

Institute for Statecraft & Center for Naval Analyses Joint Workshop.

Agenda:

An outline agenda for the workshop was provided. However, the intention was that the format for the day would be a free ranging expert discussion, not a series of detailed formal presentations with Q&A. Consequently, the agenda was only designed to serve as a framework to guide the discussion.

The workshop was held under Chatham House rules, with no approved talking points and no official governmental narrative to adhere too. This therefore has allowed for personal, professional opinions, that were not necessarily representative of the institutions from which the attendees herald from. The aim is to create dynamic and enthusiastic discussion from a broad amalgamation of resources, to tackle the issues presented, not only by the 2017 ZAPAD exercises, but Russia's wider influence in the world.

Analysis of the Aurora Exercise and discussion surrounding the conclusions it presented.

The first topic of discussion centered around the Aurora exercise, the Swedish initiative to display its military readiness and capacity for international cooperation and coordination.

Previous exercises in the Northern reaches of the Baltic totalling around 5000 participants melded seamlessly into Aurora exercise. It demonstrated a defensive, professional forces had been training domestic and home guard forces, with the aim of providing the ability to perform a comprehensive and successful response to an attack on Sweden.

This was achieved throughout the exercise and represents a, professionally conducted, huge engagement from many facets of the Swedish forces on display. Attitudes to the defence of Sweden have recently altered - however despite the large amount of time since exercises of this size have been performed, all parties involved were on their toes.

It was resoundingly confirmed, that Sweden has what it takes to cooperate with international partners and the authorities within its own military to defend their county. Operating in the center and south as well as in the Baltic sea. The exercises began with several realistic set outs: training C2, operational transportation and achieving logistical coordination.

Aurora represented a fantastic opportunity for the Swedish armed forces to show what they can do - There is a challenge to reach out and see that Sweden is militarily capable. As it left conscript system some time ago, as returns to a more militaristic stance than previously held - Aurora indicated a positive step towards Sweden being able to effectively deploy domestic forces.

Aurora possessed a significant maritime component. The mindset of the Swedish command was to feature not only in the exercise, but also contribute to the coordination simultaneously. The goals were to install the same routines and processes demonstrated in exercises and operations

Swedish command was impressed by how the relatively small maritime staff performed - after an extended period of time without featuring in such a large scale exercise - it was impressive the level to which they performed.

Information management has been identified as crucial to allowing the smaller system to work. it also creates the ability to have synergies within our systems, to be able to synchronise our resources .

Aurora began as a pre war/grey zone response. Most activity was focused in Baltic, but there was also activity on the western coast, in Gothenburg and the protection of that valuable commerce center.

It was concluded the most challenging naval aspect was the pre-war period - the grey zone. This poses a serious challenge for a smaller naval force, as the period of uncertainty stretches a small navy, making it difficult to cover all eventualities before an actual strike.

Clear routes of engagement should be delegated to a very low level of staff. Something that we have to consider is that communications may be compromised and to ensure that low levels of command are familiar with operational objectives, allowing functionality in the case of a communication blackout.

Maintenance of communication systems represents a hard challenge for Swedish military operations - Swedish communications are no equipped with integrated crypto systems. Rendering them vulnerable to attack. During Aurora, this kind of attack was planned and the situation was handled competently with the swift formulation of contingency plans in short amount of time. One facet of the Swedish naval force we have identified to be operationally vital is its submarines. They are the strongest naval contribution to combating opponents in Baltic sea. They have displayed an ability to compliment air attack systems.

Another point of interest is the success experienced with joint targeting, coordinated between Swedish Airforce and Navy. As the Swedish Navy has no - no owned airforce in Swedish navy, complications can arise in the coordination between separate services. However it is a positive sign that this was done capably when practised.

One challenge we experienced was fighting in the archelego is a challenge. The Swedish military has significant experience working alongside the Finnish military in this endeavor. During Aurora, corvettes were utilised for coastal mining, amphibious infantry coordinated with hellfire missiles, and controllable mine systems, operating alongside deployed attack helicopters, an American contribution to the exercise.

Questions:

One conclusion you drew was the impact a pre-combat grey zone has on Swedish naval capabilities. What solutions are you coming up with to tackle this issue?

A simple solution to this question is: more ships. However this is not economically feasible, so we must look down other avenues.

One solution is to utilise our international partners. To strengthen our intelligence analysis systems to prevent unnecessarily rapid escalation, so as to avoid a scenario where too much is deployed too swiftly. Intelligence therefore is key to the ability of our decision makers to be able to assess the situation with as accurate information as possible.

Is there political pressure to drive operational narrative - and not be reactive to issues.

One of the benefits to being a small country is that there is a close relationship between operational decision makers and political decision makers. This ensures a tight narrative surrounding what the operational objectives were. We have found it possible to approach these operations with a calm, and focused approach - yet retaining the ability to demonstrate a swift reaction time to a possible threat to Sweden.

Regarding the national debate surrounding Gotland. This represents a key island facet - to control baltic sea, how has aurora

'The one who knows best is the one who comes after' - It is now clear we should not have left Gotland. However there is now a Swedish armed forces presence, a new regiment has been formed, and has been shown on several exercises where Gotland is the center exercise piece. We are not going to leave and have demonstrated we are prepared and able to defend it.

Aurora and Hybrid Warfare: How did Russia react and seek to disrupt Aurora.

In Russian media displayed that Aurora was bigger ZAPAD. We witnessed low key Russian reaction - not a great deal centered around Aurora - and the Russian military response around Aurora was low key also.

Specifically, what was the strategic communication directed towards Russian: was it Active or Passive at the event. There were a number of Russian officials at the closing event, What are your thoughts on active efforts to strategically communicate?

The last ten years or so we have really begun to establish our the strategic communication. In recent years there has been an increased awareness around Strategic Communication, and we are now beginning to consider this in light of Russia.

