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NATO's military response to Russia: November 2016 update

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Contents

Summary

This briefing paper provides an overview of NATO's military response to the 2014 Russia-Ukraine crisis. It explains the main elements of NATO's response with a specific focus on the UK military contribution.

NATO agreed at its 2014 Summit a Readiness Action Plan in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea. The plan consists of two parts: Assurance and Adaptive measures.

The Assurance measures seek to reassure the members of the Alliance that border Russia by providing a more visible military NATO presence in those nations. These include bolstering air policing and air surveillance in the Baltics and along NATO's eastern flank and a more visible military presence in these states by means of additional exercises and training.

The Adaptive measures seek to adapt NATO's force structure to strengthen the ability of the Alliance to respond to any crisis that may occur and any challenge by Russia. These include significantly enlarging the existing Response Force, creating a new 'spearhead' force of around 5,000 troops, and pre-positioning equipment in member states along the eastern flank.

The main elements of the Readiness Action Plan are:

- deployment of four multinational battalions on a rotational basis to Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland in 2017
- Response Force increased from 13,000 to 40,000 troops
- Creation of a new Very High Readiness Force (VJTF) of around 5,000 troops, to be led on a rotating basis from a pool of seven nations, from 2017
- Bolstering air policing and air surveillance in the Baltics and along NATO's eastern flank
- Increasing the number and size of multinational exercises and training among Allies
- Pre-positioning equipment in Baltics and Eastern Europe
- Establishing six small headquarters in Baltic and eastern European states
- Speeding up the decision-making for the Response force

Some of these measures were adopted in April 2014 as part of NATO's immediate response to Russia's actions in Ukraine. They crystallised into the Readiness Action Plan adopted at the NATO Summit in September 2014. NATO described it as the "most significant strengthening" of its collective defence in decades.[1] Further measures, including the deployment of multinational battalions to Poland and the Baltic States, were agreed at the 2016 Warsaw Summit.

This paper briefly examines Russia's response to NATO but a more detailed examination can be found in Library briefing paper Russian foreign and security policy.

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[1]   NATO Secretary General's Annual Report 2014, foreword

Box 1: UK contribution

- Three deployments of Typhoon aircraft to the Baltic Air Policing mission in 2014, 2015 and 2016
- Deployment of Typhoon aircraft to NATO Southern Air Policing mission in 2017 (based in Romania)
- Contribute a battle group of up to 1,000 personnel to the VJTF each year from 2016 into next decade
- Lead the VJTF in 2017 with up to 3,000 personnel and on rotation thereafter
- 4,000 troops committed to NATO exercises in 2015
- Regular deployments of company sized units to Baltics and Poland to provide reassurance and support via military training and exercises.
- Sentry aircraft conducted air surveillance flights over Poland and Romania in 2014
- Warships patrolling Baltic Sea including in 2016: two deployments to NATO Standing Maritime Group 1 for the first time since 2010, involving a frigate and a destroyer
- Contribute manpower to the new NATO Force Integration Units in the Baltics and Eastern Europe

1. Background

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed in 1949 as an Alliance of 12 nations dedicated to ensuring their collective security and preservation and intended to counter the perceived threat from the Soviet Union and later the countries of the Warsaw Pact. The main tenet of the Alliance is Article 5 of the Washington Treaty which states unequivocally that an armed attack against one or more members shall be considered an attack against them all. It is a political and military alliance and all decisions are taken by consensus. NATO does not maintain armed forces of its own. It currently has 28 members from North America and Europe and will shortly expand to 29 with the accession of Montenegro.

> NATO formed in 1949 as an Alliance of 12 nations.

1949-2014

From its inception in 1949 through the Cold War, NATO looked eastwards to the Soviet Union. That focus shifted in the 1990s to more pro-active military engagement in Europe and, in this century, to out of area operations in Afghanistan, Libya and at sea off the Horn of Africa.

NATO's perception of Russia changed dramatically after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Over the last 20 years NATO has, from its perspective, worked for closer cooperation and trust with Russia. NATO and Russia signed the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act in which they declared themselves not as adversaries. In 2002 they established the NATO-Russia Council with representatives from all members of the Alliance.

Post-2014

However Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 changed that dynamic. NATO responded by suspending all practical cooperation between NATO and Russia and immediately took action to boost its air defence and air surveillance capabilities.[2]

> Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 prompted NATO to refocus on its core task: the collective defence of its 28 members.

Russia's actions in Ukraine prompted NATO to refocus on its core task: that of the collective defence of the Alliance. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, then Secretary-General, described Russia's actions in March 2014 as a "wake-up call."[3] Ahead of the NATO Summit in September 2014 he said "we are faced with the reality that Russia considers us an adversary and we will adapt to that situation."[4] Michael Fallon, the Secretary of State for Defence, described Russia as choosing a path of "competition with the West rather than partnership."[5]

Russia dominated the agenda of the NATO Summit, held in Newport in Wales in September 2014.[6] The Summit Declaration stated:

> Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine have fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace.[7]

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[2]   Doorstep statement by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 16 April 2014
[3]   "NATO says Russia has big force at Ukraine's border, worries over Transdniestria", *Reuters,* 23 March 2014
[4]   Secretary-General pre-summit press conference, 1 September 2014
[5]   HC Deb 2 July 2015 c1674
[6]   See Library briefing paper NATO Wales Summit 2014, SN06947, 25 July 2014
[7]   Wales Summit Declaration, 5 September 2014

The most significant action was the approval of the Readiness Action Plan. The new Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, described the Plan as the "most significant strengthening of our collective defence in decades."[8]

Russia topped the agenda at the 2016 Summit, held in Warsaw in July. The Summit Communiqué described Russia's aggressive actions as "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." It identified Russia's ongoing annexation of Crimea; the violation of sovereign borders by force; provocative military activities near NATO borders, large-scale snap exercises and repeated violations of NATO allied airspace as examples of Russia's destabilising actions and polities.

At the same time, the Summit Communiqué reaffirmed NATO's previously stated view that the Alliance poses no threat to Russia and does not seek confrontation with Moscow. It added that the measures it is adopting do not contradict the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act but that relations cannot return to 'business as usual'.

