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Cautious and rotational – US military engagement on NATO's eastern flank

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The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 put a stop to the gradual scaling down of US military engagement in Europe, a policy that the United States had pursued since the end of the Cold War. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict became a watershed for the US perceptions of European security as Washington started to see the threat of a conflict between Russia and a NATO member as more probable. The United States decided that – despite the mounting challenges in the Pacific region and its involvement in conflicts in the Middle East – it had to invest more in European security. The US has stepped up the intensity of joint drills with the allies and the activities of its forces in Europe. However, its support for the allies has been subject to various limitations and should be treated as a political signal to Moscow, rather than an element in a broader strategy. The future of the policy of strengthening the eastern flank will depend on the outcome of the US presidential elections in November and on developments in the bilateral relations between Washington and Moscow.

Obama's policy towards Russia before the annexation of Crimea

When president Barack Obama took office in January 2009, he was an advocate of rapprochement with Russia. Relations with Moscow were tense in the aftermath of his predecessor's eight years in power, mainly because of the USA's toppling of the Russia-friendly regime of Saddam Hussain in Iraq and its support for the so-called colour revolutions in the post-Soviet area, as well as due to the Russian intervention in Georgia and the clashes over the US missile defence programme in Europe. The new opening in relations with Moscow was intended to help Obama reach his strategic objectives with regard to the reduction of nuclear arsenals, and was in line with his broader concept of involving other world powers to a greater extent in the resolution of such problems as the conflict in the Middle East or the fight against terrorism.

Moreover, warmer relations with Russia would create a favourable context for a further down-sizing of the US military presence in Europe. Finally, the US administration considered the then president Dmitry Medvedev, who had pledged to speed up the modernisation of Russia and had a 'pro-Western' image, to be more willing to co-operate than Vladimir Putin had been. The 'reset' policy proposed by the White House achieved some of Obama's objectives. In particular, it led to the signature of the new START treaty, it managed to put more international pressure on Iran over its nuclear programme, and it led to the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution critical of North Korea. While Moscow did not manage to fully dissuade Washington from deploying elements of its missile defence system in Europe, the programme was scaled down and re-organised. However, starting from 2011, a rift between the two countries emerged over their respec-

tive assessments of the Arab Spring. Washington backed the pro-democratic protests, while Moscow saw them as illegal coups analogous to the colour revolutions. The 'reset' policy ended with the 2012 presidential elections in Russia, which brought Vladimir Putin back to the Kremlin as president and was followed

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by mounting repression against the Russian opposition. Since that moment, US-Russia relations started to deteriorate again, further exacerbated by Russia's decision to grant asylum to the former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden.

The Crimea watershed and cautious reactions

For the United States, the annexation of Crimea and Russia's intervention in eastern Ukraine were unexpected and became a pivotal point for the US elite's perceptions of European security. Since the end of the Cold War, Washington had regarded Europe as a sphere of growing stability. Facing the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, Russia's ever higher defence spending and the progressing modernisation of the Russian army, coupled with the Kremlin's openly anti-Western rhetoric, the United States started to view Russian aggression against a state on NATO's eastern flank as a potential eventuality. While Russia remains an important international actor whom the United States cannot ignore, the way it is perceived in Washington has changed radically.

The US National Security Strategy published in February 2015 identifies Russia's aggressive policy as one of the major challenges to European security.¹ This is a telling change in comparison to the 2010 strategy document which identified Russia primarily as an emerging economy and a partner in the disarmament efforts.²

Since the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the US policy on European security has been suspended between two contradictory objectives. On the one hand, in the wake of the annexation of Crimea it had become necessary to reassure its Central European allies that the United States continued to guarantee the European security architecture. On the other hand, the United States wishes to pursue this policy at the lowest possible cost, not least because of the annual problems in reaching consensus on the budget between the Democratic president and the Republican-dominated Congress. Moreover, Washington also needs to take Russia into account as a player with whom the United States may have to co-operate in other regions of the world, for instance in the Middle East. Therefore, the policy of strengthening NATO's eastern flank to some extent depends on the broader relations between the United States and Russia. Moreover, the position of those European allies who are cautious about escalating tensions with Russia (such as Germany³ or France) is also important for the White House. The US foreign and security policy is co-determined by a number of decision-making centres. However, during Obama's term as president his inner circle, and especially the people around

¹ US National Security Strategy 2015, February 2015, Strategic Theater Transformation.