There is a communication between Sweden and Russia. It is felt that good lines of communication is very important. Especially with a great deal of movement from several nations, the margin for error is quite small, especially with Polish exercises being performed, there is a substantial activity in the Baltic. It is very important therefore to be have a communication line directly to all the nations.

Are you able to elaborate on your concerns regarding the failure of communications?

One assumption is if you make up all your plans and assume all your communications s will work is naive. Everyone in possession of command experience is aware of this. Therefore, one of the key take aways is that, if the commander's intent and rules of engagement are given a mandate to act, and demonstrate your common sense. In our experience this has provided positive results.

What was the public reaction?

Succeeded in getting it over to the public the aims of the exercise. There have been a number of interesting events: one part of the Swedish government, The Green party [holders of 25 seats in Riksdag] - and local party on Gotland, did stage protests to Aurora.

In the broader field - there was a huge engagement - reservists/home guard coming in. As previously mentioned Sweden left the conscript system some time ago and will not return to it.

Half the population has been contact with the armed forces - that's why it's important to reach out to the public.

Today: we're looking for volunteers. The world is better if you volunteer to serve - Similar system to Danes. Every young person male & female are tested for service. That represents a partial shift towards conscription, but ultimately remains a mixed system.

Within civil society, there has been an awakening. There are many things that need to be done to improve our competencies. However these things are not going to be achieved swiftly, Sweden is moving as fast as it can. The last time it was concerned with it's defence the world was a very different place.

Kaliningrad Vulnerability and Russian Energy Security.

The Russians are taking steps to make Kaliningrad as energy self-sufficient as possible in the event that land access to Kaliningrad is cut off.

This means investing in LNG receiving and storage capacity and construction of natural gas and coal generating plants.

Russia is not going forward with a nuclear power stations. The LNG will be shipped to Kaliningrad by sea from the Ust-Luga port

The Russians are building a gas liquefaction plant and they have ordered three ro-ro ferries to bring supplies to Kaliningrad reducing dependence on the rail link.

But doesn't this mean that instead of being dependent on land transport, Kaliningrad will be dependent on sea and air links for re-supply?

Russia is working to create synchronous grid in Kaliningrad region in order to be secure when Baltic states will eventually join Synchronous grid of Continental Europe (UCTE).

Gas liquefaction plant is a part of that LNG project and ro-ro ferries will remove the need for railway connection through Lithuania.

Kaliningrad will be dependant on sea routes but those use international waters and you do not have to pay royalties because of no more trains through third countries.

The Russians will continue to use the rail link in order to maintain that option for re-supply.

They must assume that, in the event of conflict, the Russian forces could simply fight their way into Kaliningrad and they are not worried about being blocked from the sea because, they don't intend to allow NATO access to the Baltic.

Today Russia has to fight its way through in order to keep Kaliningrad functioning, this would involve launching a full scale invasion of Lithuania, as hinted to in ZAPAD 2017.

Alternately it could begin talks with very weak hand. However, In 4-5 years time it will not be the case they will have means to support Kaliningrad with LNG, an independent electrical grid, and ro-ro ferries etc. No need to escalate with invasion.

At present, Kaliningrad vulnerability is a valuable bargaining chip with which to reign Russia in, especially in its dealing with Baltic states - who it must rely on to accommodate its gas supply. However, in 4-5 years time this vulnerability will have gone.

Maritime Dimensions of 2017 ZAPAD Exercise.

What did we learn, what was confirmed, what were our expectations, what does it look like from your point of view. This discussion was framed around a broader issue set.

One of the principle methods of maintaining an understanding of what Russia was attempting to achieve through 2017 ZAPAD, is relying on regional allies.

One of the principle focuses is comparisons that can be drawn between the ZAPAD 2013 & ZAPAD 2017. These comparisons are then held about lessons we have learnt from Russian operations in Ukraine and Syria and to be understood in relation to the leadership changes within the Baltic fleet made in the last year.

It is believed that the ZAPAD of 2017 was a continuation of the goals established in 2013. However it is always important to note, what we didn't see in terms of major fireworks and major surprises. One explanation for this is, was the weather - if it was the severe weather of the Baltic that hampered Russian plans to display high end weapons that were not used, one notable absence was the lack of Bastion missiles, that are useful up to sea state 7.

The more likely scenario for the absence of Bastion missiles, a ship to ship offensive missile, is that the Russians does not perceive Baltic fleet as major threat and instead are concerned with countering attacks from an enemy airforce.

Another theory to consider, is that Russia never intended major firework show. But the drumbeat and subsequent hypersensitivity was a satisfactory response for them. Exercises in the Baltic were not observed individually, incorporating behaviour in the northern fleet.

ZAPAD wasn't a display of Russia's ability to fight terrorism - ZAPAD was a demonstration of its ability to react to a major threat presented by an aerospace defence and attack. Utilising bastion systems, which correlates what we're seeing in Syria.

ZAPAD can therefore be considered a forum for Russia to test systems when they have been very successful and testing procedures in combat scenarios. One key aspect was the use of high end targeting systems, since ZAPAD concluded there have been three separate targeting launches in Syria as part of large scale strategic exercises.

Admiral James Foggo, recently re-appointed to the command of the US Navy in Europe and North Africa wrote a piece titled: The Fourth battle of the Atlantic:

<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2016-06/fourth-battle-atlantic>

The foundation of the piece articulates the basis of a maritime strategy that responds to increased Russian submarine activity. You can therefore look forward to that mentality continuing.

It's important to keep two things in mind:

- 1.) Russian national maritime documents identify the United States & NATO as a threat.
- 2.) It will seek to challenge EU & US navies, when possible.

We've seen these doctrines play out in the form of several 'buzzing incidents'.

What is the response to the threat context posed by the Russians.

What we do for a living is sea control and power projection. That translates simply to no succession maritime battlespace. The United States will contest the waters globally, in the Baltic, Black and Mediterranean.

