



Executive Summary

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STRATEGIC LANDPOWER AND A RESURGENT RUSSIA: AN OPERATIONAL APPROACH TO DETERRENCE

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Over the past century, U.S. relations with Russia have evolved from ally to enemy to strategic partner to competitor. The political landscape and national interests of the Russian Federation have changed since the breakup of the Soviet Union. As a result, relations between Russia and the United States today are strained, largely because of Russia's actions in Ukraine. Understanding Russia's intentions have been challenging and difficult in the past for the United States. This monograph argues that Russia's foreign policy is driven by four overarching factors: Russian President Vladimir Putin's approach to the world around him; the Kremlin's desire for centralized control of the population; Russia's desire to protect its homeland through an outside "buffer zone;" and an enduring distrust of the West.

Given these drivers of Russian foreign policy, deterring Russia without provoking conflict or creating a spiraling security dilemma is a difficult task. Russia's actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine have put the Baltic States and Eastern Europe on edge. The primary challenge for the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is to deter both a conventional threat and an ambiguous¹ threat as Russia works toward achieving its objectives. The most dan-

gerous scenario facing the West is a Russian advance into Alliance territory with conventional forces, but many assume this is not very likely. Alternatively, an indirect Russian approach using ambiguous warfare to fracture the Alliance and increase Russia's influence in Europe is far more likely.

In attempting to devise solutions that would address both a conventional and an ambiguous threat, this monograph theorizes that based on current force structure, NATO lacks the capability to defeat a surprise Russian conventional attack into the Baltic States or Eastern Europe, regardless of the likelihood of such a scenario. However, this does not preclude the need to enhance conventional capabilities, modify force posture, and develop additional capabilities to counter both conventional and ambiguous threats, which will in turn underpin credible deterrence against Russian aggression.

To develop such capabilities requires a concerted effort on the part of NATO, the European Union (EU), and their member states, with the United States playing a key role. Yet Washington cannot afford, through its efforts, to reassure allies to the point where they solely rely on the United States to ensure their security. Therefore, European NATO

members should continue searching for more effective ways to increase capabilities and progressively increase their defense budgets. Meanwhile, the United States and its allies must employ a coordinated, whole of government effort to address capabilities beyond the scope of the military, such as law enforcement, that are critical to addressing an ambiguous threat. Additionally, the United States European Command (EUCOM) and the United States Army Europe (USAREUR) must more effectively align their security cooperation activities to support capability development, especially through NATO's defense planning process.

In doing these things, the United States and NATO must be careful that reassurance and deterrence activities, and associated policies, do not provoke further Russian aggression, or lead to a new security dilemma. To that end, any policy or strategy toward Russia must understand Russian intentions and the likelihood of a conventional attack—balanced against the reality of potential ambiguous activities and Russian influence in Europe.

In light of the key considerations outlined above, this monograph offers the following recommendations:

- The Department of Defense (DoD) should assign, allocate, and apportion forces versus aligning them, in support of EUCOM's Theater Campaign Plan and contingency plans.
- The U.S. Army should assign a Joint Task Force (JTF)-capable two-star headquarters (HQ) to USAREUR.
- The U.S. Army should establish a rotational allocation of an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) that provides a continuous armor presence in Europe.
- The U.S. Army should ensure its units receive the requisite security cooperation, and/or foreign internal defense-specific training for conventional units.
- The National Guard's State Partnership Program should focus more explicitly on building and maintaining allies' resiliency in the face of ambiguous warfare.
- EUCOM should re-examine its theater security cooperation (TSC) process to more effectively nest efforts between EUCOM and USAREUR.
 - EUCOM and USAREUR should more effectively make use of NATO capability targets,

part of the NATO Defense Planning Process, to define the types of activities that will focus on lacking capabilities.

- EUCOM should reduce the number of exercises in order to focus on high-quality, fully integrated NATO operations.
- EUCOM should synchronize country-specific sections of its Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) with the U.S. Embassy Integrated Country Strategies.
- EUCOM and USAREUR should ensure staffs are trained, particularly those involved in security cooperation, to conduct strategic and operational planning, and to understand the nesting of national security objectives with Alliance capability targets.
- The Joint Staff and the U.S. Army should improve manning levels of appropriate staff expertise to plan and manage the inform and influence activities at EUCOM, subordinate units, and within the proposed two-star HQ.
- The DoD and Department of State (DoS) should ensure they have effective mechanisms to coordinate information campaigns, and make necessary adjustments as the information environment evolves.
- The DoD should reconsider its representation at the U.S. Mission to the EU to enhance its ability to synchronize efforts with NATO and EUCOM.
- Washington needs to build a concerted effort among interagency partners to identify areas where the United States can assist European NATO members develop capabilities to deter Russia's ambiguous warfare.
- NATO should re-examine its Supreme Allied Commander Europe's (SACEUR) authority to reposition forces in Europe.
- NATO should move toward a NATO multinational logistics capability.
- NATO should streamline the timeline for approvals of counter-Russia actions.
- NATO should reinitiate dialogue with Russia.

ENDNOTE

1. The use of the term "ambiguous" rather than the more common term of "hybrid" is discussed in Chapter 1 of this monograph and is also used in the Executive Summary.

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