² US National Security Strategy 2010, May 2010, Strategic Theater Transformation.

³ See: Justyna Gotkowska, Dużo reasekuracji, mniej odstraszenia – Niemcy wobec wzmacniania wschodniej flanki NATO, *Komentarze OSW*, 5.07.2016, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2016-07-05/duzo-reasekuracji-mniej-odstraszenia-niemcy-wobec-wzmacniania>

the National Security Council, including national security advisor Susan Rice and her deputy Benjamin Rhodes, have played a decisive role in this regard. It is a group of moderates who see the Russian-Ukrainian conflict as one of the challenges that the United States is facing, and consider Russia as a partner in solving other conflicts and crises in the world. For this reason, they are wary of escalating the conflict with Moscow by, for instance, providing lethal weapons to Ukraine or excessively reinforcing the Alliance's eastern flank. The Department of Defense leadership and the current defence

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secretary Ashton Carter present a more hawkish stance. For this group, an increasingly aggressive Russia currently poses one of the most serious challenges to the international order, requiring a firm reaction from the US, which should also include stepping up the military presence on NATO's eastern flank. This attitude is largely shared by representatives of the US military, especially the US Army and the troops deployed in Europe. The current Supreme Allied Commander Europe, general Curtis Scaparrotti, and his predecessor, general Philip Breedlove, have both argued for more decisive action, which in their view should include arming Ukraine and reinforcing the Alliance's collective defence. For the officers in the land forces the mounting threat from Russia also serves as an argument for increasing the budget of this service branch, which has been losing relative significance as the Pacific region, and hence, the Air Force and the Navy, have gained more significance in the US security strategy.⁴

⁴ Mark Perry, The U.S. Army's war over Russia, Politico, 12.05.2016, Strategic Theater Transformation.

US military involvement in Europe after 2014

For the last three years, the United States has been stepping up efforts to enhance the Alliance's interoperability and boost the allies' defence capabilities. The size of the US presence in the eastern flank countries is unprecedented and marks the first build-up of US forces in Europe on such a scale since the end of the Cold War. However, it is still insufficient to guarantee effective defence in the event of a potential conflict with Russia. The measures taken by the US to enhance European security since 2014 seem to amount to a series of signals sent to Moscow, rather than an effective deterrence strategy, which would impose a much greater financial cost.

The reassurance of US allies in Europe is financed under the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), announced by Obama in June 2014. It allocates a special envelope of funding in the Department of Defence budget to expenses related to military activity in Europe (e.g. more frequent drills, modernisation of military equipment and infrastructures). The ERI is part of the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), a section in the Pentagon budget devoted to foreign operations. If Congress fails to adopt the federal budget within due time, this section is subject to so-called sequestration, i.e. automatic cuts.⁵ The ERI budget is planned year-by-year; US\$985 million has been allocated to ERI in the 2015 US defence budget. The new funding has been earmarked primarily for stepping up US military presence, investments in infrastructure in the allied states and the storage of military equipment in Europe. Funds have also been earmarked for increasing the number and frequency of military drills with allied forces, and assistance to partner countries (e.g. Georgia).

⁵ 'Sequestration' means automatic cuts in public spending in the event that the budget for the year that is beginning is not passed by Congress and endorsed by the President.

The ERI has been extended for the fiscal year 2016 with a budget of US\$789 million,⁶ in which a larger portion than in the year before has been earmarked for increasing the US military presence on the eastern flank. In the draft 2017 budget proposed by the Department of Defense, ERI spending is to increase four-fold to US\$3.4 billion. This surge is a reaction to the lack of progress in the implementation of the Minsk accords and the growing aggressiveness of Russia.