Not all in NATO agree with its approach. The German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, has accused NATO of inflaming tensions with Russia by "warmongering and stomping boots."[9] Russian President Vladimir Putin's narrative of Russian relations with NATO is that NATO broke a promise made after German reunification in the 1990s not to expand eastwards and that NATO needs an adversary to justify its existence and has chosen Russia.[10]

NATO suspended all practical cooperation, including the NATO-Russia Council, with Russia following its illegal annexation of Crimea. The Council met in April and July 2016.

NATO is not part of the coalition in Syria and therefore this brief does not make reference to Syria or the wider conflict in the Middle East.

Further library briefing papers on Russia and NATO can be found on the House of Commons Library website under International Affairs/Russia. In particular:

- Russian foreign and security policy, CBP-7646, 5 July 2016
- UK Relations with Russia 2016, CBP-7541, 21 March 2016

> The principle of Collective Defence is: an attack against one is an attack against all.

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[8]   NATO Secretary-General's Annual Report 2014, 30 January 2015
[9]   "German minister warns NATO against 'warmongering'", BBC News, 18 June 2016
[10] "Plenary session of St Petersburg International Economic Forum", President of Russia website, 17 June 2016

2. The Readiness Action Plan

Summary

NATO agreed the "most significant strengthening" of its collective defence in decades at its 2014 Newport Summit. The Readiness Action Plan is a package of measures designed to assure Allies, improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of its forces and deter threats. Further details were agreed at subsequent NATO Defence Ministers meetings and at the Warsaw Summit in July 2016.

Key elements are: significant increase in size of the Response Force to 40,000 troops; a new very high readiness force of around 5,000 troops; four multinational battalions deployed to the Baltic States and Poland from 2017; new, small headquarters in the Baltic and Eastern European states; more joint exercises and pre-positioning of equipment and supplies.

While primarily a response to Russia's actions in Ukraine, NATO also cites unrest along its southern border – from North Africa and the Middle East – as spurring these changes.

The Readiness Action Plan is a response to the changed security environment that has occurred since the 2012 summit, namely Russian activity in Ukraine the threats emanating from North Africa and the Middle East. The plan reflects a fundamental shift from the post-Cold War force posture NATO had adopted - of out of area deployments to the Balkans and Afghanistan - back to its former foe. This section focuses on the elements of the plan that relate directly to Russia.

The Readiness Action Plan consists of a two-pronged response: Assurance and Adaptive measures.

The Assurance measures seek to reassure the members of the Alliance that border Russia by maintaining a continuous air, land and maritime presence and military activity on a rotational basis. Initial measures included bolstering air policing and air surveillance in the Baltics and along NATO's eastern flank and a more visible military presence in these states by means of additional exercises and training. From 2017 NATO will deploy four multinational battalions to the three Baltic States and Poland to deter any potential Russian aggression.

The Adaptive measures seek to adapt NATO's force structure to strengthen the ability of the Alliance to respond to any crisis that may occur. These include significantly enlarging the existing Response Force, creating a new 'spearhead' force of around 5,000 troops, and pre-positioning equipment in member states along the eastern flank. The new spearhead force will be fully operational from 2017 and the high tempo of multinational exercises and joint training will continue.

"The Readiness Action Plan is the most significant reinforcement of NATO's collective defence since the end of the Cold War."
Secretary-General's Annual Report 2014

Members of NATO who border Russia have repeatedly voiced their fears of their vulnerability to a Russian attack, particularly the Baltic States. A study in early 2016 by the Rand Corporation suggested the Baltic States could be overrun by Russia in a matter of days.[11] This warning was echoed in a study published around the same by three former high-level NATO military commanders for the Estonian International Centre for Defence and Security. They recommended the deployment of a battalions to each of the Baltic States to provide a credible deterrence to Russia.[12] Poland has expressed similar concern about its vulnerabilities.[13]

The key elements of the Readiness Action Plan were agreed at the 2014 and 2016 Summits with details hammered out at subsequent Defence Ministers meetings.

Newport Summit 2014:

- Enlarge the existing Response Force from 13,000 to 40,000 troops[14]
- A new Very High Readiness Joint Force of around 5,000 troops
- Continuous (not permanent) presence of NATO forces in Eastern Europe on a rotational basis
- Pre-positioning equipment in eastern Europe
- New small headquarters in Baltic and eastern European states
- More joint exercises
- Decision-making for the Response force to be improved

Warsaw Summit 2016:

- An 'enhanced forward presence' of four battalions, provided on a multinational, rotational basis, in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland to act as a deterrent to Russia, from 2017 onwards. The UK will lead the battalion in Estonia.

The following sections explains each of these elements in more detail.

Box 2: NATO has no armed forces

NATO does not have its own armed forces. Member countries who participate in the military aspect of the Alliance contribute forces and equipment. These remain under national command and control until they are required by NATO for a specific purpose. NATO does own and operate some capabilities such as AWACS early warning radar aircraft.

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[11] Shlapak, David A. and Michael Johnson. "Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics." RAND Corporation, 2016
[12] "Closing NATO's Baltic Gap", International Centre for Defence and Security, 12 May 2016
[13] "Poland's warning to Russia: Russia's aggression in Ukraine changes everything", The Guardian, 10 April 2015
[14] Defence Ministers agreed to increase the Response Force to 30,000 at the February 2015 meeting and up to 40,000 at the June 2015 meeting.

2.1 The NATO Response Force and the VJTF

The NATO Response Force was created at the 2002 Prague Summit to provide a joint multinational force able to deploy in short time. It comes under the Command of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and the decision to deploy the force is taken by the North Atlantic Council.

The Response Force was formed in 2003.

Forces are committed to the Response Force by NATO Allies on a rotational basis. It was established in 2003 with an Initial operational capability in 2004. It was declared fully operational in 2006.

Allies commit forces on a rotational basis.

NATO agreed to significantly enhance the Response Force at its 2014 Summit with detailed changes agreed at Defence Ministers meetings in February and June 2015. The Response Force will now be a 40,000 troop strong joint force consisting of land, maritime, air and Special Forces elements that can rapidly respond to threats. The future Response Force, Defence Ministers said in June 2015, will be significantly larger and more capable than before.[15] Allies agreed in Warsaw to enhance its standing naval forces and align them with the Response Force to provide NATO's "highest readiness maritime forces."

2014 Wales Summit: enlarged to 40,000 troops including a new, 5,000 strong Very High Readiness Force (VJTF) to respond immediately to crises.