Another tenant we live by is the belief in the combined countering of Russian activity and aggression, we the US Navy understand that we do nothing without our NATO Allies and European partners.

Our operational planning, contingency planning has shown us that certain areas and regions and capabilities are organic to the US navy, however there are regions and circumstances where the alliance would provide additional capabilities.

Moving forward you will see an increased naval presence in the Baltic & Black Sea, alongside a more rotational presence, more forward defence ships and the necessary equipment to sustain them.

There will be expanded operations of exercises. One prominent example, is the recent exercise in May, where we participated in a German naval exercise, hosted by the Norwegian Navy, with the understanding that the Eastern end of the sphere is in Russia's back yard. Making a clear statement.

It is an encouraging sign that our allies ability to facilitate, assist and work with US is increasing. In two years we have seen an increase in commitment, notably investment on the execution side, we're seeing an increase in cooperative efforts, between the US & our Allies. It is through increased cooperation that we can create high end warfare strategy. Some notable instances of increased cooperation is in coordinated submarine warfare, integrated air & missile defence capabilities and ballistic missile defence capabilities. Ultimately contributing to our wider power projection, which is demonstrated in two forms: precision strike from sea, air launches from sea and cooperative amphibious warfare.

Generally it's an encouraging trend in submarine warfare: the United Kingdom returned to maritime monitoring, the ship building in Europe is encouraging. We are seeing every navy, that has the means, growing. We are seeing a growth in ASW capable ships, alongside submarine regional leaders who are starting to assert themselves, one example is the German naval submarine command.

However, challenges exist:

- 1.) The realities of atrophy strike swiftly - it is easy to fall behind in high end warfare.

2.) We recently participated in the biggest missile exercise since 1945, Formidabile shield 45. There is a sentiment that European partners 'want to eat the elephant in one bite'. The elephant in this instance being a missile defense program. There have been positive developments in Netherlands, Denmark and Germany in regard to smart defence. However building a missile that is capable of atmospheric defence is a large ask, investment is encouraging but challenges remain the technology is complex.

3.) In terms of power projection the growth in British naval aviation is very encouraging, however the French in recent past, could be more forthcoming in operations in the Eastern Mediterranean.

4.) Another obstacle to further cohesion is the nature of information exchange. Acquiring clearance to allow Navies to talk to one another, to get information released to talk on the radio, this gets more complex when trying to coordinate an air defence with a the wide range of system compatibilities. Communications represent an area for improvement.

In terms of amphibious warfare, we are seeing an increase in exercises performed and an increase in coordination and presence from our European Allies. The Turkish navy is building another large ship and the Dutch and Germans are building a nascent sea battalion.

European navies are recruiting quality sailors to use on their ships to meet today's challenges.

In our smaller European partners, we look to them to develop the rich capabilities that the alliance has identified in its capability gap. Counter measures across the theatre, and the assurance of suitable access for all our forces, which is critical to the success of our operations.

To conclude, the Russian fed is a threat to the United States & NATO. Whilst the US navy is biggest force provider there are significant ways smaller powers can improve its operation capabilities. There areas for optimism, the increased investment & corporation - and universal recognition of the threat that exists. To be able to look at Russia and what it's doing and draw appropriate conclusions, which are not not a rush to lionise but recognise there is evidence of them being more strident.

I have a personal belief, that time is on our side. That allows for a more sober strategic approach. Looking at the scenario with a long view, and trust in the strength of the alliance.

How did ZAPAD seek to contest sea routes? What do you predict the next ZAPAD in four years time will look like?

Minor air and coastal defence, amphibious landings in Russia's defence. This goes to show that some things don't change, I suspect we will see more multi surface rocket attacks.

A question we need to repeatedly ask ourselves is: are we contesting these waters? In the next 10 years that's not going to dramatically increase, it will be very challenging to push much further south into Norwegian Sea. The current scenario Russia prepared for is absorbing an aerospace attack, cruise missiles from day response in days 1 - 3 of an attack, and by day five, a push back.

The Russian Northern & Baltic fleets were discussed separately - what did you observe in terms of choreography between the two?

It was clear the two were playing off the same sheet. Practice escaping a threat, defending an attack & the subsequent counter attack, not sharing C2. The Baltic fleet, despite the adverse weather combined to coordinate air & sea assaults. This represents an important step forward for the Russians, despite not accomplishing the landing. We saw CCN launches, and going into next year there will be snap inspections for both the in Baltic and Black Sea Fleets.

US army in Europe, speaks powerfully about how little time we would have before a Russian attack materialised, perhaps, 5-7 days unambiguous warning, and the critical of state of readiness in Europe required - what are you thoughts on this?

As a Naval officer, I am not place to discuss the army. But from the US Navies point of view. Assured access is vital to allow all our efforts, in defending space as a maritime force. We have the most capable maritime force on the planet, and we are improving. However, in recent deployments, the vast majority of forces have arrived through chartered means. The logistics of assembling the manpower required to make that maritime force as capable as possible is the biggest challenge.

A great deal relies on how the crisis would evolve. Calculations on ground forces, the regiments deployed within hours. It would take 5-7 days to develop a massive ground force. However they constantly practice bringing multiple elements to the field swiftly.

Struck by closing remark: 'time is on our side', can you elaborate?

Russia has a struggling economy, 80% is energy without an ability to diversify in my mind. As for the Russian show of force, is it the potential to be a show without substance?

The Russians have the ability to bring a large force into the field, but not actually credible - does that give them immediate danger?

Whilst discussing Russian ground forces, you could argue that the numbers were great, yet the capability isn't. The land context is the worry of being overwhelmed: Quantity has a quality of its own. Which represents a valid concern.

This isn't the case in the maritime context, Russian submarines aren't as capable as NATO, but they're getting better.

Regional Perspectives of ZAPAD 2017:

Estonian:

It is difficult defining what ZAPAD was, and whether or not it fits into the the annual cycle of training that began at the start of the year. We saw a building up in the Western region, larger exercises taking place there than to the north to south.