The reinforcement of the eastern flank mainly consists in more frequent joint drills, as well as a rotational presence of small US armed units. All US activities aimed at supporting the European allies have been part of operation Atlantic Resolve since April 2014. Atlantic resolve is a common heading for the activities of all the service branches, i.e. the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marine Corps. As far as land force operations are concerned, Washington's activities have been centred on augmenting the forces already stationed in Europe and partly moving them to the eastern flank states. Since April 2014, four US Army companies have been involved in exercises in Poland and the Baltic states on a rotational basis. Next year they will be joined by a heavy brigade redeployed from US territory, which will take part in exercises in Poland, the Baltic states, Romania and Bulgaria. Moreover, the United States will be the framework nation in charge of one of the four battalion combat groups (of around 800 to 1000 soldiers), the deployment of which in Poland and the Baltic states has just been announced at the NATO summit in Warsaw.⁷ In December 2015 Washington started deploying military

equipment on the eastern flank for the units taking part in the rotational drills in Poland, the Baltic states, Bulgaria and Romania (the European Activity Set, EAS). The EAS involves Abrams tanks, Bradley infantry fighting vehicles and Paladin self-propelled howitzers. On top of that, the plans for 2017 envisage setting up military depots in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany with arms and military equipment for an additional brigade (the Armed Preposition Stockpile, APS) which may be airlifted to Europe and reach combat readiness at much shorter notice.⁸ The United States has also stepped up its involvement in air force drills.

The surge in ERI spending is a reaction to the lack of progress in the implementation of the Minsk accords and the growing aggressiveness of Russia.

In August 2015, four fifth-generation F-22 fighters were flown to Europe (the US air base in Spangdahlem, Germany) for the first time to take part in joint exercises.⁹ A-10 close air support aircraft and F-15 fighters, usually numbering 12 aircraft, also regularly take part in drills in the eastern flank states as part of the Theater Security Package mission. As far as the Navy is concerned, the US efforts seem relatively modest in comparison – the most important activity consists of regular patrols by US warships from the naval base in Rota, Spain, in the Baltic and the Black Sea regions as part of the AEGIS missile defence system.

⁶ The budget for the fiscal year 2015 (from 1.10.2014 to 1.10.2015) is higher than for the year 2016 mainly because of the need to finance measures implemented before October 2014, including assistance to the Ukrainian army.

⁷ NATO Chief: 4 Battalions Going to Baltic States, Poland, ABC News, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/nato-chief-alliance-agree-week-deploy-battalions-baltic-39812252>

⁸ Department of Defense, Eucom Announces European Reassurance Initiative Implementation Plan, <http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/708271/eucom-announces-european-reassurance-initiative-implementation-plan>

⁹ L. Seligman, US F-22s Arrive In Europe, DefenseNews, 31.08.2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/2015/08/28/us-f-22s-arrive-europe/71315590/>

NATO's eastern flank as seen from Washington

The United States' military reaction to the increased threat from Russia has been centred on those NATO states which have been most vocal in calling for a reinforcement of their military potential, i.e. the Baltic states, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. They have benefited most from the increased frequency of joint drills and the modernisation of military infrastructure. However, it was not just because of their expressly formulated expectations, but also because of their geographic location that the allies in the Baltic and the Black Sea regions received much more support than the Czech Republic, Slovakia or Hungary. The ERI investments, on the other hand, have mostly benefited Germany, because of the US infrastructure already existing there. From the point of view of the United States, the geopolitical significance of the **Nordic-Baltic region** is growing. Since 2014, the region has been seen as an area of potential conflict between Russia on the one hand, and the United States' NATO allies (Poland and the Baltic states) or its partners outside the Alliance (Sweden and Finland) on the other.¹⁰ The Baltic states and Poland have benefited most from operation Atlantic Resolve. Land force companies have been present in their territories on a rotational basis since April 2014. The US has organised the annual Saber Strike and Swift Response drills, the objective of which has been inter alia to test the movement of troops within NATO territory and the deployment of troops from the USA. Some image-building activities have also taken place, such as the Dragoon Ride between the Baltic states and Germany, which serves to reassure not just the governments, but also the general public in the allied states. The United States has

