted by hostile activities of authoritarian states challenging the principles of the rule of law and democracy. The Japanese National Defense Strategy adopted in late 2022 explicitly states that:

> Japan will reinforce collaboration with Nordic-Baltic states, which are facing unilateral changes to the status quo by force and such attempts, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and are working on cutting-edge initiatives such as information warfare, cybersecurity, strategic communication, and hybrid warfare.[98]

The Estonian Foreign Policy Strategy 2030 declares that, due to increased hybrid and cyber threats, the country must continue to actively fight hybrid threats, highlight the need to increase the resilience of societies in the face of information attacks, and bolster its international advocacy role to address cyber issues.[99]

Cyber security is the most logical point of co-operation between the two states. Japan already participates in the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. Bilateral cooperation can evolve to include information exchanges about threat actors, lessons learned, and best practices to improve cyber security. Similar cooperation would be useful in areas like sharing experiences in resilience building, identifying and countering hostile disinformation, and protecting critical undersea infrastructure. By strengthening collaboration in areas of shared interest, Estonia and Japan would contribute to the rules-based international order that is increasingly under attack from authoritarian powers.

[98] Japan Ministry of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 16 December 2022).

[99] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, *Estonian Foreign Policy Strategy 2030*, (Tallinn: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has been a major factor that prompted many strands of Japan's security and defence policy debate to coalesce into a consensus about the change in both the scale and the scope, which is sometimes termed as a Japanese *Zeitenwende.*[100] With China's policy becoming ever more assertive and with North Korea's continued development of ballistic missile and nuclear capabilities, being a herbivore in the neighbourhood of aggressive carnivores has become unsustainable and dangerous.

Hence, despite the legacy of pacifism and self-restraint dominating since the end of the Second World War, Japan has finally decided to put its financial and technological muscle behind the credible deterrence posture based on long-range strike capabilities integrated into a multi-domain operations framework. In some ways, this is an even more ambitious and radical transformation than the original German *Zeitenwende*. In it, the novel approach not only enhances the range of possibilities for cooperation with other technologically advanced countries but also strengthens Japan's role in the system of alliances constructed by the United States – as exemplified by the historical gathering of the US, Japanese, and South Korean leaders at Camp David.[101]

Estonia, on the other hand, has never been short of a sense of realism about the existential threat posed by Russia, even though it has often remained cautious and restrained in labelling China as a geopolitical threat. This sense of realism has always been at the core of the measures meant to enhance national defence preparedness and ensure a clear-eyed approach to tackling a range of hybrid threats. What it lacked, however, was an equally clear understanding of the nature of the threat posed by Russia amongst some NATO Allies and partners. Russia's genocidal war against Ukraine has put an end to many naïve and misguided assessments, thus opening a door to a more robust and credible set of deterrence policies. As for China, the Alliance has started referring to the "systemic challenges" posed by Beijing, thus creating a basis for engaging Japan and other Indo-Pacific partners who are equally disturbed by China's ambitions and policies.[102]

Russia's genocidal war against Ukraine has put an end to many naïve and misguided assessments, thus opening a door to a more robust and credible set of deterrence policies

Both nations fully realise that the fundamental pillar of their security within the system of the US-led alliances demands a commitment to serious and hard work to bolster their own capabilities. Japan's new security policy and Estonia's long-standing emphasis on Article 3 of the Washington Treaty highlight this joint focus on self-defence capabilities as a basis for fair burden-sharing with their allies. This policy and the common sense of realism – along with the emerging understanding of the interconnected nature of Chinese and Russian threats to global and regional security – shall lead to a cooperative endeavour, not constrained by the vast geographical distances or disparity in size between Japan and Estonia.

Our previous research on security and defence cooperation between the two countries highlighted the opportunities in the areas of economic and cyber security, while this report underscores the possibility of strengthening deterrence in relation to both Russia and China.[103] In particular, it proposes to:

- Join efforts in advancing the establishment of a cooperative format between NATO and Indo-Pacific nations along the lines of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership and Cooperation Council and overcoming obstacles to opening NATO's liaison office in Japan;

[100] Francis Fukuyama, "Japan's Zeitenwende," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 23 January 2023.

[101] Demetri Sevastopulo, "Camp David pact eases Japan-South Korea tensions," *Financial Times*, 18 August 2023.

[102] NATO, *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept* (Madrid: Heads of State and Government, 29 June 2022).

[103] Henry Rõigas and Tomas Jermalavičius (eds), *So Far, Yet So Close: Japanese and Estonian Cybersecurity Policy Perspectives and Cooperation* (Tallinn: ICDS, May 2021); Frank Jüris, Steven Blockmans, Kazuto Suzuki et al., *Europe's Indo-Pacific Tilt: Estonian and Japanese Interests* (Tallinn: ICDS, January 2023).

- Create the Baltic-Japan security and defence 1.5 Track dialogue forum that would regularly exchange views, perspectives, assessments, and best practices across the full range of relevant topics – including countering hybrid threats, strengthening conventional defence, and the future of arms control and export regimes;

- Develop ties between the defence intelligence services with the objective of understanding the threats posed by Russia and China;

- Facilitate networking between the experts in the fields of concept development, capability planning, doctrine, and military education who are working to address the challenges of multi-domain operations;

- Explore possibilities for closer defence industrial cooperation and technology sharing between Estonia and Japan in such niche areas as cyber security, artificial intelligence, sensorics, robotics, and electronic warfare;

- Leverage Estonia's knowledge and experience when adopting NATO's standards and practices in Japan's future capability development and its pursuit of interoperability;

- Identify opportunities for participation in exercises (e.g., integrated air and missile defence, coastal defence, critical undersea infrastructure protection, etc.) where sharing of best practices and solutions is mutually enriching.

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