C2 was a strategic deployment, this doesnt mean others were not involved. Strategic forces were able to deploy different aspects with both civilian and private sectors involved. There were new parties involved also: Kazakhs, para-military forces.

The local Estonian view was that mobility, airbourne, the aforementioned previously unseen units, artillery, air/maritime and land activities were very well coordinated. C2 aspects that needed covered for communications. Landing, as previously mentioned not completed due to weather, however there was a small landing that took place in gulf of Finland, a landing that trained for fast deployment of marines and paratroopers.

In regard to air defence things are quite different, we noticed that, electronic forces, deterrents issue were considered to be very important. Deployment and protection were all centrally coordinated.

Plans have changed since the start of the year there was a significant refocusing to ZAPAD in Belo-Russia - designed to attract significant attention from western countries.

We suspect that ZAPAD was a demonstration not only to Nato & the United States. It is sending a clear message that it is paying attention to all neighbouring countries. We experienced no more activity than usual There was not much cyber attack - not above average, it didn't peak alongside ZAPAD. The strategic complications were played down, we did not expect different opinions, too confident, instead of spicing up event they kept it simple, a demonstration of confidence.

In regard to the Western reaction, it is felt that coordination could have been better. Activities by nations and general cooperation between states could be improved.

Naval component:

There were four active phases of Russian maritime exercises:

First active phase - in Kaliningrad region, high north and Baltic sea, beginning on July 3rd and focused on countering sabaters on land. In this instance Russia conducted a major training exercise 80 miles from Estonia.

Second active phase - took place in early August. With amphibious landings on three islands.

Third active phase - took place on August 28th, with naval activity which proceeded ZAPAD - which highlighted surface warfare and amphibious capabilities, as well as anti special forces exercises - both on land at sea in Kaliningrad area.

Fourth active phase - based on open source material provided by Russian material. In addition to Baltic & Black sea fleet, a total of 50 ships from three fleets participated with the total the number of naval forces, in the tens of thousands.

Polish:

General reaction from the media was hysterical. Each day headlines announcing for example 15,000 troops sighted, yet ended up with 150. Significant escalation within media.

Political and military analysis of ZAPAD in Poland has begun, we are seeking to approach it in a calm and reasonable way - to know what is going on, seeking the external result of a broader strategy. This type of exercise is building conventional counter measures for a scenario where Russian nuclear deterrents would not fit the situation, or would dramatically escalate the situation. before it came to global confrontation.

Placing ZAPAD 2017 into our longer term analysis of Russian exercises, which was released in February of this year. These are the conclusions we drew:

1.) Achieve local sea control: An allied effort in accordance with techniques and procedures with NATO and regional partners. To overcome Russian A to V techniques. Our main concern is anti submarine warfare and anti surface warfare.

2.) Further Analysis: At present, we feel we are very reactive instead of active to Russia - we follow Russia's ideas, we should change our mindset and have Putin follow our ideas and narratives. We are certain in the fact that NATO are stronger, but they're playing the game. In case of any threat: it should be simultaneous and reactive action by NATO, if Russia were to generate a threat to Latvia/Poland/etc. With such a large front, if Russia were to pose a threat to any of these nations, we should plan to bite them from another side. Moreover if such a reaction can be elaborated as a contingency plan, we could call it 'horizontal escalation', this has the potential to become a good deterrence.

Finland:

Follow on from my Estonian colleague, if you look at the ZAPAD exercise, in the Western mind, we cannot translate that to the Russian mindset. They perform exercises all the time, ZAPAD must therefore be seen in a wider perspective. Doing this as a defence exercise for their own country, this enables them to build from around the entire country. From our perspective it is difficult for us to see the entire picture, do they possess more forces than they announced?

They are seeking to translate their armed forces into newer, larger scale professional forces.

Operational Perspective USMC:

In regards to power projection, this is what the Marine Corp in Europe has been doing to fill in the gaps: occupying forward positions and improving response times.

One of the things we've been pursuing for some time - and something we seek to do with our NATO partners. Is pull together opportunities. So we can, over a series of discussions at flag officer level, participate in a joint tabletop exercise - that seeks to refine our C2 naval expeditionary forces. Performing these exercises at a high level, will trickle down to operational and tactical level, allowing NATO amphibious forces to coordinate more effectively.

The Marine Corp has taken advantage of the 30 amphibious vessels in NATO by marines on those ships. This approach scratches multiple itches: Allows for two communications systems to talk to each other and discuss elements on the operational front, posture, demonstration of force. We have evidence of doing this in several occasions: putting Marines, on French boats, working alongside with Royal Marines - as well as similar exercises with the Spanish and Dutch. In course of next fiscal year we should be reaping all the goodness that comes from physical strategic and communication of this kind.

Posture and ability to respond: expeditionary advance operations are, at present, not uncommon. Taking the event that a NATO vessel, or american platform/small craft that can fit a couple hundred marines, that can project anti air and anti surface marines, just the mere fact it is present - put something in place that the Russians have got to honour, that causes them to change their thinking.

Norwegian:

From our preliminary observations: we found no major surprises. ZAPAD was an opportunity to learn about Russian troops and strategic goals, these aren't reasons to hyperventilate. Russians were exercising war against a conventional opponent, opposed to the against terrorists as they claimed.

In terms of regional focus, they placed a bigger emphasis on the North than expected. They showed an increased capacity for rapid deployment and large operations.

As expected they placed greater importance on the defence of their Bastion missiles. This reinforced our belief about what they consider important.

We experienced some jamming, civilian aviation was impacted. We don't think that this was intentional, just side effect of jamming their own forces.

There needs to be a reorientation towards collective territorial defence. From the Norwegian perspective, the significant NATO take away should be, an increased emphasis on the North Atlantic. We believe there needs to be capability development, joint-exercises, because as we all know, keeping lanes of communication open is absolutely crucial there is a reinforced Norwegian belief that that is essential.