¹⁰ J. Gotkowska, P. Szymański, Pro-American non-alignment. Sweden and Finland develop closer military co-operation with the United States, *OSW Commentary*, April 2016, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2016-04-01/pro-american-non-alignment-sweden-and-finland-develop-closer>

also stepped up its involvement in the national drills of their allies, such as Poland's Anakonda-16 in which nearly 14 thousand US troops took part. The US Air Force, too, has been more active in the region. The United States has been providing more air support as part of the AVDET mission in Poland¹¹ and in 2014, in direct response to the annexation of Crimea, it scaled up its involvement in the Baltic Air Policing (BAP), i.e. the constant air patrols over the Baltic states, conducted by the air forces of NATO states.¹² The Navy, meanwhile, has played a relatively small role in the reassurance efforts.

The United States' military reaction to the increased threat from Russia has been centred on those NATO states which have been most vocal in calling for a reinforcement of their military potential.

Since 2015, one of the four Arleigh Burke-class destroyers stationed at the naval base in Rota, Spain, has been regularly patrolling the Baltic. The warships patrol the sea and also serve image-building purposes as they call at ports in the allied states. Furthermore, the United States has invested in military infrastructures in the region. For instance, the air bases in Łask (Poland), Ämari (Estonia), Lielvārde (Latvia) and Šiauliai (Lithuania) have been overhauled and extended since 2014.¹³ Likewise, the firing ranges in Tapa (Estonia), Ādaži (Latvia) and Rukla (Lithuania) have been modernised and will probably serve as storage sites for US military equipment.

¹¹ Aviation Detachment (AVDET) has taken place since 2012 and is about regular US Air Force drills on Polish territory. In May 2014 the mission was expanded – six US F-16 fighters were moved to the base in Łask from Spangdahlem, Germany.

¹² Between January and April 2014 the USA stepped up its involvement in the mission from 4 to 10 F-16 fighters.

¹³ EUCOM, EUCOM provides an update on the European Reassurance Initiative, 20.04.2015, <http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/article/33026/eucom-provides-update-on-the-european-reassurance-initiative>

The US has also co-financed purchases of US arms and military equipment by the Baltic states.¹⁴ As an indirect form of support, the eastern flank countries have been allowed to buy state-of-the-art US military equipment, such as the JASSM cruise missiles.¹⁵

US military involvement on NATO's eastern flank still mainly serves political rather than military purposes.

The **Black Sea region** was the object of US interest long before the Russian-Ukrainian war. Because of their geographic location, Romania and Bulgaria have been treated as important partners for the US operations in the Middle East, Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The two countries received additional reinforcement after the annexation of Crimea and the change of the geostrategic situation in the Black Sea region. However, that support was smaller than in the case of the Baltic states and Poland because of the prior presence of US forces in their territories, and consisted mainly in closer co-operation between the air and navy forces. After 2014, 175 additional soldiers reinforced the Black Sea Rotational Force stationed at the Mihail Kogălniceanu base in Romania. This force was created in 2010 as a 250-strong unit of US Marine Corps with the purpose of strengthening allied ties with Romania and Bulgaria in view of the two countries' support for the US involvement in the Middle East and Africa. Since 2003, Romanian and Bulgarian bases have been used as a redeployment point for the US Army. Moreover, US military drills such as Saber Junction or Swift Response have partly taken place in Romania. After 2014, the US Air

Force started to hold regular exercises in the territory of Bulgaria and Romania – these exercises have involved A-10 close air support aircraft and F-15 fighters (Theater Security Package), F-16 fighters, KC-135 refuelling aircraft as well as F-22 fighters (on one occasion so far). The US Navy undertook similar activities on the Black Sea as it did on the Baltic after 2014. Following the annexation of Crimea, US warships stationed at the Rota base in Spain started to patrol the Black Sea on a regular basis. The United States has also invested in the modernisation and extension of military bases including Graf Ignatevo (Bulgaria), Câmpia Turzii and Mihail Kogălniceanu (Romania).