The Response Force consists of four parts:

1   Command and Control element: based on a deployable Joint Task Force HQ

2   Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF)

UK to lead VJTF in 2017

3   Initial Follow On Forces Group (IFFG): These are high-readiness forces that can deploy quickly following the VJTF, in response to a crisis.

4   Response Forces Pool (RFP): NATO will retain the same broad spectrum of military capabilities that it did in the previous NRF structure.[16]

Details of the assets assigned to the Response Force are available on the NATO website: NATO Response Force.

What is the VJTF?

The flagship element of the Response Force is a new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). It will consist of around 5,000 troops led by one of seven framework nations, including the UK, on a rotational basis. It is described as the 'spearhead' element of the Response Force.

NATO says the VJTF "will be available to move at the first warnings and indicators of potential threats, before a crisis begins, to act as a potential deterrent to further escalation."[17]

The 2014 Summit Declaration was relatively sketchy about the force, describing it as consisting of a land component with appropriate air, maritime and special operations forces available.[18] Further details were

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[15]   Defence Ministers statement, 25 June 2015
[16]   NATO factsheet, 9 March 2015
[17]   NATO factsheet, 9 March 2015
[18]   Wales Summit Declaration, 5 September 2014 para 8

fleshed out at NATO Defence Ministers meetings in February and June 2015.

It will be a 5,000 strong force consisting of a multinational brigade with up to five battalions. Some of these elements will be ready to move within 2 to 3 days. Leadership of the force will rotate between seven nations: the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and Turkey. The UK will lead the VJTF in 2017.[19] The UK has also pledged a battlegroup of 1,000 personnel to the Polish-led VJTF in 2020 and expects a matched Polish contribution to the 2017 VJTF.

NATO says if activated, the force will be available to move immediately, before a crisis begins, to act as a potential deterrent to further escalation. This, NATO says, will send a clear message to any potential aggressive that any attempt to violate the sovereignty of one NATO nation will result in a decisive military engagement with all 28 nations.[20]

Box 3: UK to lead the VJTF in 2017

Contribute up to 3,000 personnel including:
- Brigade HQ
- Armoured infantry and Light role infantry battlegroups
- communications, reconnaissance, intelligence capabilities
- Combat support and logistic elements

The VJTF should not be confused with the Joint Expeditionary Force which the UK is separately leading the development of with six other NATO allies.[21]

New Joint Logistics Headquarters

Defence Ministers agreed in mid-2015 to establishing a new, standing Joint Logistics Headquarters which "will enable us to move forces faster across the territory of our Alliance with the necessary supplies, equipment and transportation."[22]

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[19] Statement by the NATO Defence Ministers on the Readiness Action Plan, 5 February 2015; Statement by the NATO Defence Ministers on the Readiness Action Plan, 25 June 2015; The Government announced it would be the lead nation in 2017 in February (HCWS 252, 5 February 2015); that it will contribute a battle group in 2016 (HC Deb 8 June 2015 c898) and the details of the 2017 force in June (HCWS 53, 24 June 2015)

[20] NATO Response Force Fact sheet, accessed 28 October 2016

[21] A letter of intent by seven defence ministers on the Joint Expeditionary Force was signed at the 2014 NATO summit but it is outside the framework of NATO or any other international organisation. See "International partners sign Joint Expeditionary Force agreement" *Ministry of Defence,* 5 September 2014; PQ 208520, 8 September 2014

[22] Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, 24 June 2015

Deployment of the Response Force

The Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) has overall command of the NRF (NATO Response Force). The decision to deploy the force is taken by the North Atlantic Council.

Each year on rotation, NATO's two Joint Force Commands (based in Brunssum, the Netherlands and Naples, Italy) have operational command of the NRF. JFC Naples is commanding the NRF in 2015.

In addition Denmark, Germany and Poland have developed a Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters to provide an additional high readiness capability to command forces deployed to the Baltic states and Poland if required. Romania is providing a similar HQ for the southeast.

NATO diplomats had called on NATO to improve the speed of its responsiveness at the political level. The Netherlands Ambassador to NATO said in May 2015 "we need to shorten the decision-making processes."[23] Defence Ministers subsequently agreed in June 2015 to adapt decision making procedures to improve the speed of troop deployment. The Supreme Commander will have the authority to alert, stage and prepare troops to be ready to go once a political decision to deploy is made.

However Janes Defence Weekly reports that "serious questions hover over the alliance's ability to rapidly deploy" the Response Force and the larger follow-on force if needed.[24]

Has the Response Force ever been deployed?

Not in its entirety.

Elements of the NATO Response Force have deployed on occasion, including at the 2004 Olympics; the 2004 Afghan Presidential elections; to assist with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the aftermath of the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.[25]

2.2 Multinational battalions to the Baltics States and Poland

The headline decision of the 2016 Summit was to deploy four multinational battalions to Poland and the Baltic States from 2017. They will provide an 'enhanced forward presence' in Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to act as both a deterrent to Russia and to reassure those states of NATO's commitment to collective defence. The battalions will vary in size from 400 to 900 personnel.[26]

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[23] "Ambassador Lute's Remarks at Friends of Europe on NATO's Readiness Action Plan", *US mission to NATO*, 6 May 2015

[24] "NATO agrees deployments for eastern flank" Janes Defence Weekly, 27 October 2016

[25] NATO Response Force website, 11 May 2015

[26] "NATO agrees deployments for eastern flank" Janes Defence Weekly, 27 October 2016

The UK will lead the battalion to Estonia, contributing 800 personnel, to deploy in May 2017. France and Denmark are also contributing troops to the UK-led battalion. The UK Defence Secretary said in October 2016 the deployment is likely to include armoured Infantry, equipped with Warrior armoured fighting vehicles, tactical UAVs, and a troop of Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks.[27]

The US will lead the battalion to Poland in 2017. The US will deploy an entire battalion task force of approximately 900 soldiers from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, which is based in Germany. It will have a headquarters element; three Stryker-equipped maneuver companies with a mobile gun system; an artillery battery; and anti-tank, explosive ordnance disposal, and engineer capabilities. It will be based near Orzysz in northeastern Poland from April 2017.[28] The UK will also deploy a company to support the US-led battalion.

Canada will lead the battalion to Latvia, supported by Albania, Italy, Poland and Slovenia.