United Kingdom:

ZAPAD was an expected annual exercise, however the context of the deterioration of Syria and Ukraine. This exercise has led to a different coherent response, and prompted bilateral discussions that took

place before exercise, to discuss what Britain thought would take place, the discussions have continued afterwards.

It was felt that it played out as advertised. It wasn't a Counter Terrorism exercise. It was a state responding to a threat, a strategic exercise to prepare ground for interventions.

There was considerable discussion surrounding what would Russia do in Bel-Russia. Tensions are high, would Russia leave equipment behind, for use in a future intervention in Bel-Russia?

The usual exercise of counting and monitoring Russian deployments took place. Large part of activity during exercise itself. Consulting with countries represented by nations.

We are now beginning to determine what we've learnt: tracking the many of the themes, the command and control over forces, worked very well. Making it clear that Russia does not have with a bandwidth problem, practice acquired from conducting exercises in Syria and Ukraine.

Proved its ability work with Bel-Russian forces, important for Russians, Bel-Russian key to protect Russia.

Clever use of information. Russia was quick to point out how well we responded. Coherently displaying two messages with the exercise, publicly denouncing Western media for ignoring Aurora exercise, criticising the West for seeking to display Russia as the aggressor. Yet a very private message of: yes, we are ready.

It was noteworthy the speed at which they were able to assemble their forces.

Another big question that arose was: just how big was the exercise? Can we take the figures Russia said it did? Likely not, the question also begs: what was and what wasn't ZAPAD? Can you count a crew of an aircraft or just the pilot - initial analysis tells us there was a much larger force on display than first described by Russia, yet, tying everything to ZAPAD is also hard. Naval Deployments and northern activity was ZAPAD - but can we consider activity in the southern districts ZAPAD and exercise's in Syria to fall under the umbrella? There remains lots of work involved with unpacking ZAPAD.

Capabilities of Russian armed forces: They have clearly invested heavily and cleverly. They have sought ways to neutralise our advantages and indicated their ability to operate and operate well. As we move forward unpacking ZAPAD we will be asking the following questions:

Does Russia represent a credible threat?

What Russia can do?

What does that mean about the future?

Is time on our side?

Look at the nature of the Russian leadership and people, Putin will be around for the foreseeable future - even if he went, what comes after Putin, wouldn't be much better. We believe we will have to face the Russian challenge for many years to come.

Two aspects: 1.) Strategic culture 2.) Long perspective.

We have to realise the uniqueness of our strategic culture - we have seen a service culture with proven principles and those are different from a Western vision and based on assumptions of different fundamentals.

But this puts us in an awkward position because we seek to measure ZAPAD in a western mindset - the culture is critical and context is vital.

We rapidly inject our philosophy into Russian thinking, for example, A2AD, Russians don't have a term for this. They conduct exercises, they have those capabilities.

In ZAPAD, there's a system of thought and practice that supports culture. Escalate to de-escalate Russians don't understand, this assumes you give up on an objective - Russian have a single mindset = to win.

Peacetime, conflict - they're not giving up the strategic initiative, instead they're seizing the strategic initiative. Planning around the assumption that they're going to be surprised.

The term 'Hybrid', is completely out of step with what the Russians understand: 'little green men actions' Russian concept is more like a hybrid car: two sources of power driving one entity, an objective. But not necessarily following in that order. This strategic culture is dominant, an absolutely fundamental attitude.

This culture is one of the things we institutionally understand the least.

In today's environment that is vital to, understanding ZAPAD, Putin's aims, modern warfare and global security systems.

Russians believe current national security is unfair and is changing - that the military has a role in this. Therefore military strategy is not a single model strategy - with multiple bearings nested inside it. Consequently you will see aberrations - there is merit in comparing ZAPAD 2013 with 2017 but you should look in between them, at 2015.

The perception that there's a continuous destabilisation campaign, that is the future of warfare, destruction of the capabilities of large missiles, not designed to test capabilities they're designed to experiment and in the end the debate about what was included and what was not is something we shouldn't waste our time on.

In the west, we are practitioners of: either, or. Russia is, 'and' ZAPAD was a nationwide exercise of the defence of Europe, a statement saying, if you go to war with Russia, you go to war with all Russia - they would never demonstrate a single exercise.

Responses are nested one in another, reflecting one set of objectives.

Comment:

No one mentioned, that the principal concern of Putin is the survival of his government, it is his survival and not being undermined by the West, like Gaddafi was, like Saddam was.

If you take that, as a larger context for what was said - their number one concern is to ensure that their system is protected. We become a threat - they have to do what they can, use every resource they can, to prevent that from happening.

Iranian, North Korean & Russian ballistic missile capabilities

In regard to North Korea and Russian ballistic missile defence, policy has not quite caught up. The current policy of missile defence, focused heavily on an Iranian missile threat, and its reach into Europe. NATO then adopted a territorial defence from missiles - 'ballistic' is the focus of these policy reviews.

Iran:

Policy framework has aged well, the current missile threat is not going away - arms control hasn't worked and they've continued to pursue expanded missile capabilities.

N.Korea:

Hwasong max range, has not yet been fully tested, however, based on current performances. Gives it a max range of 10,000km. NATO has adopted a territorial defence against ballistic missiles - should it now consider N.Korea in those plans?

Looking at why the US deploys a defence against an ICBM, does that thinking apply to Europe as well? There are two reasons US deployed ground based defence:

North Korea is an unpredictable actor, they might launch a missile at some point, it is therefore reasonable to have a defence against that scenario - so why wouldn't we spend serious money defending against something that is difficult to predict.

Defending the US homeland, makes the policy decision to deter a S.Korea & Japan more credible. It is important we can credibly deter N.Korea in a regional conflict.

If we weren't confident, we couldn't be confident to come to the aid of our allies. If N.Korea launches a lower level attack. Project that gets worse, now they have an operational nuclear force - coupled with a

coercive objectives to discredit US security, scale back US involvement in the peninsula, ensure sanctions relief, formal peace treaty which would bring recognition of the nuclear threat.

Without the the security provided by the homeland defence, the United States would be more constrained than it needs to be.

You do get push back, but if they use a single missile - it's lights out. That's the strategy today - however they're using an ICBM to be in conflict, they possess the option to use nuclear weapons against regional forces, they can then threaten a strike on the US homeland.

Another reason is the escalation deterrence - We have options we can provide to the President. That if we get into a conflict we have options to deter escalation and limit damage.

Does therefore Europe need to be able to protect itself from N.Korea?

First answer, probably not. One important thing to consider however, if you imagine that N.Korea & US are in conflict, this would be a clear reason to declare Article 5, and call the international community to come together. Implications for NATO declaring political commitment to its US Allies.

European missile defence hasn't been optimised to defend from N.Korea.

Russia:

Regional missile defence posture - defend from any source.

How sound is the judgement that Russia doesn't really pose a threat to Europe?

We might not see an aggression on Russia's behalf that would suggest anything else - However, the Russian SSC8 is a violation of the INF treaty.

Vice - chairman, when considering the missile threat, determined that the SSC8 provided a different view of the Russian threat, different from 2009. We are now looking at the Russian cruise missile threats.

There has been a shift of focus to the hyper sonic glide missiles - which we believe will soon be deployed. The missile defence posture we want to adopt, which integrates air & missile defence is more nuanced than the top level policy decision suggest.

It is, at present, not credible or affordable to counter more than Russia have - we are able provide limited protection and a diplomatic space, by lowering restraints. if you can intercept early missiles you can give yourself breathing space to act.

Missile defence fits into a broader strategy, what type of policy should we adopt? The US is in the middle of a policy debate - Trump ordered posture review of missile and nuclear capabilities.

The Russian perspective posed by missile threat - the US & Nato can do a better job (we are investing in defence systems that employ missile coercion that demonstrates to us they are willing to violate international norms, and therefore cannot be trusted to be responsible nuclear force) we do have a clear interest in addressing Russian and China question - and it always boils down to the question, why are we doing this? They repeatedly demonstrate that they are unwilling to be reassured - ballistic missile defence review is an opportunity to redefine the narrative. Implement a new policy framework.

Russian Nuclear policy.

Echoing criticism of the term: escalate to de-escalate. Escalate & control is the preferred approach.

When beginning to unpack the Russian nuclear doctrine, it's important to note that a number of military documents that are fairly similar, 2014 existential threat to a state and points out the most recent navy doctrine. It presents the idea that Russia does have a nuclear threshold.

Incorrectly referred to as 'low capability'. As Russia goes through the motions of increasing its military capability, its nuclear capability will increase as well.

Yet, a threshold doesn't change. It's important to consider how quickly an adversary might perceive you to get to that threshold.

Criticism - will Russia use nuclear weapons to escalate its way out of a threat - Consider the new Navy doctrine, if that's a response to an effect they've seen in Western policy. This suggests that by leaving a sense of ambiguity within Russian doctrines - they are seeking to make their threshold ambiguous.

A very real problem is the Russian perception of Western intent. Russian leadership, does see the international system as a way to weaken them - Western intent is to weaken Putin's leadership. They absolutely believe the US is trying to overthrow their government. If there was some conflict, and the West pushes the Russians back, we could not communicate to the Russians that our objective was not regime change.

The reality of the Russian nuclear doctrine is that it will not back down - Especially after the amount Russia has invested, how much core Russian capital is tied into nuclear capabilities.

In that scenario, where the the West would eventually bring enough forces to push a Russian advance back, in that push. There would be an assessment, and the conclusion would be that regime change was in motion - It is widely believed, in that instance, they would resort to nuclear weapons.

When it comes to wargames, a common response from policy makers is we'll also preempt with nuclear strikes. We spend too much time thinking about the grey zone and thinking about the escalation, these are war games that usually start with Russia about to, or using a nuclear weapon. We need to think about, what is Russia's response after using a nuclear weapon.

Comment

There have been several discussions on the Russian mindset. It's important to explore the root of this defensive mindset.

1917, Lenin sent by Germany to Russia in a train car.

1919, British involvement in Russian civil war, with an attempted invasion of Russia from the sea, in an attempt to tip favour the war in favour of the Whites.

This plays into Russian nationalism, we often don't count foreign meddling as part of their heritage - we don't think about these things, by this legacy has an impact.

The first target of ZAPAD is the Russian population - to develop the war fear - mutually reinforced idea that the world is against them, and seeking once again to enact regime change within Russia..

Comment

Related to the missile, looking at things from an asymmetric view - as forces across the world have shrunk, we have lost the mass of industrial warfare. The Royal Navy, for example, has comparatively, very few ships.

Defence acquisition itself is a weapon of hybrid warfare - Russians have maintained the military design programs, Research and Development has continued even without the time to turn designs into mass production. Yet this is beginning to change as they develop their industry, they are now in a position to develop missiles at a far more rapid rate than we are.

With missile threats and nuclear threats. The UK has forgotten the importance of conventional strength as a method of defence - the escalator ramp has been replaced by a tripwire.

The UK would love it's own ballistic capabilities, both in a sovereign sense & to enable better cooperation. The range rings represent threats themselves, even if the capabilities are not matched by intent, there is a lack of will by politicians to provide the necessary protection. Not enough political drive enough, there is significant public blindness, if the public were kept in a state of - this would be easier, however politicians would prefer to have a blithe sense of safety.

This represents a stark difference to Putin, who has been whipping up the fear.

Comment:

A phenomenon has taken place ever since the Communist flag came down from above the Kremlin. How we would achieve peace? We reduced our defense, and moved from threat based planning to a capability based planning - we lost the ability to say we need x, because of y.

Now, when you go to the politicians and say I need 127 F22s, the most predictable response, why? The answer is of course: 'because x'.

We need to return to a threat culture, where requirement is met by a capability..

Collectively we looked at those capabilities, and saw we could destroy ourselves by all spending all at the same time, but shifted into dabbling into a bit of everything - what we need to do now is have clearly defined roles.

What have we learnt about Russia's nuclear and missile capabilities from ZAPAD?:

We saw Russia mobilise everything they could to defend against a massive cruise missile strike:

Taking out recon unit the aerospace part of that was evident, producing a layered defenses, coupled with other aircraft to take out cruise missiles.

Everybody who could shoot at a missile was shooting at the missiles - every time these happen everyone waits for a nuclear expression. We saw two launches that spark questions, the 12th was preplanned, the 20th perhaps wasn't. Experts debate a launch on the 20th was part of ZAPAD - RS 24.

It's hard to overstate the Russian concern regarding intercontinental ballistic missiles - any conversation about disarmament is undermined by that feeling of fear, after the loss of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nuclear capabilities were the one thing that kept them at the table, with that suggestion we're undermining their membership to a small group.

Does NATO need to build a N.Korean missile defence in Russia or China to protect Russia & Europe. Could this potentially be a point of cooperation/cooperative in missile defence?

President Obama did everything that could be done to shift the paradigm and indicate to the two that Iran & N.Korea represent a common security threat and that the three should be working cooperatively to deal with these issues. Not only political, but also economically and strategically.

Unfortunately - US made some investments in missile defences, with the purpose to defend against NKorea & Iran. But Russia and China's response was to assume and accuse the US of building missile defence capabilities to create a 'complete defence'. Wary that a complete defence could allow the US & NATO to involve themselves without impunity.

When looking at the Iran deal - Russia saw it as was to prove our intent all along was to impact Russia - collab between Russia and china to deploy theatre missiles - Russia and china released a joint statement on strategic stability - criticising the US for destabilising the regional

Expanding Anti-Missile Systems to NATO Partners:

It would be ideal to have every ship in equipped with interceptors - infrastructure project creating an effective deterrent, is monumental. Especially when you consider the cost of things, and enacting a key next steps strategy. Pieces of this aggregate projects that can be achieved at a relatively lower cost. This represents something, we as an alliance can start thinking about. But aside from the cost, and infrastructure involved, this isn't a reality. Absent the data link - you can't shoot anything. It took the US navy 30 years before it was able to employ an effective deterrent system.

Hybrid Threats

First examine Lithuanian objectives and visions of Hybrid warfare: conventional and non conventional warfare.

When we speak about a 'hybrid' attack we talk, not only a military attack - but in cohesion with assaults of a different nature.

Maskirovka - which loosely translated means subterfuge: the elements of surprise, diversion, and deception.

Russia's conduct capitalizes on Putin's readiness to act outside the post-war operational norms within which the West has built its military and political response mechanisms.

To create ambiguity, to confuse decision-making and public opinion.

Russia is masterly using to biggest achievements of the West – openness/democracy and globalizations/technologies

Russia is extremely active in the information field, e.g. using pro-Russian media (Russia Today, Sputnik, propaganda, disinformation, fake news, trolls, leaks etc.) in order to confuse decision-making and public opinion.

Russia also employs conspiracy theories, alternative truths, lobbying, PR agencies, discredits other states in the international arena (Georgia, Ukraine) and harasses those who criticize the Kremlin.

Russia is also active in promoting its narratives: "the West is corrupt and morally bankrupt", "fascist regime in Kiev", "Ukraine is an artificial state", "widespread Russophobia". There is a constant struggle over historical narratives, common history of the post-Soviet countries, and the victory over fascism in the World War II (liberators vs occupiers).

Russia supports European extremist and anti-EU groups, foments divisions and instability in the target countries, and creates divisions inside the EU and NATO.

Other forms of action:

1. Cyber activity (attacks against critical infrastructure, hacked and leaked emails, cyber espionage), refugee flows (as a method of pressure, punishment or destabilization),
2. Population resettlement (in order to change the ethnic composition of a frozen conflict region),
3. Proxy groups (pseudo-NGOs, youth organizations, research institutes, think tanks, motorcycle clubs)
4. Coup attempts (last year in Montenegro).

There are other tools that are subordinated to Russia's disruptive policies abroad

1. Cultural diplomacy: promotion of Russian culture abroad, promotion of the Russian language, cultural exhibitions, tourism promotion.
2. Compatriot policy (promotion of language, issuing financial, health care or other kind of benefits to Russian-speakers abroad, issuing Russian passports, justifying aggression against neighboring countries with protection of Russian speakers' rights),
3. Religion: the Russian Orthodox Church.

"Information war" (*informatsionnaya voyna*)

There is a clear distinction between the Russian definition: an all-encompassing, and not limited to wartime and the Western one: limited, tactical information operations carried out during hostilities.

Russian approach is much broader than simply sowing lies and denial, for instance maintaining that Russian troops and equipment are not where they plainly are.

Russian state and non-state actors have exploited history, culture, language, nationalism and more to carry out cyber-enhanced disinformation campaigns with much wider objectives.

Russian aims to extract, exfiltrate, manipulate, distort, or insert information, or just isolate a target from sources of information other than Russian ones.

ZAPAD 2017:

Why were we worried?

When Russian troops invaded Georgian territory in early August 2008, 58th Army had just finished its Kavkaz-2008 military exercise, coincidentally occurring just ahead of the invasion (15-31 July) and located just north of the Georgian border.

Russia conducted snap exercise from 26 February to 3 March 2014. Under the guise of the exercise, Russia deployed a large contingent of troops to Crimea and its vicinity. The result was Russia's illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory.