The **Central European region** has received relatively little attention in the US plans to strengthen the NATO eastern flank (with the exception of Poland, treated as part of the Nordic-Baltic region). The United States realises that – owing to their geographic location – the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have different perceptions of threats. These states did not call for a reinforced US military presence in Europe in the wake of 2014, sometimes even criticising the idea, although in the end they accepted the consensus within NATO. Despite Washington's critical view of Viktor Orbán's policy, Hungary has been the Central European ally with which the United States has co-operated most closely.

Outlook for the future

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has been pivotal for the way the US views European security. Nevertheless, US military involvement on NATO's eastern flank still mainly serves political rather than military purposes. It is intended to have an impact on its image and reassure the allies that the collective defence commitments remain valid. The US progresses step by step. While the scale of operations has been increasing, they still barely address the military imbalance between the allies on NATO's

¹⁴ For example, Javelin anti-tank systems in the case of Estonia or Harris Falcon III radio stations in the case of Lithuania.

¹⁵ JASSM missiles have been ordered by Poland and Finland. Before they were only available to Australia.

eastern flank and the Russian Federation.¹⁶ The unprecedented activity of US armed forces in the countries on the Baltic and the Black Sea (especially once the regularly rotating brigade is deployed in 2017) will contribute to strengthening the deterrence potential. If the US continues to step up its military engagement on the eastern flank, it will use the rotational presence formula. The United States is unlikely to set up permanent military bases in the region. Moscow and the Western capitals would see that as excessively provocative. Moreover, the expert community in the United States has been increasingly sceptical about creating large, permanent overseas bases.¹⁷

Because the build-up of US military involvement in Europe depends on the annual adoption of the ERI budget, the United States' current activities are not based on any long-term plan to step up America's own military engagement or considerably boost the defence capacity of allies on the eastern flank. The current proposal to increase the ERI funding several-fold in the fiscal year 2017 is probably the last major move as far as the Obama administration's European policy is concerned. In the coming years the ERI may face cuts as part of the annual budget negotiations in Washington. Should there be a thaw in the relations between Washington and Moscow, security matters in Central and Eastern Europe will be among the first areas in which Russia will expect concessions. Moreover, there is a consensus among US politicians that the European states spend disproportionately little on defence, given their development level, and should be pressured to take on more

responsibility for their own security.¹⁸ The ongoing campaign ahead of the US presidential election proves that this negative view of the European allies may play an increasingly important role in the public debate in the US.

This year's presidential election will be crucial for the future of US military involvement in Europe.

This year's presidential election will be crucial for the future of US military involvement in Europe. The pre-election debate this time has been less focused on the economy than in 2008 or 2012, and more attention has been paid to topics related to foreign and security policy (especially terrorism). The scale of differences between the Democratic and Republican candidates as far as foreign policy is concerned is the largest in decades, also with regard to European security or the relations with the Russian Federation. Hillary Clinton is an advocate of maintaining and strengthening NATO in its current form. Even though she was one of the authors of the policy of 'reset' in the relations with Russia, she has been very critical of the Kremlin's policy since the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Donald Trump, on the other hand, has repeatedly decried the USA's European allies for 'exploiting' Washington to maintain their security at a low cost. In his first foreign policy speech the Republican candidate called NATO 'obsolete' and suggested that its objectives should be defined anew. He has also declared that he is willing to ease tensions with Moscow, suggesting negotiations with Russia and pointing to shared experiences, such as the terror threat.

¹⁶ David A. Shlapak, Michael W. Johnson, Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank, RAND Corporation, February 2016, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1253.html

¹⁷ Objectives formulated e.g. in: US European Command, Strategic Theater Transformation, January 2005, http://web.archive.org/web/20070204141322/http://www.eucom.mil/english/Transformation/Transform_Blue.asp

¹⁸ Jeffrey Goldberg, The Obama Doctrine, The Atlantic, April 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>

While Russia's increasingly aggressive posturing has led to a reversal of the US policy of scaling down military involvement in Europe, the Old Continent nonetheless remains a less important theatre than Eastern Asia or the Middle East. This is not likely to change, unless there is a sudden escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict or Russia targets a NATO member directly. In the wake of 2014, the United States has not changed its strategic choice to pivot towards the Pacific, motivated by China's increasingly assertive policies and the threat posed by its growing military potential to the US allies in the Pacific region. The US elite views the rise of China's power as the most important challenge to the United States' international hegemony. The focus on Asia is reflected in the direction of innovations in the US defence sector and in the most popular US strategic concepts (e.g. AirSea

Battle).¹⁹ Even after the additional brigade is deployed in Europe, the US will still have fewer troops in Europe than it has in the territories of the Asian allies. If tensions continue to rise between the United States and China (e.g. over the islands in the South China Sea or Taiwan), this disproportion will probably deepen. The Middle East is also seen in the United States as a source of threats more serious than those faced by Europe. While the size of US forces in the region has decreased considerably during president Barack Obama's term, the US has continued to bear the high financial burden of its involvement in the Middle East, including its assistance to Israel, or participation in the international coalition fighting the Islamic State.

¹⁹ AirSea Battle. Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access&Area Denial Challenges, US Department of Defense, May 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/ASB-ConceptImplementation-Summary-May-2013.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. US troops deployed in Europe by service branch and selected major units (as of June 2016).²⁰

The United States has been scaling down its military presence in Europe since the end of the Cold War. At the peak post-War moment, in 1952, there were around 450,000 US soldiers stationed in Europe. In the years 1990–1993 the US Army presence in Europe decreased from 213,000 soldiers to 122,000 soldiers.²¹ The personnel reductions ended in October 2012 when the 172th brigade stationed in Baumholder, Germany, was disbanded. Currently around 62,000 soldiers, representing different service branches, serve under the US European Command.

²⁰ Source: U.S. Military Presence in Europe (1945-2016), U.S. European Command, 26.05.2016, <http://www.eucom.mil/media-library/document/35220/u-s-military-presence-in-europe-fact-sheet>, 2016 Index of U.S. Military Strength, The Heritage Foundation, <http://index.heritage.org/military/2016/assessments/operating-environment/europe/> MCoE Supplemental Manual 3-90 – Force Structure Reference Data, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/other/msm3-90_2012.pdf, M. Tan, Army restructures CAB in Germany, cuts 1,900 troop jobs, Army Times, April 2015, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2015/04/29/army-restructures-12th-combat-aviation-brigade/26587469/>

²¹ <http://index.heritage.org/military/2015/chapter/op-environment/europe/>

Service branch	Number of troops	Largest units (name, place of deployment, number of soldiers, selected weapons)
US Army	~25,000	<p>2nd Cavalry Regiment (Vilseck, Germany) around 4,500 troops among others: Stryker armoured fighting vehicles (around 300), M777 howitzers</p> <p>173rd Airborne Brigade (Vicenza, Italy) around 4,400 troops M119 howitzers (x 2), M777 howitzer (x 1) among other weapons</p> <p>12th Combat Aviation Brigade (Katterbach, Germany) around 1,300 troops among others: AH-64, UH-60, CH-47 helicopters</p>
Navy and Marine Corps	~8,500	among others: Arleigh Burke-class destroyer (x 4), command ship (x 1)
Air Force	~28,000	<p>31st Fighter Wing (Aviano, Italy) no data among others: F-16 fighters (x 48)</p> <p>48th Fighter Wing (Lakenheath, UK) no data among others: F-15 fighters (x 72)</p> <p>52nd Fighter Wing (Spangdahlem, Germany) no data among others: F-16 fighters (x 24)</p>