Germany will lead the battalion in Lithuania, supported by Belgium, Croatia, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway.[29]

The Warsaw Summit Communiqué said the purpose of the deployment was to:

> unambiguously demonstrate, as part of our overall posture, Allies' solidarity, determination, and ability to act by triggering an immediate Allied response to any aggression.[30]

The battalion-sized battlegroups will "operate in concert with national forces, present at all times in these countries, underpinned by a viable reinforcement strategy."[31]

Michael Fallon told the Defence Committee the whole point of the deployment is to create a "tripwire" so that "the force there does not have to wait for tension to escalate". He repeated NATO's point that the battalions are there not just to reassure but also to deter any potential aggressor that "NATO is ready to respond."[32]

'Continuous' not 'permanent' presence

NATO is careful to avoid using the term 'permanent' when discussing the deployment of troops in the eastern part of the Alliance. Instead the preferred language is a 'continuous presence' on a rotational basis. This is intentional.

During discussions of expansion in the mid-1990s with NATO, Russia sought to prevent the stationing of forces and nuclear weapons from the existing Member states on the territory of the new Member states.

[27] "UK steps up measures to reassure European allies", 26 October 2016
[28] "Carter announces deterrence, defence buildup in Europe", DoD News, 26 October 2016
[29] "NATO agrees deployments for eastern flank" Janes Defence Weekly, 27 October 2016
[30] NATO Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 9 July 2016, para 40
[31] NATO Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 9 July 2016, para 40
[32] Defence Committee, oral evidence: SDSR and the Army, 1 November 2016, HC 108 2016-17, Q233

In response, NATO stated categorically it had "no intention, no plan and no reason" to base nuclear or other forces on the territory of new members. This was made explicit in the 1997 Founding Act between NATO and Russia. However the Act does not prohibit the basing of soldiers in central and eastern Europe. The Act states:

> NATO reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces. [33]

NATO argues that the deployments of the four battalions are "well below any reasonable definition of 'substantial combat forces'. NATO argues it is Russia that has violated its commitments in the 1997 Founding Act by increasing the number of troops along Allied borders, breaching agreements which allow for verification and military transparency and broken the agreement not to use force against any other state.[34]

Russia argues the proposed deployments puts the viability of the Founding Act at risk.[35] Russia has also said it is closely monitoring NATO's actions ("building up its military presence and military activity near our borders") to judge whether they are in compliance with the Act:

> We will continue to closely monitor NATO's actions as to their compliance with the Russia-NATO Founding Act of 1997 with respect to the non-deployment of substantial combat forces on the territory of its member countries.[36]

2.3 New Multinational command and control centres

NATO agreed at Newport to set up small headquarters in six countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. They were activated in September 2015. Two further headquarters are to be established in Slovakia in 2016 and Hungary in 2017.

These are formally known as NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) and are designed to work with host nations to ensure that the very high-readiness forces can deploy into an assigned region as fast as possible. This may include identifying the logistical networks, transport facilities and support infrastructure that might be required and to coordinate training and exercises. The goal is for some units of the VJTF to be capable of moving in just two days with the help of NFIUs.

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[33] Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, May 1997

[34] "Russia's top five myths about NATO" NATO, October 2016

[35] "NATO's actions create risks to European security – Russian NATO envoy", Tass Russian news agency, 27 October 2016

[36] Remarks by Mikhail Ulyanov, Director of the Foreign Ministry Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control and Representative of the Russian Federation at the First Committee of the 71st Session of the UNGA, Russian Foreign Ministry website, 4 October 2016

Senior military personnel have previously identified concerns with moving forces across continental Europe. The UK's chief of the Army, General Sir Nicholas Carter, expressed frustration with these restrictions in evidence to the Defence Committee before the Warsaw Summit.[37] By November, Michael Fallon told the Defence Committee that "huge progress" has been made in the last two years to ensure the relevant permissions have been "sorted out" to ensure equipment and personnel can move easily across Europe's internal borders.[38]

The NFIU's will also constitute a "visible and persistent NATO presence" in the host nations.[39] They will consist of around 40 people staffed on a rotational basis.[40]

2.4 Exercises

NATO and members states have significantly increased the number of NATO-led and joint exercises and training since 2014. Member States have also increased the number of troops involved in these exercises.

The UK has significantly increased the number of personnel deployed on NATO exercises since 2011 from fewer than 700 to over 9,000 in 2016 (see box 1 for UK contributions). Exercises range in scale and level of involvement.

NATO's held over 300 exercises in 2015, including its largest and most complex exercise for a decade in autumn 2015.[41] 36,000 personnel from allied nations took part in exercise Trident Juncture to train and test the Response Force. Steadfast Jazz in 2013 was the previous exercise that came close in scale. The largest NATO exercise in 2016 involved 31,000 troops from 23 nations in Exercise Anakonda in Poland.

A list of forthcoming NATO and Allied national exercises is available on the NATO Shape website.

Box 4: Number of UK personnel on NATO exercises

2011: 695
2012: 2,510
2013: 1,715
2014: 2,090
2015: 6,250
2016: 9,075 (expected total, as of 27 June 2016)[42]

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37 Defence Committee, oral evidence, SDSR and the Army, 14 June 2016, HC 108 2016-17, q23
38 Defence Committee, oral evidence: SDSR and the Army, 1 November 2016, HC 108 2016-17, q245
39 NATO Defence Ministers Statement, 5 February 2015
40 "UK confirms lead role in NATO spearhead force", Ministry of Defence, 6 February 2015
41 "Opening remarks by NATO deputy-secretary general Ambassador Alexander Vershbow at the opening ceremony of 'Trident Juncture 2015' live exercise", NATO, 19 October 2015.
42 Letter from Julian Brazier to Emily Thornberry, DEP2016-0571, 27 June 2016

2.5 Pre-positioning equipment

NATO allies agreed to pre-position equipment along NATO's eastern border which, combined with the new Joint Logistics headquarters, are designed to address concerns about the speed with which NATO forces could reinforce any troop deployment.

