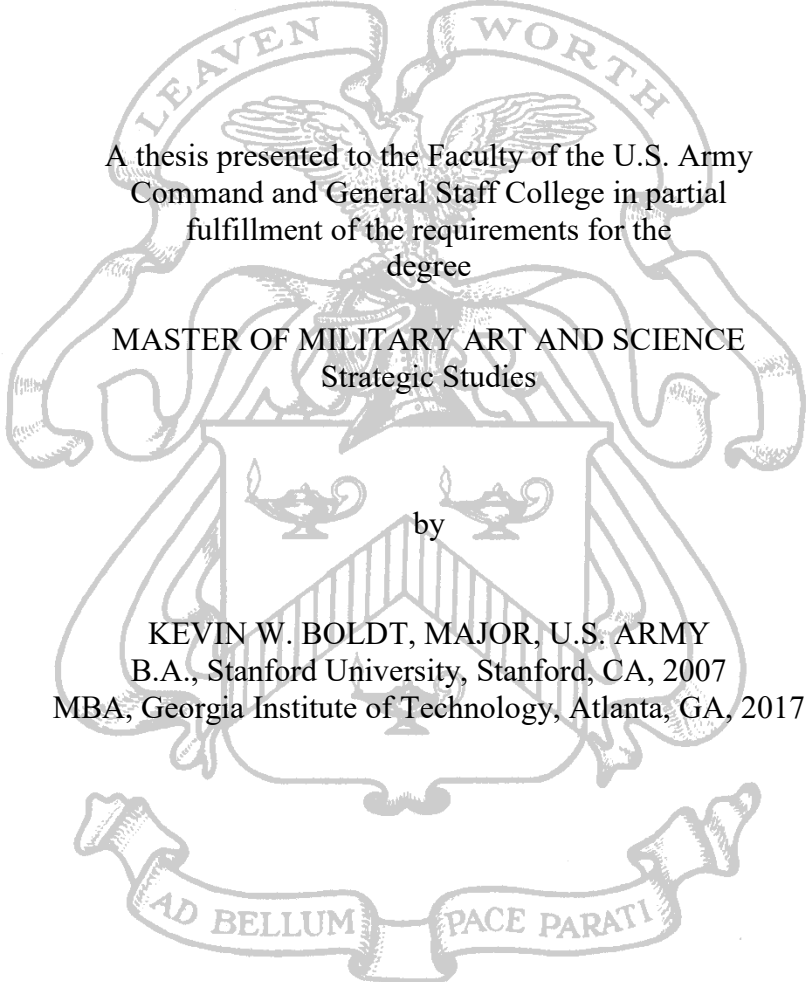


FILLING IN THE GAP OF U.S. DETERRENCE POLICY: POLAND AND THE  
FUTURE OF U.S. MILITARY POSTURE IN EUROPE



A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
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degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Strategic Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

FILLING IN THE GAP OF U.S. DETERRENCE POLICY: POLAND AND THE FUTURE OF U.S. MILITARY POSTURE IN EUROPE, by Major Kevin W. Boldt, 71 pages.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall serves as a visual reminder of the beginning of the end of the Cold War. From the 1990s until the present, NATO has attempted to reap the peace dividend from this decades-long conflict. However, much like the path of the Berlin Wall still scars Berlin, lines remain drawn throughout Europe between east and west. Similar to the Cold War, the United States remains committed to countering Russian subversion and aggression (as outlined in the 2017 *National Security Strategy*). The ongoing debate centers on how (or if) NATO can counter Russian aggression activities that fall below the threshold of full-scale war. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, NATO has implemented “enhanced Forward Presence” in eastern Europe. In this paper, the author focuses on the role of the U.S. in deterring Russia and uses the context of Poland to compare the strategic impact of rotational forces versus permanently based forces to achieve the strategic objective of countering Russian aggression.

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## ACRONYMS

ABCT	Armored Brigade Combat Team
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AWFC	Army Warfighting Challenge
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
CALL	Center for Army Lessons Learned
CEPA	Center for European Policy Analysis
DIME	Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic
DoD	Department of Defense
eFP	Enhanced Forward Presence
EUCOM	U.S. European Command
ERI	European Reassurance Initiative
FM	Field Manual
HQDA	Headquarters, Department of Army
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JP	Joint Publication
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCFA	National Commission on the Future of the Army
NSS	<i>National Security Strategy</i>
OAR	Operation Atlantic Resolve
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Nobody intends to put up a wall!

—East German Premier Walter Ubricht, *The Local*

#### Overview

The collapse of the Berlin Wall serves as a visual reminder of the beginning of the end of the Cold War. From the 1990s until the present, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has attempted to reap the peace dividend from this decades-long conflict. However, much like the path of the Berlin Wall still scars parts of Berlin, lines remain drawn, between east and west, throughout Europe. