House of Commons

Defence Committee

Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO

Third Report of Session 2014–15

HC 358

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Third Report of Session 2014–15

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The Defence Committee

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Summary and recommendations

For more than a decade NATO has seen terrorism and "failed states" as the central security threat. That threat remains. But the Russian annexation of Crimea and the continuing violence in Ukraine have been a stark reminder of NATO's responsibilities in Europe. They pose fundamental questions about NATO's ability to respond to Russian aggression against its neighbours, and NATO's ability to uphold its obligations to defend NATO member states.

Our visit to Estonia and Latvia, as North Atlantic Treaty countries, highlighted how Russian actions have given NATO a new relevance. Whatever the probability of a further Russian threat to NATO countries—and our witnesses differ on that—there is no doubt that Eastern European nations feel that the threat is very real. It has encouraged them to make fresh commitments to reach 2 per cent of Defence Spending. This new focus provides a unique opportunity for NATO to re-establish its centrality and relevance. The NATO Summit in Newport in September must ensure that it addresses the threat from Russia, and take the opportunity provided to reshape NATO.

Whatever the likelihood of a Russian attack on the territory of NATO countries, NATO is obliged to have a detailed contingency plan for such a scenario. The territorial defence of NATO members in Europe was the founding rationale for NATO. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty requires that an armed attack on one NATO State is treated as an attack upon them all. This report, therefore, focuses on NATO preparedness for a Russian threat.

Our conclusion is that NATO is currently not well-prepared for a Russian threat against a NATO Member State. A Russian unconventional attack, using asymmetric tactics (the latest term for this is "ambiguous warfare"), designed to slip below NATO's response threshold, would be particularly difficult to counter. And the challenges, which NATO faces in deterring, or mounting an adequate response to, such an attack poses a fundamental risk to NATO's credibility.

This Report focuses narrowly on NATO, Article 4 and 5 obligations, Ukraine, and the Baltic States, rather than the more general debate about Russia and global security threats. We have chosen this focus because the NATO conference will be hosted by the UK in September; because this is of central concern to Eastern European NATO members; because the attack on Ukraine has raised the possibility—however currently unlikely—of an attack, conventional or unconventional, on a NATO Member State in the Baltics, potentially requiring an Article 5 response; and because such a response would be challenging and requires significant adaption from the UK and NATO.

The report begins with an analysis of Russia: its conventional forces, its new approach to asymmetric warfare, and its apparent intentions. It then considers NATO's preparedness to respond, first to the less likely scenario of a conventional Russian attack, then to the scenario of an asymmetric attack. It concludes that NATO is poorly prepared for either scenario, and suggests urgent steps that would need to be taken to meet these challenges.

Our specific concerns about NATO's deficiencies in its ability to respond to a conventional attack include:-

- Shortcomings in NATO's ability to foresee and to give adequate warning of such an attack;
- Shortcomings in NATO's command and control structures; and
- Questions about the public's readiness to honour the Article 5 commitment.

Russia's use of "next generation warfare" tactics also poses a range of questions for NATO, including

- Whether Article 5 is sufficient to ensure that the collective defence guarantee will come into effect in the face of asymmetric attacks;
- Whether NATO has the right tools to address the full breadth of threats, including information warfare, psychological operations and, in concert with the EU, exertion of influence through energy and trade policy; and,
- Whether NATO has the ability to effectively counter the threat of cyber attack from Russia and to mount its own offensive cyber operations.

We are also concerned that events in Ukraine seem to have taken the UK Government by surprise, that the capacity for analysis and assessment of developments in Russia and for understanding and responding to the current Russian way of warfare appears to have been seriously degraded in recent years.

Recommendations

The NATO alliance has not considered Russia as an adversary or a potential territorial threat to its Member States for twenty years. It is now forced to do so as a result of Russia's recent actions. Events in Ukraine this year, following on from the cyber attack on Estonia in 2007 and the invasion of Georgia by Russia in 2008, are a "wake-up call" for NATO. They have revealed alarming deficiencies in the state of NATO preparedness, which will be tough to fix. The UK Government should take the lead in ensuring that the NATO Summit addresses these threats in the most concrete and systematic fashion.

We recommend that the NATO Summit sets plans to ensure:

- dramatic improvements to the existing NATO rapid reaction force;
- the pre-positioning of equipment in the Baltic States;
- a continuous (if not technically 'permanent') presence of NATO troops, on training and exercise in the Baltic;
- the re-establishment of large-scale military exercises including representatives from all NATO Member States. These exercises must involve both military and political decision-makers;

- the establishment of headquarters structures, at divisional and corps level, to focus on Eastern Europe and the Baltic;
- consideration of the re-establishment of a NATO standing reserve force along the lines of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force–Land, involving all Member States; and,
- re-examination of the criteria, doctrine and responses to calls under Article 4 for 'collective security' support against asymmetric attacks, especially, but not limited to, cyber attacks where attribution is difficult.

We recommend that the NATO Summit also addresses the Alliance's vulnerabilities in the face of asymmetric (ambiguous warfare) attacks. In particular it should consider

- How to establish the intelligence processes and an "Indicators and Warning" mechanism to alert Allies to the danger or imminence of such an attack;
- What steps it needs to take to deter asymmetric threats;
- How it should respond in the face of an imminent or actual such attack;
- The circumstances in which the Article 5 mutual defence guarantee will be invoked in the face of asymmetric attack;
- How it can, as a matter of urgency, create an Alliance doctrine for "ambiguous warfare" and make the case for investment in an Alliance asymmetric or "ambiguous warfare" capability.

We recommend that the Ministry of Defence address, also as a matter of urgency, its capacity to understand the nature of the current security threat from Russia and its motivations. Ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of Defence Attachés to provide the analysis and expertise required is one measure which would help to address this issue. In particular we recommend the appointment of additional Defence Attachés to cover the Baltic States and in Central and Eastern Europe and reverse the cutbacks in Russia and Ukraine. We further recommend that the Government ensure that there is adequate representation in Poland which may be of critical importance in the future. We also recommend the creation of a "red team" in the Ministry of Defence to provide a challenge to existing orthodoxy from a specifically Russian perspective.

We recommend that, in opening the NATO Summit, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State should make a commitment to the UK maintaining defence spending at or above 2% of GDP. Increasing levels of spending amongst European NATO Member States and the collective efficiency of such spending must be made a priority of the Summit as a demonstration of NATO's political will and its commitment to collective defence.

This report does not deal with the detail of emerging events in the non-NATO state of Ukraine but it would be wrong to publish a report on NATO relations and responses to Russia without expressing our sympathies and condolences to all the families, friends and nations who have experienced the deaths of relatives, friends and citizens from the

downing of Malaysian Airlines civilian flight MH17 with military rockets near the borders of Ukraine and Russia. Our condolences are extended to all affected but especially to the relatives and friends of the UK citizens killed and to our allies who suffered such a heavy toll of innocent lives.

1 Introduction

1. For two decades the UK—and NATO's—security priorities have focused on terrorism and failed states. The UK still has significant commitments to the draw-down in Afghanistan, and to address the threat from terrorism following recent events in Syria and Iraq and the increase in the number and reach of self-styled jihadist groups in the growing number of ungoverned spaces across the world. These remain very important priorities.

2. However, events in Crimea and Ukraine represent a "game changer" for UK defence policy. They have provoked a fundamental re-assessment of both the prioritisation of threats in the National Security Strategy and the military capabilities required by the UK. The UK's Armed Forces will need now also to focus on the defence of Europe against Russia and against asymmetric forms of warfare. This will have significant implications for resources, force structures, equipment and training.

3. The Committee's report on Deterrence in the twenty-first century, published in March this year, concluded that

> The 2015 National Security Strategy must reflect that threats to UK security include the re-emergence of state threats that we may have been tempted to think had diminished with the end of the Cold War. These state threats may become manifest in a range of ways, including through attack with CBRN weapons, conventional forces, terrorist proxies or cyber capabilities.[1]

4. This inquiry is the Committee's latest in a series aiming to inform the next Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and National Security Strategy (NSS). We have also timed publication of this report to inform the NATO summit taking place in Wales in September. It is clear that NATO is not the only international organisation with an interest in events in Ukraine. Both the EU and the UN have condemned the annexation of Crimea. The economic tools possessed by the EU will be an important element in deterring military actions against Member States. Whilst Ukraine and Georgia are not NATO members, it is our contention that events in Ukraine, seen in the context of the massive cyber-attack on Estonia in 2007 and the invasion of Georgia in 2008, represent the existence of a strategic threat to NATO, a threat that many had thought had disappeared with the end of the Cold War. NATO was founded upon three principles: deterring Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration. Therefore Member States must now be prepared to invest in NATO capabilities to enable the Alliance to deter, and if necessary counter, this threat.

5. During the course of this inquiry we have visited NATO and SHAPE and both Latvia and Estonia. We are grateful to the UK Permanent Representation to NATO and DSACEUR for hosting our visit to NATO and SHAPE. We would also like to thank the

1 Defence Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2013–14, Deterrence in the twenty-first century, HC 1066 , paragraph 75.

UK Embassies in Riga and Tallinn for putting together excellent programmes for us and to thank those who took the time to meet with us during our visits.

6. This report will focus first on Russian forces–their strengths and weaknesses in relation to conventional and unconventional warfare. Then it will analyse the strength and weaknesses of NATO forces, in relation to a potential Russian threat. It will conclude with specific recommendations to address deficiencies.

2 Russian Forces

Russian conventional and nuclear forces

Weaknesses

7. Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia was militarily successful. But the operation revealed serious failures in command and control of Russian forces.[2] Much of the troops' equipment was outdated in comparison to the latest US equipment, and *The Economist* notes that since then the improvements in equipment have been slow.

> Until the T-50 stealth fighter appears in small numbers towards the end of the decade, the mainstay of the air force will remain upgraded SU-27s and MiG-29s that first flew in the 1970s. The navy is getting new corvettes and frigates, but the industry cannot produce bigger vessels: hence the order of two Mistral ships from France. The army is to replace Soviet armour with the Armata family of tracked vehicles, but not yet.[3]

8. Russia's GDP is 2 trillion dollars, 20 per cent less than that of the UK's 2.4 trillion. But its defence expenditure is almost twice that of the UK's 60 billion dollars, annually, and its armed forces are perhaps ten times larger (although its population is only one and a half times larger than that of the UK). Low levels of education, however, and the limitations upon the available time to train conscripts (who make up the majority of soldiers) mean that modern, more sophisticated equipment is not always used to its full potential.[4] Russia's arms industry is trying to recover from years of under-investment and significant corruption.[5] The army is also suffering from a shortage of conscripts.[6] The size of the Russian military, which was cut as part of the modernisation programme, is estimated to be between 700,000 and 1 million.[7] This is substantially smaller than the approximately 3, 370, 000 service personnel in NATO allies armed forces.[8]

9. Russia's ability to field large conventional forces for a sustained, long-term conflict is further limited by the country's economic fragility. The overly optimistic economic forecasts upon which the military reform was based have also resulted in problems in the armaments programme. The programme was based upon an annual average growth rate of 6% but the level achieved was in fact 4.3% in 2011 and had reduced to 2% in 2013.[9] Defence companies have also faced difficulties obtaining high-quality domestically produced

2 McDermott, Roger N. "*Russia's Conventional Armed Forces and the Georgian War*." The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters, Spring 2009. pp. 65-80

3 *Putin's new model army* , The Economist, 24 May 2014

4 Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), *Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective – 2013*, P 40

5 Russia and Ukraine - update June 2014 Standard Note SNIA 6923, House of Commons Library, June 2014

6 Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), *Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective – 2013*, P 40

7 *Putin's new model army* , The Economist, 24 May 2014

8 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence, (February 2014) p 10

9 The International Institute of Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2013, (March 2014) p 164

components and systems.[10] Roger McDermott of the Jamestown Foundation has suggested that even a campaign in Ukraine would have to be fairly short as "Russia has no defence or economic capacity to go in for the long haul."11

Strengths

10. Russia is, however, in a significantly stronger position than it was in 2008. It has made considerable new investments and has dramatically improved its capabilities. Since 2012, expenditure on the military has increased and, during the period 2013-17, defence expenditure will amount to 4.8% of Russian GDP. Russia has embarked on a $720 billion weapons-modernisation programme which aimed to increase the 10% of equipment classed as "modern" in 2012 to 30% by 2012 and to 70% by 2020.[12]

11. As Jonathan Eyal, senior research fellow at RUSI told us

> Gone are the days when Russian troops were demoralised, disorganised and badly-supplied: the operation in Crimea was accomplished by elite Russian units which were well-trained, well-fed and very well equipped with the latest communication systems. And Russia's military modernisation is set to continue: by 2015, the country plans to spend US$100 billion on its armed forces yearly.[13]

Keir Giles, associate fellow at Chatham House, told us that Russia had built upon the lessons of the Georgian war and is looking to develop capabilities which capitalise upon the West's weaknesses. [14]

12. The Russian military's increased effectiveness was demonstrated recently when Russia carried out the large-scale Zapad 2013 exercise in the Baltic region, which included:

- Large-scale deployment of conventional forces (believed to be c. 70,000 troops) including land, sea, air, air defence, airborne, special forces (Spetsnaz), the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Interior (VVMVD), medical units and army psychological personnel, logistical and engineering forces;
- search and rescue;
- amphibious landing and anti-landing operations;
- air and ground strikes on enemy targets;
- submarine and anti-submarine warfare;
- missile strikes with long-range precision strike assets; and

10 The International Institute of Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2013, (March 2014), p 166

11 *Ukraine crisis: Is Russia ready to move into eastern Ukraine?*, BBC News, 8 April 2014

12 There are no indicators of what definition of "modern" is being used by this programme

13 Dr Jonathan Eyal (TND0020)

14 Q180

- airborne and air assault operations.[15]

This exercise was described publicly as an exercise in anti-terrorist activity but involved operations against a sophisticated opponent. Observers have suggested that it gave an indication of what a full scale attack on one of the Baltic States might look like. It was described by Major General (Ret) Neretnieks of the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences as proof that Russia has regained its capability for large-scale conventional military operations, a capability which he thought was lacking amongst Western powers.[16]

13. James Sherr, associate fellow at Chatham House, described the Zapad 13 exercise as designed to demonstrate to NATO what sort of operations Russia is now capable of mounting.[17] General Sir Richard Shirreff, former DSACEUR NATO agreed, describing the simulated 'anti-terrorist' actions being deployed as being akin to practising to use a sledgehammer to crack a nut. He also told us that during Zapad

> The Latvians were extremely worried by the very high levels of Russian air activity that was taking place on the Russian-Latvian border, which was nothing short of intimidation. There were fleets of Ilyushin-76 troop-carrying planes approaching the border, veering off, coming back and veering off, just to rattle the Latvians. It highlighted the fact that this was Russia sending some pretty strong signals about its ability to deploy forces, should it want to.[18]

14. The increase in Russian conventional capacity has been mirrored by an increase in Russian willingness to engage in a combative relationship with the West. Tomas Ries of the Swedish Defence College suggests that the potential for conflict between Russia and NATO has been evident for some time. He points to Russian publications on national security from the mid-2000s onwards, which named NATO as the enemy. Ries also highlights a number of recent events which reflect this more combative approach:

- Russian simulated strategic bomber strikes against much of north-western Europe and Alaska since 2005;
- Cyber-attack on Estonia in 2007;
- Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008; and,
- Russian military reforms, modernisation and exercises.[19]

15 Stephen Blank, *What Do the Zapad 2013 Exercises Reveal? (Part One),* Eurasia Daily Monitor, vol 10 issue 177, (October 2014)

16 Q200

17 Q280

18 Q272+

19 Thomas Ries, *The Clash Of Civilisations*, The British Army 2014, p 47

15. Russia is also a nuclear power and has exercised scenarios involving the use of nuclear weapons. The 2009 Zapad exercise involved a simulated nuclear strike upon Warsaw and the Vostok 2010 exercise also involved simulations of a nuclear strike.[20]

16. It has been argued that Russia sees its strategic nuclear forces as a key deterrent to potential Western intervention or belated response to Russian aggression. Russia dedicates a third of its Defence budget to them. Russia's substantial nuclear arsenal is also regarded as protection against any possible future threat from China. The potential for use of nuclear weapons is perceived to provide compensation for the inferiority of its conventional armed forces on the Chinese border.[21]

17. Keir Giles has noted that in February 2011, the implementation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) resulted in intensive Russian activity aimed at developing and introducing new strategic weapons systems, including at least three new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) programmes.[22] Sir Andrew Wood, former Ambassador to Moscow and associate fellow of Chatham House, confirmed to us that the use of nuclear weapons in war is a publicly-stated component of Russian military doctrine, and whilst still outmatched by NATO conventional forces, Russia's forces are expanding and reforming fast.[23]

Russian Next Generation warfare

18. In part because of the relative weaknesses in its conventional military capacity, Russia has increasingly focused on new and less conventional military techniques. These asymmetric tactics (sometimes described as unconventional, ambiguous or non-linear warfare) techniques are both more aligned to Russian strengths, and considerably more difficult for NATO to counter. The Russian use of asymmetric warfare techniques (which build on long-established methods of Special Forces (Spetznaz)), therefore, represents the most immediate threat to its NATO neighbours and other NATO Member States. Russian asymmetric warfare involves tactics which can be employed either in place of or alongside conventional means of warfare.

19. The concept of asymmetric warfare is not necessarily a new development. The model of reflexive control has been an element in Russian military doctrine for some time. This tactic is intended to influence the decision making of an adversary by providing that adversary with information that will reflexively lead them to pursue particular courses of action. The use of such asymmetric tactics are perceived to allow attacks against states which have a superiority in numbers of troops and weaponry. The benefits have been set out in the Russian journal *Military Thought*

20 Stephen Blank , *What Do the Zapad 2013 Exercises Reveal? (Part One),* Eurasia Daily Monitor, vol 10 issue 177, (October 2014)

21 *Putin's new model army* , The Economist, 24 May 2014

22 Keir Giles and Dr. Andrew Monaghan, Russian Military Transformation - Goal In Sight? May 2014, p 28

23 Q223; 254

> Asymmetric actions, too, will be used extensively to level off the enemy's superiority in armed struggle by a combination of political, economic, information, technological, and ecological campaigns in the form of indirect actions and nonmilitary measures. In its new technological format, the indirect action strategy will draw on, above all, a great variety of forms and methods of non-military techniques and nonmilitary measures, including information warfare to neutralize adversary actions without resorting to weapons (through indirect actions), by exercising information superiority, in the first place.[24]

20. In February 2013, the Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov published an article which promulgated its use, highlighting that

> The very "rules of war" have changed. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness.[25]

He continued, noting that

> Asymmetrical actions have come into widespread use, enabling the nullification of an enemy's advantages in armed conflict. Among such actions are the use of special-operations forces and internal opposition to create a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state, as well as informational actions, devices, and means that are constantly being perfected.[26]

21. Different types of asymmetric warfare, which have been practised by Russia in operations in Estonia in 2007,[27] Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 include:

- Cyber attacks–where attacks are carried out against state infrastructure networks and websites. Attacks may also be carried out against vital private infrastructure (such as banking and utility networks);
- Information operations–the wide-spread dissemination of (usually false) information to confuse the enemy and influence opinion both at home and abroad;
- Psychological operations–the use of propaganda and agents to encourage the enemy state's population to undertake subversive activity;
- Economic attacks–destabilising the economy of the enemy state by, for instance, use of sanctions and blocking trade flows;

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24 Col. S.G. CHEKINOV (Res.), Doctor of Technical Sciences Lt. Gen. S.A. BOGDANOV (Ret.), Doctor of Military Sciences, The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War, MILITARY THOUGHT:A Russian Journal of Military Theory and Strategy, East View Press, No. 4, 2013

25 Dr Mark Galeotti, *The 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and Russian Non-Linear War*, July 2014

26 Ibid.

27 Whilst not fully attributed, it is widely considered that Russia had been associated with cyber attacks in Estonia 2007.

- Proxy attack–the use of armed civilians or terrorist groups against a state, or the use of forces who operate without insignia or official affiliation (the so-called 'little green men').

22. Major Nathan D. Ginos of the US Army explains how it was used in the 2008 Russo-Georgia war:

> The actions of Russia leading up to the use of ground forces in South Ossetia by Georgia show contemporary growth in application of reflexive control to force Georgia to act according to Russian desires. The manner in which a gradual escalation of tension forced Georgia into military action left a reflexive trail of justification for Russian intervention. The manner in which outside participants saw the buildup of events tended to make the Russian case by providing a solid foundation for strategic communication. The "attacks on Russian citizens", according to Russia, by Georgian military forces gave a semblance of international credibility to the "defensive" actions of the Russian military in preventing a "humanitarian crisis".[28]

23. In 2007, the use of cyber warfare was seen in Estonia. In its 2009 report, Russia: A New Confrontation? our predecessor Committee said

> In Estonia, we learnt about the cyberattacks it suffered in April 2007. Several of Estonia's banks, schools, media networks and government departments were disabled by a sustained attack on their computer networks. The attack was conducted through bombarding Estonia's key websites with requests for information, which overwhelmed the systems. […] The attacks coincided with a diplomatic row between Russia and Estonia over the Estonian Government's decision to remove a Soviet war memorial from central Tallinn to a military cemetery nearby. […]The Russian Government and the pro-Kremlin state-sponsored group Nashi deny responsibility for the attacks. The Estonian Government has not blamed the Russian Government directly for being responsible for the attacks, but did publish a list of internet provider addresses where it believed the attacks were coming from that included Russian Government addresses.[29]

James Sherr told us that Russian operations in Ukraine have demonstrated

> Russia's investment in a model of force and of war that can effectively cripple a state and achieve key strategic goals before we even register what is happening.[30]

24. The operation to annex Crimea was the most dramatic recent display of Russian asymmetric tactics, the most notable being the appearance of the 'little green men' who

28 Major Nathan D. Ginos, *The Securitization of Russian Strategic Communication*, December 2010, p 37

29 , Defence Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2008–09 , *Russia: A new confrontation*, HC 267, para 141-2

30 Q280

occupied key buildings including political and communications headquarters and laid siege to Ukrainian armed forces. Mark Galeotti of New York University noted that

> The deception may have been pretty transparent, as they all wore the latest Russian kit and drove military vehicles with official license plates, but the ruse gave them the crucial hours they needed for their mission, especially as alongside them were genuine volunteers and paramilitaries. Were they mercenaries? Local activists? Acting without orders? Unsure what was happening, reluctant to appear the aggressor, Kiev was paralyzed for long enough that it didn't matter what it decided, the Russians were in charge.[31]

These tactics were employed alongside military intimidation with Russia sending large numbers of troops to the Ukrainian border.[32] When the US Secretary of Defence discussed the number of Russian troops on the Ukrainian border with his Russian counterpart, he was told that these troops were participating in an exercise although Defence Minister was unable to confirm when the exercise was due to end.[33]

25. In Eastern Ukraine, the city of Donetsk has been held by Igor Strelkov. Although he is leading a Ukrainian resistance movement, he is a native of Moscow, whose real name is Igor Girkin, and has confirmed that he was until April 2013, an employee of the Russian FSB, state security forces, who fought in Transnistria, Serbia and Chechnya, and played a role in the annexation of Crimea.[34] Jen Psaki, the US State Department spokeswoman has emphasised the strong connections between the Russian state and the armed militants in Eastern Ukraine.[35]

26. This man with his now ambiguous relation to the Russian state is symptomatic of the new asymmetric threat. And the uncertainty over his relationship to the downing of the Malaysian airliner on 17 July, highlights the unpredictable threats posed by Russia's involvement in asymmetric operations of this kind. Professor Michael Clarke, of the Royal United Services Institute, has emphasised the potential connection between Russian separatist forces and the attack on the Malaysian airliner. "

> We know that the separatists actually boasted on 29 June that they had captured an SA-11 air defence system from the Ukrainians [...] We've also got the evidence that's been coming out overnight that the leader of the separatists Igor Strelkov [...] tweeted that he had brought down an Antanov 26 Russian transport. He then deleted that tweet very very quickly.[36]

27. There remain significant constraints even to Russian asymmetric operations. The financial impact of the annexation of Crimea in terms of both the sanctions imposed by the

31 Dr Mark Galeotti, *Putin, Ukraine and asymmetric politics*, Business New Europe, April 2014

32 Q304

33 Igor Sutyagin and Michael Clarke , *Ukraine Military Dispositions*, RUSI Briefing Paper, April 2014

34 *Shadowy Rebel Wields Iron Fist in Ukraine Fight*, The New York Times, July 10 2014

35 *Photos Link Masked Men in East Ukraine to Russia*, New York Times, April 21, 2014

36 Comments on BBC Radio 4, Today programme, 18 July, 2014

West and the cost of the military operation and supporting the Crimean economy have been significant. Reuters reports that

> Rising prices and stagnating wages may make hundreds more Russians think twice about the government's price tag of between 800 billion and 1 trillion rubles ($23-30 billion) for Crimea, and may come to pose the first real threat to Putin.
>
> […] Russia's economy, riddled with corruption and nepotism, is still weak and, increasingly isolated by Western sanctions, is for now teetering on the edge of recession.[37]

28. The report continues to note that the Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov had been criticised following a statement that the $8 billion of funds accumulated in Russian personal pension plans in 2014 had been spent on "anti-crisis measures" and on Crimea. James Sherr told us that the Russian economy was dependent upon the West.

> There is no area in which we are dependent on Russia where Russia is not even more dependent on us. That has been a factor in the change of tactics we are seeing on the ground in Ukraine. The Kremlin is not delusional. There is an understanding that Russia needs the European market and technology from advanced member states. In an odd way, that means we can worry less about what might go wrong. Energy is not a gift from Russia; it is a vital business for the functioning of their economy.[38]

Chris Donnelly, Director of the Institute for Statecraft, however, summarised the benefit of the Russian use of asymmetric warfare techniques as

> a form of warfare that integrates the use of conventional and unconventional force; integrates the use of force with non-military tools of war—cyber, economic, political; integrates the whole with an immensely powerful information warfare programme; and is backed up by an ideology. This is a change in the nature of conflict. The aim of the whole operation is to break the integrity of the state—in this case, Ukraine—before there is any need to cross its borders with an invasion force and trigger an Article 5 situation, were it a NATO country. So we are seeing a form of warfare that is operating under our reaction threshold.[39]

He added that the benefit of using these asymmetric tactics is that they are deniable and can cause confusion long enough for Russia to achieve its goals. This has enabled Russia to engineer significant changes without any military repercussions.

> The Russians are demonstrating that they now have the capacity to unfreeze the frozen conflicts, move the situation in their favour and freeze them again. We are seeing a concept of war that is not only as I have described, but that is

37 *Crimea euphoria fades for some Russians*, Reuters, 6 July, 2014

38 Q297

39 Q266

> constantly increasing the level of activity and getting us used to accepting it, so that we become like the frog in a bucket of water, warming up slowly and not realising that we are accepting more and more that we should not be. That is the danger, so first we need more intelligence, and secondly it is crucial that we revise our capacity for thinking and acting strategically—for understanding what is going on and its implications.[40]

29. **The Russian deployment of asymmetric tactics represents a new challenge to NATO. Events in Ukraine demonstrate in particular Russia's ability to effectively paralyse an opponent in the pursuit of its interests with a range of tools including psychological operations, information warfare and intimidation with massing of conventional forces. Such operations may be designed to slip below NATO's threshold for reaction. In many circumstances, such operations are also deniable, increasing the difficulties for an adversary is mounting a credible and legitimate response.**

40 Q286

3 Russian Intentions

30. It is much easier to describe Russia's forces, military options, and doctrine, than it is to define Russia's intentions. Commentators differ markedly on whether Russia constitutes a significant threat to its neighbours or to NATO. One school of thought maintains that it is very important to understand Russia's point of view. They often emphasise that NATO and EU expansion into traditional Russian 'spheres of influence' has been provocative, and rash; argue that Russia's actions are defensive and understandable; and even imply that Crimea was 'really part of Russia anyway.' Generally, this position tends to favour a de-escalation of a conflict with Russia; resist any military measures which might 'restart the cold war'; encourage cooperation with Russia in the Middle East in particular; emphasise other threats elsewhere in the world, for NATO and the West (such as Islamic extremism); and, portray Russia as a potential strategic ally.

31. In the context of our report, for example, Lord Richards, the former Chief of the Defence Staff, told us that he did not believe that separatists in Ukraine were being orchestrated by Moscow.[41] He emphasised the historical Russian claims to Crimea.[42] The former Secretary of State has made it clear that he views terrorism not Russia to be the greatest threat to the UK, a view shared by Lord Richards.[43]

32. The other position, traditionally taken by the Baltic states and other former Warsaw Pact members—but following Crimea, now by a group of commentators in the UK and the US—portrays Russia as a substantial threat. Following the annexation of Crimea, the Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen has described Russia as "speaking and behaving not as a partner, but as an adversary."[44] He went on to say that

> In recent weeks, Russian officials have accused NATO of breaking its promises, interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs, and escalating the crisis. It is time to see these claims for what they are: a smokescreen designed to cover up Russia's own broken promises, interference and escalation.[45]

33. The Secretary General of NATO has rejected claims that Russia was motivated by NATO enlargement, emphasising the intensive engagement between NATO and Russia which resulted in the NATO-Russia Council. [46] Sir Andrew Wood also discounted any theory that Russia was responding rationally to a NATO threat. He argued that the real threat to Russia lay in Ukraine becoming a more credible democracy than Russia.[47]

41 Q107

42 Q103

43 Q325; 99

44 Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary General, NATO *De-escalation starts on the ground*, April 2014

45 Ibid.

46 Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary General, NATO '*The Future of NATO: A Strong Alliance in an Unpredictable World*', Chatham House 19 June 2014

47 Q213

34. Edward Lucas of *The Economist* portrayed the Ukrainian intervention as part of a wider campaign by President Putin to consolidate his power base by

> whipping up a sense of xenophobia and a sense that Russia is a besieged fortress, that the West is out to get Russia and has cheated Russia, and that Russia has suffered multiple injustices.[48]

35. Edward Lucas also suggested that the main reason that Russia is concerned about Ukraine moving towards becoming a part of the EU is that the reforms which would, by necessity, have to take place, would result in Ukraine becoming "law-governed, prosperous, democratic, with economic and political pluralism."[49] He notes that the existence of a stable democracy on Russia's borders would present an existential threat to Russia by highlighting the deficiencies in the current Russian system. [50]

36. The former Foreign Secretary, the Rt. Hon. William Hague told the House of Commons that the motivation behind the annexation of Crimea was "to restore Russian prestige,"[51] a comment supported by Major General (Ret.) Neretnieks of the the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences.[52]

37. In evidence to us, it has been suggested that another motivation is that the military action taken by Russia was in response to President Putin's declining popularity. Protests in major Russian cities in 2011 followed Parliamentary elections which were widely criticised for being rigged. This combined with the recent slow down in the economy had made the Russian President vulnerable and his popularity ratings had dropped to below 50%.[53] Following the annexation of Crimea, President Putin's approval ratings have increased to 80%.[54] A number of our witnesses suggested that we might see a repetition of such operations in response to future waning of the President's popularity[55] or in response to internal troubles within Russia.[56]

38. Regardless of the merits of Russia's case, or Putin's motivation, Russia has consistently asserted a right and legal and moral duty to protect ethnic Russians who live abroad. This lay behind the Georgian intervention. The claim has been made that the revolution in Ukraine endangered Russian ethnic minorities in the country and it was on that basis that Russia sent troops in to Crimea and to the Ukrainian border.[57]