The US Secretary of State, Ash Carter, announced a significant pre-positioning of US equipment while in Germany in June 2015. The equipment, described as enabling capabilities, include ISR, strategic and inter-theatre lift, command and control, special-operations capabilities, logistical expertise and assets, and precision joint fire capabilities among others.[43] During a visit to Estonia in the same month he cited the need for American rotational forces to move more quickly and easily to participate in training and exercises throughout Europe and that the vehicles and associated equipment necessary to support one armoured brigade combat team (including tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and artillery) will be temporarily staged in countries in central and eastern Europe: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland.[44]

The TACET Initiative

The UK, Germany and the US launched the Transatlantic Capability Enhancement and Training (TACET) initiative in February 2016 alongside 12 other nations. It supports the Assurance Measures of the Readiness Action Plan by supporting the training objectives of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. This will be achieved by providing subject matter expertise in capability areas such as military engineering and medical support; participation in NATO and multinational exercises in the region and rotating persistent presence forces.[45]

The UK will have a lead nation status for the initiative, alongside Germany and the US, and will take the lead on Airfield Operations; Infantry and Mechanised Infantry tactics; and aspects of Maritime Mine Counter-measures focusing on diving.[46]

2.6 The Maritime Component

The maritime element of the Response Force is provided by four Standing Maritime Groups. These consist of warships provided by NATO Allies and placed under NATO command for six months.

The UK provides the headquarters for the central command of NATO's Maritime Forces. MARCOM (Allied Maritime Command) it is based in the UK in Northwood and commanded by a British three-star admiral.[47]

These standing maritime groups are:

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[43]   Joint Press Conference with Secretary Carter, German Defense Minister Von Der Leyen, Norwegian Defense Minister Soreide, the Netherlands Defense Minister Hennis-Plasschaert in Munster, Germany; 22 June 2015

[44]   "Carter salutes Estonia for NATO contributions", DOD News, 24 June 2015

[45]   TACET press release, German Ambassador to NATO, 10 February 2016

[46]   UK to step up NATO maritime commitment, Ministry of Defence, 10 February 2016

[47]   Further details can be found on the MARCOM website.

- Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)
- Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)
- Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1)
- Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 (SNMCMG2)

As part of the immediate response of NATO to Russia's actions in Ukraine, NATO deployed SNMCMG1 to the Baltic Sea in April 2014. Standing Mine Counter-Measure Groups will patrol the Baltic Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, including the Black Sea, as part of the 'assurance' response.

The Warsaw Summit Communique said NATO's Standing Naval Forces will be aligned with the Response Force to provide NATO's highest readiness maritime forces. It also said work is underway to operationalise the Alliance Maritime Strategy.

The UK will contribute to Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) in 2016 for the first time since 2010. The Defence Secretary made the announcement at the NATO defence ministers meeting in February 2016. It will involve:

- the deployment of HMS Iron Duke, a Type 23 Frigate, from January to July 2016, operating in the Baltic sea (the first frigate to be deployed on this task since 2010);
- the deployment of a Type 45 Destroyer from October to November 2016.[48]

News about SNMG1 is available on the NATO SNMG1 website.

In 2016 three Royal Navy mine-sweepers were deployed to Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group, each for a four month period.

2.7 The US European Reassurance Initiative

The US launched Its European Reassurance Initiative in 2014 to reassure NATO allies worried about Russia's annexation of Crimea and activities in Ukraine. The US allocated $3.4bn in funds to the Initiative in FY20016/17 which will see measures adopted under the ERI moving from one of assurance to one of deterrence.[49]

Defence Secretary Ash Carter announced in October 2016 the US will deploy a persistent rotational armoured brigade team in Europe from 2017 which, he said, is "a major sign of the US commitment to strengthening deterrence" in Europe. The ERI also involves positioning equipment for an armoured brigade combat team in Europe and the two brigades already in Europe.[50]

Further details of US military deployments and exercises, including locations in Europe, can be found on the US Department of Defence website: Operation Atlantic Resolve.

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[48] UK to step up NATO maritime commitment, Ministry of Defence, 10 February 2016; PQ28576, 3 March 2016

[49] "European Reassurance Initiative shifts from assurance to deterrence". DoD News, 14 July 2016

[50] "Carter announces deterrence, defence buildup in Europe", DoD News, 26 October 2016

3. Protecting NATO's airspace

Summary

NATO air policing is a peacetime mission to detect, track and identify all aerial objects approaching or operating within NATO airspace. UK and NATO aircraft intercepted unidentified Russian planes over 400 times in 2014.[51]

UK Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon aircraft have scrambled multiple times in response to Russian activity near UK airspace. Russian aircraft have never entered UK sovereign airspace or overflown the UK without authorisation.

Allies contribute to NATO's dedicated Baltic air policing mission. NATO boosted the number of aircraft in 2014 in response to Russian activity. The UK has committed Typhoon aircraft to the Baltic air policing mission in 2014, 2015 and 2016. In 2017 the UK will deploy four Typhoon aircraft to the NATO Southern Air Policing Mission based in Romania.

2014 also saw NATO begin air surveillance missions over Romania and Poland, to which the UK contributed Sentry aircraft.

3.1 The Quick Reaction Alert Force

Quick Reaction Alert aircraft are maintained at very short notice to respond to unusual or unauthorised activity near or over the airspace of NATO members. NATO says the Russian military often do not file flight plans, communicate with civilian air traffic control authorities or use their on-board transponders. This means civilian air traffic control cannot detect these aircraft nor ensure there is no interference with civilian air traffic. NATO therefore scrambles aircraft to intercept and identify the aircraft.[52]

Allies, including the UK, contribute QRA aircraft for specific missions over the Baltics and Iceland as neither the Baltic States nor Iceland has an air policing capability – they have no air defence combat aircraft.[53]

The UK Quick Reaction Alert Force

The RAF's primary role is the air defence of the United Kingdom. It maintains a Quick Reaction Alert Force which can scramble within a few minutes to intercept any aircraft entering or flying around NATO-monitored airspace around the UK without proper authorisation.[54]

The QRA Force consists of three Typhoon squadrons based at RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Coningsby: 1 and 6 Squadron at Lossiemouth and 11 Squadron at Coningsby.

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[51]   Secretary-General's Annual Report 2014 press conference, NATO, 30 January 2015
[52]   "NATO tracks large-scale Russian air activity in Europe", NATO, 29 October 2014
[53]   Detailed information on NATO Air Policing is available on the NATO website.
[54]   RAF website, accessed 18 June 2015

Russian aircraft have never entered UK sovereign airspace or overflown the UK without authorisation.[55] UK sovereign airspace extends 12 nautical miles from the UK coastline.

However, Russian aircraft have approached or entered the NATO Air Policing Area (APA) for which the UK has responsibility. On these occasions QRA Typhoon aircraft may be scrambled to identify and intercept them. In January 2015, for example, Typhoon aircraft intercepted two Russian Tu-95 'bears' through the UK Flight Information region.[56]

The MOD has published the number of days on which Quick Reaction Alert aircraft have launched specifically against Russian military aircraft for each year from 2005 to 2014. This is contained in the table below. This table does not include QRA launches for non-Russian aircraft:[57]

Year	No. Days Launched Against Russian Military Aircraft
2005	4
2006	1
2007	19
2008	11
2009	11
2010	7
2011	10
2012	9
2013	8
2014	8
2015	8

QRA aircraft were launched once in response to Russian military aircraft between 1 January and 31 July 2016, the latest figures that are available at the time of writing.[58]

The Ministry of Defence declined to provide information on the type of aircraft and location of the interceptions. The MOD does not routinely provide information on QRA launches but does provide the information in response to parliamentary questions and freedom of information request.

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[55]   FOI 2016/3759, 1 April 2016
[56]   UK Flight Information region is outside of the 12 nautical miles
[57]   PQ 221677, 22 January 2015. The figure for 2015 was given in response to a Freedom of Information request dated 12 January 2016. QRA aircraft launched 12 times in 2015, eight of which were in response to Russian aircraft.
[58]   FOI 2016/08197, 13 September 2016

Russian military aircraft are allowed to fly reconnaissance missions over the UK under the 2002 Open Skies Treaty. RAF personnel are on board for these flights. The UK may make similar flights over Russian territory.[59]

3.2 Baltic Air Policing Mission

When the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined NATO in 2004 they lacked the capabilities needed to provide air policing. The Alliance agreed to set up an air policing mission which Allies contribute aircraft to on rotation from Šiauliai airbase in Lithuania. The current rotation is the 42nd.[60]

NATO has boosted the air policing mission in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine.

When the crisis broke out in March 2014 the US sent an additional six additional F-16C Eagle fighter aircraft to supplement the four aircraft already deployed to Lithuania for the Baltic Air Police Mission. The following month, in April 2014, NATO collectively decided to significantly enhance the Baltic air policing mission by expanding the number of bases used and the number of aircraft allocated to the mission.

Nations usually contribute three or four aircraft per rotation/mission.

From April 2014 the number of contributing nations was increased from one to four. This meant up to sixteen aircraft were available for each four month rotation.

From September 2015 the number of contributing nations has reduced to two, each providing four aircraft. France and Spain are currently leading the mission until the end of the 2016.[61]

From April 2016 two additional bases were made available: Malbork Airbase in Poland and Amari Airbase in Estonia.[62]

3.3 UK contribution to Baltic Air Policing Mission

The UK was one of the first nations to contribute to the mission when it first began, deploying Tornado F.3 aircraft in October 2004, but stopped because of other operational commitments.[63]

The Government announced on 17 March 2014 it would send four Typhoon aircraft to the mission in response to the Ukraine crisis. So far the UK has contribute to three rotations in 2014, 2015 and 2016, all of which took place between May and September. The 2014 deployment

NATO scrambled aircraft more than 150 times in response to Russian air activity over the Baltics in 2014, four times more than in 2013.
NATO

RAF Typhoon aircraft have participated in the Baltic Air Policing Mission in 2014, 2015 and in 2016.

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[59]   "Open skies – planned aircraft flights in UK airspace", MOD News, 20 May 2015
[60]   A full list of deployments is available on Wikipedia: Baltic Air Policing. This list has not been independently confirmed by the House of Commons Library.
[61]   "France and Germany take over protection of Baltic skies", NATO, 31 August 2016
[62]   Statement by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 16 April 2014; "Allies getting ready to continue NATO Baltic air policing", NATO Allied Air Command, 27 April 2015
[63]   HC Deb 6 March 2012 659W. These commitments were predominantly the UK's role in Afghanistan and Iraq.

was based in Lithuania and the 2015 and 2016 deployments operated out of Estonia.

The RAF has on occasion published pictures and information about interceptions of Russian aircraft when patrolling the Baltic skies. For example on 17 June 2014 the RAF released an account of Typhoon aircraft scrambled to intercept Russian aircraft flying in international airspace near to the Baltic States. The aircraft were: a Russian Tupolev Tu22 'Backfire' bomber, four Sukhoi Su27 'Flanker' fighters, one Beriev A50 'Mainstay' early warning aircraft and an Antonov An26 'Curl' transport aircraft.[64]

3.4 Air surveillance over Poland and Romania

NATO agreed in March 2014 to begin air surveillance missions over Poland and Romania with NATO AWACS (Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft) surveillance aircraft. The decision was made in response to events in Ukraine but NATO has said flights are restricted to Alliance territory. The UK contributed Sentry aircraft to the mission.

NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force has two operational elements:

- E-3A Component consisting of 17 E-3A aircraft in three operational squadrons. Based at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen in Germany although aircraft may be deployed to other bases. 15 countries provide personnel to the Component. Each aircraft has a crew of 16. The E-3A component is described as NATO's first integrated, multi-national flying unit, providing rapid deployability, airborne surveillance, command, control and communication for NATO operations.[65]
- E-3D Component provided by the RAF. It consists of six E-3D Sentry aircraft based at RAF Waddington and operated by 8 Squadron. Sentry is easily identified by the large circular radar antenna dish set on top of the fuselage. This is the UK's contribution to the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force. The Government said in mid-2014 the mission was expected to continue at least until the end of the year.

3.5 Southern Policing Mission

Romania has been pushing for a stronger NATO presence to deter Russia which borders the Black Sea along with NATO members Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. Romania has floated the idea of regular NATO naval deployment to the Black Sea, although warships from countries not bordering the Sea may only remain there for 21 days.[66]

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64   "RAF Typhoon intercept Russian aircraft", *RAF news,* 18 June 2014
65   NATO E-3A Component website
66   "Romania calls for permanent NATO Black Sea Force", Balkan Insight, 2 February 2016. The 1936 Montreux Convention restricts the movement of naval vessels to the Black Sea fleet. Specifically, it restricts the maximum aggregate tonnage of naval vessels passing through the Turkish Straits and a maximum time limit of 21 days for naval vessels of non-Black Sea nations to remain in the Black Sea.