ZAPAD exercises aimed to NATO-oriented activities (eg., a large-scale offensive operations). The Russian MoD recently stated - ZAPAD 2017 will "take NATO forces into account."
Zapad 2017 - large-scale training where in addition to MoD forces, other Russian troops, federal, state and private forces will take part.

Part of the training of Zapad 2017 took place in Belarus, therefore high number of the Russian Armed Forces and military vehicles were be relocated there.

It has become a practice Russia is reluctant to declare the real number of participants in training and

artificially fragmenting into separate episodes of training in separate training areas, with the goal of avoiding notification or observation thresholds giving the impression that individual training takes place while in reality they have a common scenario.

Part of the training areas were immediately adjacent to Lithuanian State border therefore one cannot exclude intentional or accidental incidents.

Traditionally ZAPAD served concrete political and strategic communications purposes as a show of force and a narrative for Russian leadership. They intimidate and threaten countries against whom the exercises were designed.

Therefore, it was likely that the Russian information operations intensify towards the West, especially in the run-up to ZAPAD 2017 and during exercises - to discredit the NATO forces in Lithuania and lead to public opposition to the deployment of troops, through information and cyber attacks, to spread false content and provocative nature.

Hybrid elements of Zapad:

Before the exercise, there were no indications that Zapad could be used as a cover for real operations, but it was expected provocations against Lithuania's structures and procedures for testing, information attacks.

The purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate muscle, scare and intimidate - and reinforce the idea that there is an 'iron ring' around the Baltic States.

Moscow blamed West for generating 'hysteria over Zapad'.

Lithuania was ready during Zapad-2017 (and remains ready) to react to any provocation or counter an attack:

- Allied deterrence measures (enhanced sea, air and land components);
- National rapid reaction forces on stand-by;
- Readiness to support the units of the Ministry of Interior;
- Joint intelligence centre operating on 24/7;
- Regular and close communication among our Armed Forces, Police, Border Guard, Customs Service, other structures of the Ministry of Interior, State Security Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Hostile information environment monitoring and assessment

The deterrence posture of NATO agreed in Warsaw is working. With eFP in the Baltic states and Poland, NATO has demonstrated that it can deliver. It changed Russia's risk calculus.

The lack of transparency: comprehensive mandatory observation under the Vienna Document 2011 was ignored and we received only limited, partial and deliberately distorted information on the: a) number of troops (were higher than alleged 12.700); b) military equipment; c) scenarios.

As already a common practice, Russia concealed real information about the scope of Zapad-2017 by

artificially splitting the exercise into smaller-scale exercises.

Some of the maneuvers took place in the other training areas, than declared, at the same time significantly exceeding the number of the declared ones.

Some of the maneuvers exercised aggressive actions against the neighboring NATO countries, the simulation of the attack. Russia simulated war in Western strategic direction from Barents to the Black Sea.

Specifically – two nearly simultaneous violations of Lithuanian borders from Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus on 9 September and two violation of Lithuanian airspace by Russian fighters on 16 September.

The lessons were drawn and put into practice not only from Russia's military conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine, but also in Syria. Strategic bomber flights, extensive use of paratroopers, submarines, bombardment at closer vicinity to our borders, rapid redeployment of large military forces (confirming offensive nature of the Zapad).

“Whole of state” warfare model was applied – armed forces trained together with other force structures such as Rossgvardia, Ministry of Emergencies, Federal Security Board, Border Guard troops, also with civil institutions and private companies. Large number of reservists was mobilised. Zapad should be perceived as an integral part of Russia's overall military posture, continuous process in Russia that lasts for more than 10 years, with the military build-up, and high level of combat readiness, capability for speedy deployment of troops and selective implementation of international obligations.

Security situation in the Baltic region remains tense because Russia continues its military build-up and activities next to the Baltic borders and applies a wide range of methods from non-linear (hybrid) warfare, including destabilizing cyber-attacks.

Conclusion

First of all, let's look at the operations the Russians are conducting in their doctrine, the strategic aerospace operations and the phases of ZAPAD: defence, transition, offence.

If you look up Russian war with NATO - only conducted with radical [political motive sinvolved - radical non political objects with non radically means.

Pursue radical objectives with radical means.

Not part of their doctrine that is under further development the Russians don't even have the answers.

I think the Russians are thinking at a higher level than we give them credit for 0 you have a Russian policy that rejects the strategic conditions that have be set around Russia and now you have a Russian set of measures that actually could be called the Russians setting their own conditions:

- Strategic uniqueness demands unique military approaches to maximize and seize opportunity

- Strategic vulnerability demands aggressive counter-surprise measures for a Russia perceived as potentially 'undefendable'
- Going to war with Russia means "Going to war with all of Russia"
- The decisiveness of the initial period of war

The destabilization campaign makes things more effective - these strategic conditions are being set and ultimately what will constitute a 21st century deterrent we will have to address those conditions.

Counter our strategic conditions - to break our economic, social, political stranglehold on the worlds system.

A strategic challenge to western democracy, not to that extent, we are already at war with Russia - they have declared war on us, what we saw at ZAPAD is the military arm of that

It's wrong to look at ZAPAD as just a military exercise it is not just military of it - Military element of that strategy is in pure scale terms, and is far smaller than it was during the cold war.

The russians are thinking about all this - working out what they want to do - well before they have the means to do it.

They are not tailoring their situation to suit their means, they know where they want to go. Putin is certain what he wants to do - to break the world system. To protect himself from the fate of other autocratic leaders.

Regional exercise is what they've trained against. Syria represents a veto against Western foreign policy.

An interesting war game could therefore be, what if the West refused to be vetoed.

We are at war, in a hybrid war, we cannot deter it - only fight it.

We need to be finding the solutions to the problems posed by this discussion:

How can we replicate the war power of our navy more cheaply?

What is the critical mass of our navies?

We need to go away and seek to change the minds within uniformed services, and move away from a mentality of peacetime, to one of wartime.