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48 Q154

49 Q155

50 Q155

51 HC Deb, 18 Mar 2014 : Col. 655 [Commons Chamber]

52 Major General (Retd.) Karlis Neretnieks (TND0019)

53 P17, *Russia, Ukraine and the West: Is Confrontation Inevitable?*, Chatham House

54 Q162

55 Q162

56 Q243

57 *Russia's humanitarian actions vs Western military interventionism: Tskhinval is not Tripoli, Crimea is not Kosovo*, The Voice of Russia, 21 March 2014

39. The arguments of some our witnesses suggest that instability inside Russia, a threat to Putin's power, or a steep decline in his popularity, might also create the precondition or provide the temptation towards more aggressive action in the name of Russians outside Russia. This is of particular concern for the Baltic States which have significant ethnic Russian populations. Sir Andrew Wood, a former Ambassador to Moscow suggested that the most likely area of attack would be the Baltic States although he believed it would be an asymmetric attack rather than a direct military confrontation.[58]

58 Q241

4 The UK and NATO's capacity to respond

The conventional military threat

The conventional vulnerabilities of the Baltic theatre

40. Our witnesses consistently emphasised that there was a low likelihood of a Russian conventional attack on a Baltic State. However, NATO has an obligation under Article 5 to protect the Baltics as NATO Member States. And as Chris Donnelly pointed out, Russian conventional forces, cannot be entirely separated from its 'ambiguous warfare' technique. He illustrated how Russians had clearly used military exercises on the border with Ukraine as an intimidatory tactic working alongside their asymmetric operations, rushing forces to the border, then withdrawing. Such military exercises were used to intimidate and destabilise, ensuring that Ukraine's territorial defence capability was degraded.[59]

41. Witnesses emphasised that NATO was poorly prepared for a Russian attack on the Baltic, and that poor state of preparation might itself increase the likelihood of a Russian attack. When questioned about the likelihood of a Russian attack against a Baltic country, the recently retired Deputy Supreme Allied Commander NATO, General Sir Richard Shirreff replied that "If NATO is not bold, strategic and ambitious, the chances are high."[60]

42. The Baltic States are particularly vulnerable to military attack due to their position, their size and the lack of strategic depth. They also have limited military capabilities and both Edward Lucas and Major General (Retd.) Neretnieks noted that without adequate reinforcements, their territories could well be overrun within a couple of days.[61] Major General (Retd.) Neretnieks thought that this may present problems for NATO

> It is doubtful if NATO today has the capability to launch even a limited military operation in support of the Baltic States at such short notice. Secondly, NATO would probably have to launch an extensive air campaign to suppress the Russian air defence systems (and ground to ground systems) that cover the Baltic States already today from Russian territory, before being able to deliver any substantial help, especially if it is supposed to come from bases in western and central Europe.[62]

Furthermore Major General (Retd.) Neretnieks has suggested that, should Russia decide to use Swedish territory, for instance the island of Gotland, then it could effectively limit NATO's capability to launch an operation in support of the Baltic States.[63]

59 Q304

60 Q82-3

61 Q164; 180; Major General (Retd.) Karlis Neretnieks (TND0019)

62 Major General (Retd.) Karlis Neretnieks (TND0019)

63 Major General (Retd.) Karlis Neretnieks (TND0019)

Constraints in UK/NATO conventional training, equipment and doctrine

Counter-insurgency versus State on State threats

43. For more than a decade the UK and its NATO partners have focused on counter-insurgency warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, against a lightly armed insurgent force, rather than on conventional state on state conflict. This very different form of warfare, has introduced force profiles, training, exercises, logistics systems, equipment, and priorities quite different from those of the Cold War, and quite different to those that would be required to meet a Russian threat to a Baltic state. The force structured and trained to engage in an enduring counter-insurgency operation at medium scale is very different to that required to counter a large-scale conventional threat.[64] The latter demands the ability to manoeuvre and fight, and specialist capabilities such as the ability to build bridges across wide rivers.[65]

44. **We believe that the Armed Forces needs to ensure that its training covers all types of warfare and responses to threats beyond counter insurgency actions. For instance, has the wide-wet gap crossing capacity been preserved?**

Limited readiness levels and scale of deployable forces

45. A number of witnesses raised questions about the readiness of NATO forces. General Sir Richard Shirreff told us that

> I think NATO would find it very difficult to respond sufficiently quickly if, for example, Russia decided to attack and mount an airborne descent operation, for example, on Riga, Tallinn or Vilnius. The fact is that there is a Russian aviation base within 40 minutes' flying time of Riga so, unless NATO has stationed forces in the Baltic states, I think it is highly unlikely that NATO could respond quickly to a sudden, surprise attack. That said, if there was a build-up of tension and relatively clear indications and warnings—which is, I think, highly unlikely—NATO could begin the process of preparing to defend those Baltic states against Russia. However, the honest answer, as we speak now, is that NATO would be very pushed to respond sufficiently quickly in the event of a sudden surprise attack.[66]

46. General Sir Richard Shirreff thought it highly unlikely that the NATO Response Force could be stood up sufficiently quickly and that it lacked credibility, because the North Atlantic Council has never been able to agree on its deployment. A consensus of all 28 nations is required before it can be deployed.[67] Lord Richards, former Chief of Defence

64 Q266

65 The Army has progressively reduced its wide-wet gap crossing capacity. It can no longer bridge the river Weser, for example, without bringing equipment out of war reserve.

66 Q257

67 Q258

Staff, agreed, "I think NATO needs to wake up in terms of its ability to do things quickly."[68] He also pointed to deficiencies in the command and control structures required for such large scale operations:

> They do need to get their command and control improved. That is a big thing, because you can have wonderful troops, wonderful aircraft and wonderful ships, but if you do not get your command and control right, it all comes to nothing.[69]

47. Dr Robin Niblett highlighted in evidence to us that the command structures in NATO had been depleted in recent times. This was done in the expectation that national military forces would fill the capacity gap, something which has not happened.[70] This has left NATO under-staffed, weakening both its capability and credibility. General Sir Richard Shirreff told us that the command structure had shrunk dramatically in recent times which meant that NATO was not always able to carry out the wishes of allies. He told us that the staff supplied by the UK to the command structure were extremely competent but he could confirm that as recently as March "the UK was quite a long way down the league in manning its posts in NATO."[71]

Absence of large scale exercises and training

48. The most dramatic gap in NATO capacity, is illustrated by training. In 1984, 131,565 ground and air personnel were involved in Operation Lionheart which involved transporting 57,700 soldiers and airmen from Britain by air and sea. The purpose of the exercise was to establish a method of attacking the 'follow-on forces' that would be sent in to battle after the first wave of Soviet Union attacks. As well as British Troops, American, Dutch and West German forces are involved in the exercise, playing the role of aggressor forces. The object of the exercise was described as being to test land-air cooperation and the operational compatibility of the national forces involved.[72] By contrast, the 2013 NATO exercise, Steadfast Jazz which took place in Poland and Latvia in 2013 involved a force of only 6,000 troops. This was the largest NATO exercise to take place since the end of the Cold War.[73] In the same year, the Russian Zapad 2013 exercise mobilised, transported and deployed an estimated 70,000 troops. Large-scale exercises, and large scale armoured movements on that scale have simply not been rehearsed by NATO for over two decades.

49. The importance of large-scale military exercises has been highlighted by a number of witnesses to this inquiry as a means of illustrating capabilities and demonstrating willingness to put them in to action. They are therefore an important element of NATO's deterrent posture.

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68 Q118

69 Q118

70 Q211

71 Q309-310

72 *British Start War Games on Continent*, New York Times, 18 September 1984

73 Andrew Cottey, *The European Neutrals and NATO: Ambiguous Partnership*, Contemporary Security Policy, 34:3, (2013) 446-472,

50. **The failure of national military forces to provide sufficient staff resources has left NATO command structures depleted. It is disappointing that the UK is continuing to fail to fill the posts expected of it.**

51. ***We recommend that the UK (and US) practice the deployment of forces at least to divisional scale to Poland and the Baltic States via Germany.***

52. ***We recommend that the NATO Summit sets out plans to ensure:***

- ***dramatic improvements to the existing NATO rapid reaction force; and***
- ***the re-establishment of large-scale military exercises including representatives from all NATO Member States. These exercises must involve both military and political decision-makers.***

The need to rebalance

53. We have previously drawn attention to the need for the UK's Armed Forces to be "re-balanced" following the conclusion this year of combat operations in Afghanistan.[74] UK operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were focused on counter-insurgency and training and force structure was inevitably focused on the skills required for such operations. For example, during the Cold War, the Armed Forces were accustomed to regular cycles of exercising at divisional and corps level, but operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have shifted the emphasis to much smaller scale operations.

54. In 2011, Mark Phillips, Associate Fellow, Royal United Services Institute noted that

> The army recognises that it is unbalanced as a result of ongoing operations. It also recognises that the way land forces have specialised must not exclusively determine the balance of what will be required in the future. As part of Future Force 2020, the army is therefore structuring and training itself to meet a wider range of potential adversaries and types of activities.[75]

55. Chris Donnelly told us that

> for 20-odd years the UK and NATO European partners have based their force structuring, and how they have developed their armed forces and how they have spent their money, on the premise that we will not use force in Europe and we will not use military power for political ends. All our structures were based on that, and they were based on having Russia as a partner in that agreement, and Russia has just overturned that agreement. Russia has sanctioned the use of force to destabilise neighbouring countries

74 Defence Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2013-14, *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part One,* HC 197, paragraph 18.

75 , Mark Phillips, *Exercise Agile Warrior and the Future Development of UK Land Forces*, RUSI Occassional Paper, May 201,1 P 15

> and to change borders. As General Sir Richard said, that has changed everything.[76]

56. Lord Stirrup, former Chief of Defence Staff, told us that he did not think that NATO was sufficiently exercised for the threats posed by both conventional and asymmetric warfare.

> flexibility and adaptability are keys to your response. To have that kind of flexibility and adaptability, people have to be used to deploying to different places and to putting structures together. [...] Clearly the issues are much more complex today […] I am thinking of cyberspace in particular, but also the use of nationalities within other states, as we have seen in Ukraine and as one can see in other countries in eastern Europe. There is a whole range of complex issues that NATO needs to think about. That is why we need much more exercising and war-gaming that introduce all these elements, so that people can actually try them out on computers—desktops—go through the thought processes, identify the difficulties and think about them in advance.[77]

He noted however the difficulty of undertaking large-scale military exercises when defence budgets of NATO allies were under strain and were decreasing.[78]

57. In their study of The Defence Industrial Triptych,[79] Henrik Heidenkamp, John Louth and Trevor Taylor examined the importance of the strategic relationship between Government and the businesses that contribute to defence and security. This study examined questions around the implications of this relationship for operational flexibility. A change of focus from relatively small scale counter-insurgency operations, as in Iraq or Afghanistan, to a much larger scale enduring conventional conflict on NATO's borders would have very substantial implications for this relationship. This in turn raises questions as to whether the Government's contracts for logistic support and supply of goods and services are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to make such a change.