The Warsaw Summit Communque cited Russia's use of its military presence in the Black Sea to project power into the Eastern Mediterranean as an example of the risk Moscow presents to the security of Allies and others. Allies expressed concern about Russia's plans for further military build-up in the Black Sea region.

As such, NATO is considering establishing further Forward Presence will be established in the southeast, focusing on the Black Sea region, with a Romanian-led multinational framework brigade. Janes Defence Weekly reports in early November that details of this "remain fuzzy", with allies awaiting a joint vision from Romani, Bulgaria and Turkey.[67]

Michael Fallon, the UK Defence Secretary, told the Defence Committee the reason for the focus on the Black Sea is motivated by an increasing militarisation of Crimea, insurgency activity, increasing naval activity through the Bosphorus, all of which is a concern to Romania, Bulgaria and other countries in the region.[68]

At the Defence Ministers meeting in October 2016 Michael Fallon announced the UK will deploy four Typhoon aircraft for up to four months in 2017 for the Southern Policing Mission. They will be based at Mihail Kogǎlniceanu Airbase, Romania.[69]

Box 5: UK contributions to NATO air policing

- Three Typhoon squadrons for UK Quick Reaction Alert Force
- E-3 Sentry AWACS (airborne warning and control system) deployed to patrol Polish airspace in March 2014
- Four Typhoon aircraft to Lithuania for Baltic Air Policing Mission in 2014
- Four Typhoon aircraft to Estonia for Baltic Air Policing Mission in 2015
- Four Typhoon aircraft for Baltic Air Policing Mission in 2016
- Four Typhoon aircraft for NATO southern Air Policing Mission in 2017

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[67] "NATO agrees deployments for eastern flank", Janes Defence Weekly, 2 November 2016
[68] Defence Committee, Oral evidence: Warsaw NATO summit and Chilcot Report, 19 July 2016, HC 579 2015-16, q33
[69] "UK steps up measures to reassure European allies", Ministry of Defence news, 26 October 2016

4. Anti-Submarine exercises

Suspected Russian submarine activity around the Baltics and North Sea has been reported by several European countries.

Sweden launched a major maritime hunt for a suspected submarine, or rather 'foreign underwater activity', off its coast in October 2014. Sweden's Defence Minister, Peter Hultqvist, was quoted at the time saying: "what's been happening in the Baltic Sea, including airspace incursions, shows that we have a new, changed situation.[70] The wreckage of a small submarine was found in Swedish waters in July 2015.

Finland dropped depth charges at a suspected unidentified submarine near Helsinki in April 2015.[71]

A UK fishing association said a Russian submarine could have damaged a UK fishing vessel off the Isle of Man in April 2015. The Royal Navy initially said that no UK submarine was involved and there was suspicion it could have been a Russian submarine observing a NATO maritime exercise. However in September 2015 the Government said that it had in fact been a UK submarine that had snagged the nets of the fishing vessel Karen.[72]

The UK's strategic nuclear deterrent is based in Faslane on the west coast of Scotland. The seven-strong fleet of Astute-class submarines will be based there when they all enter service. The UK's remaining four Trafalgar-class submarines are based in Devonport on the south coast of England.

The Government does not comment on matters relating to submarine activity and has not responded to questions about suspected Russian submarine activity around UK waters.[73] When asked for information on the number of incursions into UK territorial waters by foreign vessels in recent years. Mark Francois, then Armed Forces Minister, said:

> The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is just one organisation with a role in the security of the United Kingdom's (UK) territorial waters. To reflect this cross-Government responsibility, under the UK National Strategy for Maritime Security, a Ministerial working group, chaired by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has been established to focus on maritime security in its entirety.

> Through the coordination of intelligence and information the National Maritime Information Centre (NMIC) provides the UK with a comprehensive picture of potential threats to UK maritime security and unified situational awareness of maritime activity in UK and international waters.

> The MOD contributes to HMG's efforts by providing multi-layered capability to deter incursions into territorial waters. This is delivered through a combination of surface ships, submarines and

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[70]   "Sweden searches for suspected Russian submarine off Stockholmx`", The Guardian, 19 October 2014

[71]   "Finland drops depth charges in 'submarine' alert", BBC News, 28 April 2015

[72]   HCWS177, 7 September 2015

[73]   PQ 1737, 15 June 2015

> aircraft, alongside close co-ordination and co-operation with other Government Agencies and our allies.
>
> I am not prepared to disclose further details as this would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.[74]

Michael Fallon cited submarine activity in a list of examples of 'Russian aggression', alongside long-range aviation and the Carrier task group that sailed past the UK in October 2016.[75]

NATO held a major anti-submarine exercise in the North Sea in May 2015. Exercise Dynamic Mongoose involved over a dozen vessels and four submarines from 11 countries, including non-NATO member Sweden. The two-week exercise took place in Norwegian waters and involved Royal Navy frigate HMS Portland. It is an annual exercise.[76] The UK will contribute two frigates to the 2016 Exercise Dynamic Mongoose.

[74]   PQ 218391, 24 March 2015
[75]   Defence Committee, oral evidence: SDSR and the Army, 1 November 2016, HC 108 2016-17, q234
[76]   "Anti-submarine warfare exercise 'dynamic mongoose' starts off Norwegian coast", NATO, 4 May 2015; "NATO's 'Dynamic Mongoose': hunting for submarines", BBC News, 14 May 2015

5. Russia's response

Russia has long blamed NATO for breaking perceived promises Moscow believes NATO made after German reunification in 1989 and in the early 1990s to not expand further.[77]

Vladimir Putin cited NATO's subsequent incorporation of former Warsaw Pact countries, the Baltic States and former Soviet Republics when justifying Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. More recently, in a speech in June 2016, Putin accused the US and its allies of using the Ukrainian crisis to "justify the existence of the North Atlantic bloc" arguing "they need an external adversary, an external enemy, otherwise what's the purpose of this organization? There is no Warsaw Pact, no Soviet Union, so whom is it directed against?"[78]

Russia published a new military doctrine in 2014. NATO tops the list of main external risks to Russia, specifically the build of the power potential of NATO, the deployment of military infrastructure of NATO members near the border of the Russian federation and further expansion of the Alliance as the first in its list of main external military risks to Russia. It also identified the build-up of military forces of foreign states in the territories of states contiguous with the Russian federation, and the establishment of strategic missile defence systems. Moscow published an update to its 2001 Maritime Doctrine in 2015 which specifically sets targets for "developing infrastructures" for Russia's fleet in Crimea and also calls for "accelerated reconstitution and completion of strategic Russian positions" in the Black Sea. It also puts a renewed emphasis upon the Atlantic and the Arctic.