Appendix 2. Involvement of US forces in selected exercises and missions in Europe

Exercise	2013	2014	2015	2016
Saber Strike	580 troops	380 troops 8 x F-16 fighter 1 x B-52 bomber Bradley infantry fighting vehicles Stryker armoured fighting vehicles	Around 700 troops 3 B-52 bombers 2 B-2 bombers 4 KC-135 refuelling aircraft C-17 and C-130 transport aircraft, 8 A-10 close air support aircraft 16 F-16 fighters AH-64 Apache helicopters Abrams tanks Stryker armoured fighting vehicles M119A3 light howitzers	Around 2,000 troops 1 B-52 bomber, 2 HH-60 helicopters 5 AH-64 helicopters A-10 close air support aircraft HIMARS multiple rocket launchers M777 howitzers

Exercise	2013	2014	2015	2016
Baltops	No data on the number of troops 1 Blue Ridge-class command ship (USS Mount Whitney) 1 B-52 bomber	1300 troops 1 Arleigh Burke-class destroyer (USS Oscar Austin) 1 KC-135 refuelling aircraft	670 troops 1 landing craft (USS San Antonio) 4 KC-135 refuelling aircraft 14 F-16 fighters 3 B-52 bombers	around 700 troops 1 command ship (USS Mount Whitney) 4 KC-135 refuelling aircraft 20 F-16 fighters 2 B-52 bombers
Saber Junction	-	2500 troops 14 C-130 transport aircraft	no data	Around 1000 troops
Aviation Detachment (AVDET)	15.02.-9.03. 3 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz, Poland)	31.03.-12.04. 3 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz)	23.03.-17.04. 4 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz)	29.02.-25.03. 4 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz)
	6-24.05. 6 F-16 fighters (Łask, Poland)	01.05.-[?] 6 F-16 fighters (Łask)		06.06.-20.06. 20 F-16 fighters
	12-25.07. 6 F-16 fighters (Łask)	2-18.06. 18 F-16 fighters (Łask)	2-30.06. 8 F-16 fighters (Łask)	
	15-25.10. 3 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz)	1.07.-31.08. 3 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz, Poland)	12.10.-6.11. 3 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz)	
	4.09.-8.10. 7 F-16 fighters (Łask)			
		15-31.10. 2 C-130 transport aircraft (Powidz)		
Theater Security Package	-	-	27.03.-30.06. 12 F-15 fighters (Leeuwarden, Netherlands/Graf Ignatevo, Bulgaria)	01.04.-30.09. 12 F-15 fighters (Keflavík, Iceland/Leeuwarden, Netherlands)
			30.03.-30.06. 12 A-10 close air support aircraft (Câmpia Turzii, Romania/Graf Ignatevo)	
			25.06.-30.07. 12 A-10 close air support aircraft (Łask, Poland)	
			23.06.-30.09. 12 F-15 fighters (Câmpia Turzii)	
			IX-XII 12 A-10 close air support aircraft (Ämari, Estonia/Kecskemét, Hungary/Câmpia Turzii)	

Exercise	2013	2014	2015	2016
Baltic Air Policing	-	I-III 4 F-15 fighters (Šiaulė, Lithuania)	-	-
		III-IV 10 F-15 fighters (Šiaulė)		

Appendix 3. Spending on European Reassurance Initiative in the years 2015–2017 (US\$ million)²²

	Fiscal year 2015	Fiscal year 2016	Fiscal year 2017*
Stepped-up presence	423.1	471.4	1 049.8
Additional exercises and training	40.6	108.4	163.1
Infrastructure investments	196.5	89.1	217.4
Storage of military equipment	136.1	57.8	1 903.9
Defence capacity building in partner states	13.7	62.6	85.5
Transfer fund (support for the governments of Ukraine and the Baltic states)	175	-	-
Total	985	789,3	3 419,7

* planned spending not yet approved by Congress

²² Source: http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY2017_ERI_J-Book.pdf

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