58. Finally, significant concerns were raised about the ability to respond to the potential threat of Russian nuclear weapons, and in particular public willingness to reinforce a 'trip-wire' force, with nuclear strikes. Andrew Wood emphasised that there was a degree of political consent for the use of nuclear weapons in Russia which is not perceived by the Russians to be reflected in NATO.[80] By contrast, in the recent past, several countries in Europe have called for the reduction in the number of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

> The German coalition government—spurred by the Free Democratic Party—stated that it would pursue the withdrawal of the remaining nuclear weapons from Germany. This received a qualified endorsement from others, and led to Germany, the Benelux countries, and Norway collectively calling for an

76 Q266

77 Q108

78 Q94

79 Henrik Heidenkamp, John Louth and Trevor Taylor *The Defence Industrial Triptych*, RUSI Whitehall Paper 81, 2013

80 Q223

> open discussion of ways of further reducing the role of nuclear weapons in NATO.[81]

What NATO needs to do

59. General Sir Richard Shirreff highlighted that NATO needed to have credible conventional deterrent forces as the alternative was to rely upon the nuclear deterrent.[82] This would be politically difficult for many NATO allies and would lack credibility in response to all but the most serious of attacks. In our report on Deterrence in the twenty first century, we highlighted the fact that the credibility of the nuclear deterrent relied on credible conventional forces to deter lesser threats.[83]

60. Dr Robin Niblett informed us that in his recent meetings with the group of policy experts, there had been a high degree of consensus amongst experts and academics across Europe about the need for "pre-positioning equipment, proper exercises, snap exercises, command and control improvements."[84] General Shirreff emphasised the importance of such exercises involving all levels of decision-making.

> It is not just exercising soldiers; it is top to bottom. It is politicians to troopers. It is going back to the days, for example, when, on a regular basis, NATO would exercise WINTEX and Governments got involved. Mrs Thatcher got involved, […] If we can do that, we can develop a muscle memory of political leaders who have to make some really tough decisions.[85]

61. As well as large-scale exercises, the possibility was raised that NATO could position troops and equipment in the Baltic states to ensure that they were not viewed as an easy target by Russia. Edward Lucas thought that in order to defend the Baltic States, it would be vital to pre-position troops and materiel there, noting that it would be much less expensive to base troops in Eastern Europe than in, for instance, Germany. Both he and James de Waal, Senior Consulting Fellow at Chatham House, thought the deployment of troops to the area also increased NATO's credibility.[86] Sir Andrew Wood agreed that there was a case for basing NATO troops in Eastern Europe, suggesting that they could be pre-positioned in Poland.[87] The UK should reconsider whether to retain staging and training rights in Germany to facilitate deployment.

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81 http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1103.pdf

82 Q259

83 Defence Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2013–14, Deterrence in the twenty-first century, HC 1066 , paragraph 36

84 Q200

85 Q268

86 Q163-4; 187;31

87 Q255

62. Although Lord Richards did not believe a permanent British base was required in the Baltic States, he thought regular exercises taking place in the area would be beneficial to UK armed forces.[88] Lord Stirrup also counselled against permanent basing arguing that

> the chances are that if you did deploy forces, or station forces in peace time, you would be stationed in the wrong place, because as I said, what comes around next nearly always surprises you. I would prefer to have a system that is exercised regularly.[89]

63. In a recent speech, Anders Fogh Rasmussen emphasised that NATO needed to be ready to respond quickly when and wherever it was required and so an Alliance Readiness Action Plan was being prepared for the summit which was examining

> how we can best deploy our forces for defence and deterrence. This includes force posture, positions, and presence. We are considering reinforcement measures, such as necessary infrastructure, designation of bases and pre-positioning of equipment and supplies. We are reviewing our defence plans, threat assessments, intelligence-sharing arrangements, early-warning procedures, and crisis response planning. We are developing a new exercise schedule, adapted to the new security environment. And we want to further strengthen our NATO Response Force and Special Forces, so we can respond more quickly to any threat against any member of the Alliance, including where we have little warning.[90]

64. General Shirreff thought that NATO needed a standing reserve force which was capable of being deployed throughout the NATO area.[91] He suggested that something similar to the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force - Land which involved all NATO allies and was a standing force would give the Alliance greater credibility. He told us that

> It bound all the allies in from the very start and it is exactly the sort of reserve capability that I think the alliance needs in this very dangerous time.[92]

65. **The willingness, ability and readiness to act against common threats are vital for the future existence of NATO. This requires a collective view of Russian actions and possible responses should the situation in Ukraine worsen or repeat itself in a NATO country. The absence of a collective view risks perpetrating the Russian perception that NATO is divided and lacks the political will to respond to aggression, undermining NATO's deterrent posture.**

66. ***We recommend that the NATO Summit sets out plans to ensure:***

- ***the pre-positioning of equipment in the Baltic States;***

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88 Q132

89 Q55

90 Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary General, NATO '*The Future of NATO: A Strong Alliance in an Unpredictable World*', Chatham House 19 June 2014

91 Q312

92 Q312

- ***a continuous (if not technically 'permanent') presence of NATO troops, on exercise in the Baltic.***
- ***the establishment of headquarters structures, at divisional and corps level to focus on Eastern Europe and the Baltic***
- ***consideration of the reestablishment of a NATO standing reserve force along the lines of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force–Land, involving all Member States.***

The Next Generation Military threat

The vulnerabilities of the Baltic States to asymmetric warfare

67. The ethnic composition of the Baltic States makes them particularly vulnerable to asymmetric attacks from Russia. As in Eastern Ukraine, the Baltic States have substantial ethnic Russian populations, particularly Latvia (which is 26% Russian) and Estonia (which is 25% Russian).

68. In the eastern Estonian county of Ida Viru over 70% of residents are ethnic Russian.[93] This county lies on the Russian border and has the greatest industrial and energy capacity of any Estonian county.[94] The region of Latgale in Latvia has a Russian ethnic population which makes up 39% of the total population and 54% of the population speak Russian at home.[95]

69. In Latvia, we were told of the influence of Russian language channels upon the Russian-speaking Latvian population. The Latvian Government has decided to set up a Latvian Russian-language channel but it is unlikely to have the same reach as the Russian channels which have larger production budgets for entertainment shows. Local polling had found that 43% of Russian-speakers in Latvia support the annexation of Crimea. Sir Andrew Wood told us that although the BBC Russian Service was available, it was only online and was in no way a counterweight to the propaganda channelled through Russian Television.[96] **The combination of substantial Russian minorities (which constitute a majority in some areas) and the influence of the Russian media could make Estonia and Latvia in particular vulnerable to the type of information warfare and inciting of disturbances that have caused such chaos in Ukraine.**

70. Although Lithuania has a significantly smaller ethnic Russian population (around 6%), it is considered militarily attractive for Russia as it would create a link through Belarus between mainland Russia and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad.[97] Both Latvia and Lithuania have both confirmed that they believe their citizens have been subject to

93 Statistics Estonia statistical database: Population indicators and composition

94 Foundation Ida-Virumaa Industrial Areas Development (IVIA)

95 Latvijas Statistika, Population database

96 Q230

97 Q171

information operations. In a paper produced for the US Army War College, Dr Steve Tatham reported that

> At a NATO PsyOps Conference held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in the fall of 2012, Lithuanian and Latvian IO [Information Operation] officers provided the conference with a detailed presentation on how, in their view, Russia was proactively seeking to discredit the idea of Lithuanian (and Latvian) national identity. This, they demonstrated, was being undertaken by a series of concerted and organized IO activities, notably in the cultural, television, sporting, and performing domains. They also highlighted how Lithuania's Special Forces, Artivas, and their operations in Afghanistan had become the subject of concerted public exposure.[98]

71. The Baltic States are vulnerable to Russian pressure over trade and energy supplies to varying degrees. Russia is Lithuania's largest trading partner and accounts for roughly 25% of total trade. Although the figures for both Estonia and Latvia are 10%,[99] Russia is Latvia's second biggest trading partner.

72. In terms of energy, all of the Baltic States' gas is supplied by Russia and there are currently no gas interconnectors between the Baltic States and the rest of Europe (although one between Germany and Lithuania is due to be completed by 2018).[100] Edward Lucas highlighted the actions that Russia might undertake when trying to destabilise a Baltic State.

> One thing we should be on the alert for, for example, would be Russian attempts to destabilise the Baltic States' economies. Are we ready to come in, protect trade and investment there and counter that? That is not really a NATO task, but the first thing to do if you were weakening the Baltic states would be to attack one of them with trade sanctions, blocking the east-west transit flows or things like that, knocking a few percentage points off GDP, sending unemployment up and putting them in a recession. […] On energy security, we are doing quite well in building resilience into the European gas grid, but there is still no gas interconnector to the Baltic States from the rest of Europe. They are dependent on Russian gas.[101]

73. Pressure may be exerted on the Baltic States and other countries by Russia in a number of ways which fall well outside of NATO's remit, including over trade and energy supplies.

Constraints in UK/NATO Next Generation training and doctrine

74. As Chris Donnelly noted, one feature of the types of ambiguous operation evident in Ukraine has been that they appear below a threshold of response and are designed to create

98 Dr Steve Tatham, *U.S. Governmental Information Operations And Strategic Communications: A Discredited Tool Or User Failure? Implications For Future Conflict*, Strategic Studies Institute, December 2013, pg 57

99 *Echoes of the Sudetenland*,The Economist, 29 March 2014

100 *Conscious uncoupling*, The Economist, 3 April 2014

101 Q181

uncertainty about whether a military response would be proportionate or legitimate. In the event of such an attack being perpetrated on a NATO Member State, the Secretary of State acknowledged that such action would not necessarily invoke an Article 5 response. He told us that he thought such an attack was unlikely however.[102]

75. Concerns have therefore been raised that Article 5 may be of limited utility in response to ambiguous attacks of this nature. Sir Hew Strachan raised the possibility that a cyber-attack may not constitute an Article 5 attack.[103] The 2007 cyber attack against Estonia did not elicit an Article 5 response. The Secretary of State acknowledged the difficulty of invoking an Article 5 response following an asymmetric attack where it is difficult to prove a state actor is responsible.

> This is an emerging challenge, not just for NATO but for all nations, to define the boundaries of warfare in an era when it is becoming ever more complex. We have seen cyber-attacks on many nations, and defining the point at which a response is triggered in the way that a conventional military attack would have triggered a response is challenging. It is challenging ethically; it is challenging legally.[104]

76. General Sir Richard Shirreff told us that there needed to be a discussion about how NATO responded to asymmetric attacks on a Member State.

> what Article 5 means in the 21st century, because we still look at it through Cold War spectacles. Where is this irregular capability? At what point is a threshold being crossed? Is cyber a threshold? I am sure that the way to think this through is by setting up proper exercises and proper training, which trains not only forces at the sharp end but the political leadership as well.[105]

77. Both Lord Stirrup and Edward Lucas saw difficulties in invoking Article 5 in response to the sort of operations seen in Eastern Ukraine in which groups of civilians, allegedly accompanied by Russian Special Forces, took over Government buildings.[106] Chris Donnelly recommended that the Washington Treaty be amended to remove the word 'armed' in order to counter this problem.[107] He warned that

> We are no longer just interested in the kinetic—the tanks, ships and planes—but in how Russia and other countries are using these new tools to achieve their political objectives. It is warfare below our threshold of attention.[108]

78. A number of witnesses have suggested that there may be a lack of political will in NATO to support an invocation of Article 5 in the event of an asymmetric attack, even

102 Q366
103 Q28
104 Q363
105 Q268
106 Q58; 158
107 Q282
108 Q268

where it might be proportionate and legal.[109] Ambiguous operations against NATO Members would be likely to be designed to exploit division in the Alliance.

79. The question of public support for NATO's collective defence guarantee is also one Member States have yet to address. The diverse nature of NATO operations (in Afghanistan and Libya for instance) have led to confusion around the purpose of NATO. Public opinion research in 2008 (following the Russian military action against Georgia) found that, should a similar attack have taken place on a Baltic State, less than 50% of the populations in several leading NATO states (US, UK, Spain, Italy, Germany and France) would have supported a defence.

Table 1: Defending Baltic States from Russian attack, 2008

	France	Germany	Italy	Spain	UK	US
Strongly support	8%	12%	13%	15%	13%	16%
Somewhat support	32%	15%	24%	22%	22%	20%
Neither support nor oppose	27%	24%	24%	23%	34%	30%
Somewhat oppose	19%	15%	19%	17%	15%	17%
Strongly oppose	14%	35%	20%	23%	16%	16%

Source: Q1255, http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/HI_FinancialTimes_HarrisPoll_September2008_Tables_EU.pdf

James Sherr questioned the effort that was put into explaining the role of NATO. He asked

> What effort is put into the Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom? Who is funding it? Has anyone heard of it?[110]

He suggested that it was the duty of political leaders to educate the public about the purpose and benefits of NATO.

80. Article 4 of the Washington Treaty provides for NATO Member States to request consultations in the event that the "territorial integrity, political independence or security" of any Member State is threatened. This Article was invoked by Poland on the basis that events in Ukraine represented "a threat to neighbouring Allied countries and [had] direct and serious implications for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area". The North Atlantic Council met on 4 March 2014 and agreed that

> Despite repeated calls by the international community, Russia continues to violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to violate its international commitments. These developments present serious

109 Q166, 296

110 Q295

> implications for the security and stability of the Euro Atlantic area. Allies stand together in the spirit of strong solidarity in this grave crisis.[111]

This was only the fourth occasion on which Article 4 has been invoked since the signing of the Treaty.[112]

81. The ability to counter asymmetric warfare will be a vital tool for NATO allies in the near-future. The recent report by the Group of Policy Experts (chaired by Dr Robin Niblett) concluded that

> The crisis in Ukraine has revealed the threats to NATO members from 'non-linear' forms of aggression, which combine mass disinformation campaigns, cyber-measures, the use of special forces, sometimes disguised as local partisans, mobilization of local proxies, intimidation through displays of strength, and economic coercion. NATO needs to develop the doctrines, instruments and techniques to be able to defend its members against these threats. Rapidly reconstituting command and control, ensuring the resilience and continuing interoperability of cyber systems, counter-propaganda and defining the role of special forces are just some of the challenges ahead for NATO members.[113]

82. Lord Richards told us that NATO must understand how a future war would be fought, noting that whilst NATO had a large military capability, there was every chance that it could be defeated by asymmetric tactics.[114] Cyber attacks are a common occurrence, and in Ukraine Russian information operations have suggested that NATO is using Ukraine as a base from which to launch an offensive against Moscow.[115] Events in Eastern Ukraine have seen the use of proxy groups to seize public buildings and declare independence from the Ukrainian state and economic attacks have been mounted against the Ukrainian economy.[116] Keir Giles noted that NATO allies have been slow to challenge Russia's version of events in Ukraine, even when it could be proven to be untrue.[117]

83. Dr Igor Sutyagin, research fellow at RUSI and Major General Neretnieks told us that we needed to be able to understand such measures and counter them if we wished to maintain effective defence.[118] All agreed that more analysis and understanding was required, a view shared by Sir Andrew Wood who pointed out that these were not just tactics adopted by the Russians-they were also used by the Chinese.[119] Keir Giles told us

111 Statement by the North Atlantic Council following meeting under article 4 of the Washington Treaty, 4 March 2014

112 The three previous occasions all followed requests by Turkey (in 2003 on the outbreak of the Iraq war; in June 2012 after the shooting down of a Turkish military jet; and in October 2012 after Syrian attacks on Turkey.

113 Group of Policy Experts, *Collective Defence and Common Security*. June 2014,.p 3,

114 Q106

115 *US is Militarizing Ukraine to Invade Russia. Sergei Glazyev*, RIA Novosti, 10 June 2014

116 Q181

117 Q167

118 Q203; 210

119 Q217

that one solution lay within the Alliance, looking to the expertise and understanding of NATO allies in Eastern Europe.

> There is a rule of thumb that the closer a country is to Russia, the more resources and clever people they throw at understanding Russia. We have a lot to learn from Russia's neighbours, and we always have had. We can use their help in building up our capability.[120]

During our recent visit to Latvia and Estonia we met with Jānis Bērziņš of the Latvian Defence Academy who authored a paper on *Russia's New Generation Warfare In Ukraine: Implications For Latvian Defense Policy*[121] and Martin Hurt of the International Centre for Defence Studies who authored a paper on *Lessons Identified in Crimea: Does Estonia's national defence model meet our needs?*[122] which examined the Russian use of asymmetrical tactics. Both papers have helped to frame our thinking on this subject.

84. We asked the Secretary of State whether the UK had the capability to deal with asymmetric warfare and were told that many of the tactics used in Ukraine were well understood by the Ministry of Defence and that, whilst some fine tuning of responses might be needed, those events were not as revolutionary as they first appeared.[123] When we asked about the MoD's ability to counter information warfare, we were told that the Department had considerable expertise in strategic communications and that they were currently providing support to the NATO Centre of Excellence for Strategic Communications (where best practice is shared amongst experts from NATO allies).[124] When we asked whether there was a permanent UK permanent presence there, we were told that there was not currently but that there were plans to have one in place by January 2015.[125]

85. NATO also has a Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), which was founded and accredited by NATO in 2008, which has a permanent UK member of staff. The Centre has several tasks including the development of doctrine, cyber awareness and training, the generation of lessons learned, and research and development. However, the Centre is understaffed with a number of key roles to be filled. Although NATO doesn't carry out 'offensive' cyber operations, some NATO allies are now publicly admitting that they do so on a national basis.

86. ***We recommend that NATO is tasked and mandated to plan, train and exercise for a cyber attack to ensure the necessary resilience measures are in place. The use of***

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120 Q193

121 Jānis Bērziņš, *Russia's new generation warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian defense policy*, National Defence Academy of Latvia:

Center for Security and Strategic Research, April 2014

122 Martin Hurt, *Lessons Identified in Crimea: Does Estonia's national defence model meet our needs?*, International Centre for defence Studies, April 2014

123 Q215

124 Q371

125 Ministry of Defence, (TND0017)

asymmetric warfare tactics present a substantial challenge to a political military alliance such as NATO. These tactics are designed to test the lower limit of the Alliance's response threshold, are likely to involve deniable actors, and work to exploit political division. They also bring in to question the operation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO's cornerstone.

87. **Russia's actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine illustrate the immediate (although not the only) reasons for reconsideration of Article 5 in relation to'deniable' actions. Cyber attacks—where attribution is often difficult but of central importance before any offensive targeted responses are considered—will increase. The use of airliners hijacked for attacks in New York and the Pentagon in the USA in 2001 were considered sufficient to invoke a NATO Article 5 response, even though not immediately attributable to any nation state but to non-state actors. That NATO Article 5 declaration (the only one since the inception of NATO) was used in conjunction with Chapter 7 UN Resolutions to form the ISAF missions and take military action against the nation state of Afghanistan for harbouring those non-state actors and their promoters. Attribution therefore—even if of vicarious or 'deniable' promotion by nation states, such as in the situation in Ukraine—illustrates the developing need for NATO to re-examine the criteria and doctrines, both legal and military, for the declaration and use of Article 5 for collective defence and the declaration and use of associated Article 4 (itself only invoked four times) for collective security.**

88. **In particular, NATO must resolve the contradiction between the specifications in Article 5 that a response should be to an "armed attack" and the likelihood on the other hand of an "unarmed attack" (such as a cyber attack or other ambiguous warfare). NATO must consider whether the adjective "armed" should be removed from the definition of an Article 5 attack.**

89. **The breadth of the Russian unconventional threat, stretching into economic and energy policy makes it clear that NATO cannot counter all of the specific threats posed by Russia. Responding to these specific threats will be a matter for national Governments and the EU. However, NATO must ensure that its response to any such operation perpetrated against a Member State is timely and robust. This also requires investment in new capabilities to address the new threats.**

90. ***We recommend that the NATO Summit also address the Alliance's vulnerabilities in the face of asymmetric (ambiguous warfare) attacks. In particular it should consider***

- ***What steps it needs to take to deter asymmetric threats;***
- ***How it should respond in the face of an imminent or actual such attack;***
- ***The circumstances in which the Article 5 mutual defence guarantee will be invoked in the face of asymmetric attack;***
- ***How it can, as a matter of urgency, create an Alliance doctrine for "ambiguous warfare" and make the case for investment in an Alliance asymmetric or "ambiguous warfare" capability.***

Weak Russian assessment capacity

91. Sir Hew Strachan, Chichele Professor of the History of War, All Souls College Oxford, believed that the annexation of Crimea had been predictable and he questioned whether the level of shock expressed indicated shortcomings in the UK Government's ability to analyse Russia.[126] Indeed four days prior to the start of the Russian annexation of Crimea, the former Foreign Secretary (following a conversation with the Russian Foreign Minister) reassured the House of Commons that Russia was unlikely to intervene militarily in Crimea.