Russia has embarked on a major military modernisation programme. The 'Closing NATO's Baltic Gap' report observes that some of the most capable formations in Russia's Armed Forces are located in the Western Military District with many units positioned in the immediate vicinity of the Baltic States. NATO points to a more military assertive Russia, witnessed not just in the events in 2014 in Crimea and eastern Ukraine but with an increase in military exercises and military activity along NATO's borders, including long-range aircraft flying near UK airspace.[79] A Russian Carrier Group sailed through UK waters on its way to the Mediterranean to support Russian operations in Syria in October 2016, prompting much concern among the UK media.[80]

Russia has significantly increased its military firepower in Kaliningrad. This is a Russian enclave between Poland and Lithuania and is home to Russia's Baltic fleet. It has deployed Iskander nuclear-capable missiles, military aircraft, ground forces and associated equipment in the enclave. NATO argues these are defensive measures to counter the threat of

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[77]   Contemporary accounts of Russian opposition to NATO's expansion in the 1990s is available in House of Commons Library Research Paper, NATO Enlargement, 97/51, 8 May 1997
[78]   Andrew T. Wolff explores the history of NATO-Russia tension over expansion in an article in International Affairs, September 2015.
[79]   See Library Briefing Paper *NATO's military response to Russia* for specific examples.
[80]   "Here comes the Royal Navy", Daily Mail, 20 October 2016

NATO. President Putin has dismissed NATO fears of a Russian invasion of the Baltic States as "absolute nonsense" and dismissing the idea Russia would use nuclear weapons to take over the Baltics.[81]

House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Russian foreign and security policy, CBP-7646, 5 July 2016 provides detailed analysis of how Russian foreign policy is made and the motives behind it.

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[81] "Interview to Bloomberg", President of Russia website, 1 September 2016. Former senior NATO commander General Sir Richard Shirreff's book 'War with Russia in 2017' outlined a scenario in which Russia plans to invade the Baltic States and then threaten nuclear action if NATO threatens to intervene or respond.

6. Further material

Library briefing papers

The Library has produced a number of briefing papers on the Ukraine crisis. These are collated on the Library's website under Russia. Briefings on NATO can also be found on the Library's website under NATO.

Briefing Paper Russian foreign and security policy, CBP-7646, 5 July 2016 provides detailed analysis of how Russian foreign policy is made and the motives behind it.

Briefing Paper UK Relations with Russia 2016, CBP-7541, 21 March 2016 examines the UK's relationship in light of the findings of the Litvinenko Inquiry and the Government's assessment of Russia in the 2015 National Security Strategy. The latter is the subject of a separate briefing paper The 2015 National Security Strategy, CBP-7431.

Information on Russia's military modernisation programme can be found in section 5 of Library Briefing Paper Russia and Ukraine – update June 2014. A detailed historical analysis is provided in Russia's military posture, published in April 2009 which is currently being updated.

Written Statements

5 February 2015: Announcing the contribution to Baltic Air Policing Mission in 2015; to become part of the VJTF framework nation roster and lead the VJTF in 2017 (HCWS252).

24 June 2015: Announcing offer of a battlegroup of 1000 personnel to VJTF in 2020; offer of Typhoon aircraft to Baltic Air Policing Mission in 2016 (HCWS53)

Parliamentary debates

8 September 2014: NATO Summit

5 February 2015: Russia: Armed Forces (House of Lords)

10 February 2015: Ukraine

2 March 2015: Defence and Security Review (NATO)

6 July 2016: 2014 NATO Wales Summit

11 July 2016: NATO Warsaw Summit

Committee reports

Defence Committee Reports can be found on the Defence Committee's website. Of particular relevance are:

- Russia: implications for UK defence and security, 5 July 2016, HC 107 2016-17
- Towards the next Strategic Defence and Security Review: Part Three, 25 March 2015, HC 1127 2014-15
- Re-thinking defence to meet new threats, 24 March 2015, HC 512 2014-15
- Towards the next Defence and Security Review: NATO: Government response, 27 October 2014, HC 681 2014-15

- Towards the next Defence and Security Review: NATO, 31 July 2014, HC 358 2014-15

NATO statements and links

2 March 2014: North Atlantic Council statement on situation in Ukraine

16 April 2014: Secretary-General statement

5 September 2014: Wales Summit 2014 Declaration

5 February 2015: Defence Ministers Statement on Readiness Action Plan

25 June 2015: Defence Ministers Statement on Readiness Action Plan

9 July 2016: Warsaw Summit Communiqué

NATO-Russia relations website and NATO Allied Command Operations

Appendix: Article 5

Article 5 of the Washington Treaty states "the parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." It does not commit Allies to military action but states that each member will assist the Party or Parties attacked by taking "such action as it deems necessary".

Article 5 states:

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

> Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.[82]

NATO reaffirmed its commitment to Article 5 in its Wales Summit Declaration, stating:

> The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend our territories and our populations against attack, as set out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.[83]

US Defence Secretary Ash Carter sought to reassure the Baltic members of the Alliance of the American commitment to Article 5. In comments made during a visit to Estonia in July 2015 he said:

> The United States and the rest of the NATO alliance are absolutely committed to defending the territorial integrity of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, just as we are committed to defending all NATO allies.[84]

Russia's use of hybrid warfare in Ukraine prompted much pre-summit discussion of whether such an attack could trigger Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The Summit Communiqué states that that Article 5 could be invoked in response to a hybrid campaign, noting that the primary responsibility to respond to a hybrid threat or attack rests with the targeted nation, assisted at any stage if needed by NATO. It adds that the Alliance will be prepared to counter hybrid warfare as part of collective defence.

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[82]   A full copy of the Treaty can be accessed online at:
       http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/treaty.htm
[83]   Wales Summit Declaration, 5 September 2014
[84]   "Carter salutes Estonia for NATO contributions", *DOD News,* 24 June 2015