> My hon. Friend will be pleased and somewhat reassured to hear that Mr Lavrov did not raise the issue of military intervention in Ukraine. My hon. Friend was right to point out that the Russian Black sea fleet is based at Sevastopol, but it is clear, as I said on the television yesterday, that any notion of this kind is manifestly not in the interests of Russia or Ukraine.[127]

92. Keir Giles, argued that there was a need for an improvement in the Government's analytical capability noting that there had previously existed an analytical unit which had been very successful at predicting Russian actions. He told us that this unit

> warned of the armed conflict in Georgia and predicted the Putin-Medvedev presidency swaps both times. That was shut down in 2010. Defence intelligence had two individuals studying Russian military policy. Their augmentees amounted to three; that was scaled back to one a couple of weeks ago. The Ukraine desk officer post was chopped two years ago, so when they wanted to have someone covering Ukraine specifically, they brought in the south Caucasus desk person in the hope that nothing would kick off in the south Caucasus at the same time.[128]

93. Although he suggested that there may be a need to increase the number of Russian-speakers employed by the Department, Peter Watkins, Director General of Security Policy of the Ministry of Defence, did not see the need to reconstitute the Advance Research and Assessment Group. Instead he suggested that the Ministry of Defence had

> an array of other sources of advice and information in the Department, whether from our own defence intelligence staff or from academia, think-tanks, etc. Therefore, we are not deprived of input on the sorts of issues you raised.

94. The former Defence Secretary rejected the idea that the MoD had been taken by surprise by events in Ukraine.[129] He told the Committee that although events might seem dramatic to the outside observer they were less so to those who were monitoring the situation within the MoD. He added that strategic and military colleagues were inclined to

126 Q4

127 HC Deb, 24 Feb 2014, col. 35 [Commons Chamber]

128 Q183

129 Q315

see events as "an evolution of something that we've been very much aware of for a period of time, and the roots of which we can trace."[130]

95. Chris Donnelly told us that the use of asymmetric tactics

> isn't new as far as the Russians are concerned, but I think it's new to us. I think we have forgotten the experience that you have just pointed to. I think historians are aware of it, but if you walk around Whitehall today, you don't get a sense that we understand how important this is. I think we have lost our collective memory about it.[131]

As referenced above, Chris Donnelly summarised the nature of the new forms of warfare that were being adopted by Russia, added that Russia was employing "a form of warfare that is operating under our reaction threshold."

96. Sir Andrew Wood told us that the understanding of this sort of warfare is lacking within the UK Government,[132] something which the Ministry of Defence denied. The former Secretary of State told us that

> This is an area where the key factor is expertise, not big battalions, and we do have considerable expertise within the Ministry of Defence[133]

We are surprised by these assertions which are not in line with the evidence we have received on the significant reduction in British capacity for intelligence and analysis of Russia and the consequences for preparedness for the events in Crimea and Ukraine. If indeed the MoD was aware of the evolution of Russian military tactics, we remain to be convinced that any preparations were made to counter this new threat.

97. ***Given questions raised by Russian actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, we recommend that the Government fundamentally reviews its priorities as defined in the National Security Strategy. In particular, we note that state-on-state conflict was designated a low, tier 3, threat. We therefore suggest that substantial reworking of the National Security Strategy is required immediately.***

98. **The nature of the reappearance of the threat from Russia, and its likely manifestation in asymmetric forms of warfare underline the importance of high quality, independent analysis of developments in Russia and in Russian military doctrine. The closure of the Advanced Research and Assessment Group has led to a drastic denuding of capability in this area. The MoD needs a new Conflict Studies Research Centre (which ARAG subsumed).**

99. **There may be an argument that lack of MoD capacity doesn't matter given Foreign and Commonwealth Office's presence in the region. However, given cuts in the budget**

130 Q327

131 Q268

132 Q217

133 Q371

of the FCO; the level of ambassadorial representation in the Baltic States; the lack of designated language posts (and therefore a lack of language speakers in the Baltic region); and the minimal size of the FCO desk dealing with Ukraine before the conflict, we believe that this capability gap is not unique to the MoD but represents a significant strategic gap for the Government.

100. ***We recommend that the Ministry of Defence address, also as a matter of urgency, its capacity to understand the nature of the current security threat from Russia and its motivations. Ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of Defence Attachés to provide the analysis and expertise required is one measure which would help to address this issue. In particular we recommend the appointment of additional Defence Attachés to cover the Baltic States and in Central and Eastern Europe and reverse the cutbacks in Russia and Ukraine. We further recommend that the Government ensure that there is adequate representation in Poland which may be of critical importance in the future. We also recommend the creation of a "red team" in the Ministry of Defence to provide a challenge to existing orthodoxy from a specifically Russian perspective.***

101. ***We recommend that the NATO Summit also address the Alliance's vulnerabilities in the face of asymmetric (ambiguous warfare) attacks. In particular it should consider:***

- ***How to establish the intelligence processes and an "Indicators and Warning" mechanism to alert Allies to the danger or imminence of such an attack***

5 Recommendations

102. ***The NATO alliance has not considered Russia as an adversary or a potential territorial threat to its Member States for twenty years. It is now forced to do so as a result of Russia's recent actions. Events in Ukraine this year, following on from the cyber attack on Estonia in 2007 and the invasion of Georgia by Russia in 2008, are a "wake-up call" for NATO. They have revealed alarming deficiencies in the state of NATO preparedness, which will be tough to fix. The UK Government should take the lead in ensuring that the NATO Summit addresses these threats in the most concrete and systematic fashion.***

103. ***We recommend that the NATO Summit sets plans to ensure:***

- ***dramatic improvements to the existing NATO rapid reaction force;***
- ***the pre-positioning of equipment in the Baltic States;***
- ***a continuous (if not technically 'permanent') presence of NATO troops, on training and exercise in the Baltic;***
- ***the re-establishment of large-scale military exercises including representatives from all NATO Member States. These exercises must involve both military and political decision-makers;***
- ***the establishment of headquarters structures, at divisional and corps level to focus on Eastern Europe and the Baltic;***
- ***consideration of the re-establishment of a NATO standing reserve force along the lines of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force–Land, involving all Member States; and,***
- ***re-examination of the criteria, doctrine and responses to calls under Article 4 for 'collective security' support against asymmetric attacks, especially, but not limited to, cyber attacks where attribution is difficult.***

104. ***We recommend that the NATO Summit also addresses the Alliance's vulnerabilities in the face of asymmetric (ambiguous warfare) attacks. In particular it should consider***

- ***How to establish the intelligence processes and an "Indicators and Warning" mechanism to alert Allies to the danger or imminence of such an attack;***
- ***What steps it needs to take to deter asymmetric threats;***
- ***How it should respond in the face of an imminent or actual such attack;***
- ***The circumstances in which the Article 5 mutual defence guarantee will be invoked in the face of asymmetric attack;***

- ***How it can, as a matter of urgency, create an Alliance doctrine for "ambiguous warfare" and make the case for investment in an Alliance asymmetric or "ambiguous warfare" capability.***

105. ***We recommend that the Ministry of Defence address, also as a matter of urgency, its capacity to understand the nature of the current security threat from Russia and its motivations. Ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of Defence Attachés to provide the analysis and expertise required is one measure which would help to address this issue. In particular we recommend the appointment of additional Defence Attachés to cover the Baltic States and in Central and Eastern Europe and reverse the cutbacks in Russia and Ukraine. We further recommend that the Government ensure that there is adequate representation in Poland which may be of critical importance in the future. We also recommend the creation of a "red team" in the Ministry of Defence to provide a challenge to existing orthodoxy from a specifically Russian perspective.***

106. ***We recommend that, in opening the NATO Summit, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State should make a commitment to the UK maintaining defence spending at or above 2% of GDP. Increasing levels of spending amongst European NATO Member States and the collective efficiency of such spending must be made a priority of the Summit as a demonstration of NATO's political will and its commitment to collective defence.***

107. **This report does not deal with the detail of emerging events in the non-NATO state of Ukraine but it would be wrong to publish a report on NATO relations and responses to Russia without expressing our sympathies and condolences to all the families, friends and nations who have experienced the deaths of relatives, friends and citizens from the downing of Malaysian Airlines civilian flight MH17 with military rockets near the borders of Ukraine and Russia. Our condolences are extended to all affected but especially to the relatives and friends of the UK citizens killed and to our allies who suffered such a heavy toll of innocent lives.**

Conclusions and recommendations

Russian Forces

1. The Russian deployment of asymmetric tactics represents a new challenge to NATO. Events in Ukraine demonstrate in particular Russia's ability to effectively paralyse an opponent in the pursuit of its interests with a range of tools including psychological operations, information warfare and intimidation with massing of conventional forces. Such operations may be designed to slip below NATO's threshold for reaction. In many circumstances, such operations are also deniable, increasing the difficulties for an adversary is mounting a credible and legitimate response. (Paragraph 29)

The UK and NATO's capacity to respond

2. We believe that the Armed Forces needs to ensure that its training covers all types of warfare and responses to threats beyond counter insurgency actions. For instance, has the wide-wet gap crossing capacity been preserved? (Paragraph 44)

3. The failure of national military forces to provide sufficient staff resources has left NATO command structures depleted. It is disappointing that the UK is continuing to fail to fill the posts expected of it. (Paragraph 50)

4. *We recommend that the UK (and US) practice the deployment of forces at least to divisional scale to Poland and the Baltic States via Germany.* (Paragraph 51)

5. *We recommend that the NATO Summit sets out plans to ensure:* (Paragraph 52)

- *dramatic improvements to the existing NATO rapid reaction force; and*
- *the re-establishment of large-scale military exercises including representatives from all NATO Member States. These exercises must involve both military and political decision-makers.*

6. The willingness, ability and readiness to act against common threats are vital for the future existence of NATO. This requires a collective view of Russian actions and possible responses should the situation in Ukraine worsen or repeat itself in a NATO country. The absence of a collective view risks perpetrating the Russian perception that NATO is divided and lacks the political will to respond to aggression, undermining NATO's deterrent posture. (Paragraph 65)

7. *We recommend that the NATO Summit sets out plans to ensure:* (Paragraph 66)

- *the pre-positioning of equipment in the Baltic States;*
- *a continuous (if not technically 'permanent') presence of NATO troops, on exercise in the Baltic.*
- *the establishment of headquarters structures, at divisional and corps level to focus on Eastern Europe and the Baltic*

- *consideration of the reestablishment of a NATO standing reserve force along the lines of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force–Land, involving all Member States.*

8. The combination of substantial Russian minorities (which constitute a majority in some areas) and the influence of the Russian media could make Estonia and Latvia in particular vulnerable to the type of information warfare and inciting of disturbances that have caused such chaos in Ukraine. (Paragraph 69)

9. *We recommend that NATO is tasked and mandated to plan, train and exercise for a cyber attack to ensure the necessary resilience measures are in place. The use of asymmetric warfare tactics present a substantial challenge to a political military alliance such as NATO. These tactics are designed to test the lower limit of the Alliance's response threshold, are likely to involve deniable actors, and work to exploit political division. They also bring in to question the operation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO's cornerstone.* (Paragraph 86)

10. Russia's actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine illustrate the immediate (although not the only) reasons for reconsideration of Article 5 in relation to'deniable' actions. Cyber attacks—where attribution is often difficult but of central importance before any offensive targeted responses are considered—will increase. The use of airliners hijacked for attacks in New York and the Pentagon in the USA in 2001 were considered sufficient to invoke a NATO Article 5 response, even though not immediately attributable to any nation state but to non-state actors. That NATO Article 5 declaration (the only one since the inception of NATO) was used in conjunction with Chapter 7 UN Resolutions to form the ISAF missions and take military action against the nation state of Afghanistan for harbouring those non-state actors and their promoters. Attribution therefore—even if of vicarious or 'deniable' promotion by nation states, such as in the situation in Ukraine—illustrates the developing need for NATO to re-examine the criteria and doctrines, both legal and military, for the declaration and use of Article 5 for collective defence and the declaration and use of associated Article 4 (itself only invoked four times) for collective security. (Paragraph 87)

11. In particular, NATO must resolve the contradiction between the specifications in Article 5 that a response should be to an "armed attack" and the likelihood on the other hand of an "unarmed attack" (such as a cyber attack or other ambiguous warfare). NATO must consider whether the adjective "armed" should be removed from the definition of an Article 5 attack. (Paragraph 88)

12. The breadth of the Russian unconventional threat, stretching into economic and energy policy makes it clear that NATO cannot counter all of the specific threats posed by Russia. Responding to these specific threats will be a matter for national Governments and the EU. However, NATO must ensure that its response to any such operation perpetrated against a Member State is timely and robust. This also requires investment in new capabilities to address the new threats. (Paragraph 89)

13. *We recommend that the NATO Summit also address the Alliance's vulnerabilities in the face of asymmetric (ambiguous warfare) attacks. In particular it should consider* (Paragraph 90)

- *What steps it needs to take to deter asymmetric threats;*
- *How it should respond in the face of an imminent or actual such attack;*
- *The circumstances in which the Article 5 mutual defence guarantee will be invoked in the face of asymmetric attack;*
- *How it can, as a matter of urgency, create an Alliance doctrine for "ambiguous warfare" and make the case for investment in an Alliance asymmetric or "ambiguous warfare" capability.*

14. *Given questions raised by Russian actions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, we recommend that the Government fundamentally reviews its priorities as defined in the National Security Strategy. In particular, we note that state-on-state conflict was designated a low, tier 3, threat. We therefore suggest that substantial reworking of the National Security Strategy is required immediately.* (Paragraph 97)

15. The nature of the reappearance of the threat from Russia, and its likely manifestation in asymmetric forms of warfare underline the importance of high quality, independent analysis of developments in Russia and in Russian military doctrine. The closure of the Advanced Research and Assessment Group has led to a drastic denuding of capability in this area. The MoD needs a new Conflict Studies Research Centre (which ARAG subsumed). (Paragraph 98)

16. There may be an argument that lack of MoD capacity doesn't matter given Foreign and Commonwealth Office's presence in the region. However, given cuts in the budget of the FCO; the level of ambassadorial representation in the Baltic States; the lack of designated language posts (and therefore a lack of language speakers in the Baltic region); and the minimal size of the FCO desk dealing with Ukraine before the conflict, we believe that this capability gap is not unique to the MoD but represents a significant strategic gap for the Government. (Paragraph 99)

17. *We recommend that the Ministry of Defence address, also as a matter of urgency, its capacity to understand the nature of the current security threat from Russia and its motivations. Ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of Defence Attachés to provide the analysis and expertise required is one measure which would help to address this issue. In particular we recommend the appointment of additional Defence Attachés to cover the Baltic States and in Central and Eastern Europe and reverse the cutbacks in Russia and Ukraine. We further recommend that the Government ensure that there is adequate representation in Poland which may be of critical importance in the future. We also recommend the creation of a "red team" in the Ministry of Defence to provide a challenge to existing orthodoxy from a specifically Russian perspective.* (Paragraph 100)

18. *We recommend that the NATO Summit also address the Alliance's vulnerabilities in the face of asymmetric (ambiguous warfare) attacks. In particular it should consider:* (Paragraph 101)

- *How to establish the intelligence processes and an "Indicators and Warning" mechanism to alert Allies to the danger or imminence of such an attack*

Recommendations

19. *The NATO alliance has not considered Russia as an adversary or a potential territorial threat to its Member States for twenty years. It is now forced to do so as a result of Russia's recent actions. Events in Ukraine this year, following on from the cyber attack on Estonia in 2007 and the invasion of Georgia by Russia in 2008, are a "wake-up call" for NATO. They have revealed alarming deficiencies in the state of NATO preparedness, which will be tough to fix. The UK Government should take the lead in ensuring that the NATO Summit addresses these threats in the most concrete and systematic fashion.* (Paragraph 102)

20. *We recommend that the NATO Summit sets plans to ensure:* (Paragraph 103)

- *dramatic improvements to the existing NATO rapid reaction force;*
- *the pre-positioning of equipment in the Baltic States;*
- *a continuous (if not technically 'permanent') presence of NATO troops, on training and exercise in the Baltic;*
- *the re-establishment of large-scale military exercises including representatives from all NATO Member States. These exercises must involve both military and political decision-makers;*
- *the establishment of headquarters structures, at divisional and corps level to focus on Eastern Europe and the Baltic;*
- *consideration of the re-establishment of a NATO standing reserve force along the lines of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force–Land, involving all Member States; and,*
- *re-examination of the criteria, doctrine and responses to calls under Article 4 for 'collective security' support against asymmetric attacks, especially, but not limited to, cyber attacks where attribution is difficult.*

21. *We recommend that the NATO Summit also addresses the Alliance's vulnerabilities in the face of asymmetric (ambiguous warfare) attacks. In particular it should consider* (Paragraph 104)

- *How to establish the intelligence processes and an "Indicators and Warning" mechanism to alert Allies to the danger or imminence of such an attack;*
- *What steps it needs to take to deter asymmetric threats;*
- *How it should respond in the face of an imminent or actual such attack;*

- *The circumstances in which the Article 5 mutual defence guarantee will be invoked in the face of asymmetric attack;*
- *How it can, as a matter of urgency, create an Alliance doctrine for "ambiguous warfare" and make the case for investment in an Alliance asymmetric or "ambiguous warfare" capability.*

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23. *We recommend that, in opening the NATO Summit, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State should make a commitment to the UK maintaining defence spending at or above 2% of GDP. Increasing levels of spending amongst European NATO Member States and the collective efficiency of such spending must be made a priority of the Summit as a demonstration of NATO's political will and its commitment to collective defence.* (Paragraph 106)

24. This report does not deal with the detail of emerging events in the non-NATO state of Ukraine but it would be wrong to publish a report on NATO relations and responses to Russia without expressing our sympathies and condolences to all the families, friends and nations who have experienced the deaths of relatives, friends and citizens from the downing of Malaysian Airlines civilian flight MH17 with military rockets near the borders of Ukraine and Russia. Our condolences are extended to all affected but especially to the relatives and friends of the UK citizens killed and to our allies who suffered such a heavy toll of innocent lives. (Paragraph 107)

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 22 July 2014

Members present:

Rory Stewart, in the Chair

Mr James Gray
Mr Dai Havard
Sir Bob Russell
Gisela Stuart
Derek Twigg

Draft Report (Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two - NATO), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 107 read and agreed to.

Summary and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 3 September 2014 at 2.00 pm

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the Committee's inquiry page at www.parliament.uk/defcom.

Wednesday 7 May 2014	*Question number*
Sir Hew Strachan, Chichele Professor of the History of War, All Souls College, Oxford, and **James de Waal**, Senior Consulting Fellow, International Security Department, Chatham House	Q1–50
Wednesday 18 June 2014	
Lord Stirrup, former Chief of the Defence Staff gave evidence. Q1-98	Q51–98
Lord Richards, former Chief of the Defence Staff	Q99–153
Tuesday 24 June 2014	
Keir Giles, Chatham House, and **Edward Lucas**, The Economist	Q154–195
Major General Neretnieks, (retired), **Robin Niblett**, Chatham House, and **Igor Sutyagin**, RUSI	Q196–212
Tuesday 1 July 2014	
Sir Andrew Wood, former UK Ambassador to Moscow and Associate Fellow, Chatham House	Q213–255
Wednesday 9 July 2014	
James Sherr, Associate Fellow, Chatham House, **Chris Donnelly**, Director, Institute for Statecraft, and **General Sir Richard Shirreff**, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, NATO	Q256–313
Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, Secretary of State for Defence, **Peter Watkins CBE**, Director General, Security Policy and **Paul Wyatt**, Head, Defence Strategy and Priorities, Ministry of Defence	Q314–387

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the Committee's inquiry web page at www.parliament.uk/defcom. TND numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1 Ben Hardwick (TND0014)
2 Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament (TND0009)
3 Cdr N D Maccartan-Ward (TND0007)
4 Cdr N D Maccartan-Ward (TND0012)
5 Christopher Coker (TND0002)
6 Commander Nd Maccartan-Ward (TND0015)
7 Defencesynergia (TND0006)
8 Dr Jeremy Stocker (TND0005)
9 Dr Jonathan Eyal, Director, International Security Studies, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (TND0020)
10 Major General (Retired) Karlis Neretnieks (TND0019)
11 Ministry Of Defence (TND0013)
12 Ministry Of Defence (TND0017)
13 Nuclear Education Trust (TND0011)
14 Nuclear Information Service (TND0010)
15 Sir Paul Newton (TND0004)
16 Sir Robert Fry (TND0003)
17 Yvonne Walsham (TND0001)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Session

All publications from the Committee are available on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/defcom.
The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2014-15

First Report	MoD Main Estimates 2014-15	HC 469
Second Report and First Joint Report	Scrutiny of Arms Exports and Arms Controls (2014) First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills, Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development Committees of Session 2014–15	HC 186
Third Report	Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two: NATO	HC 358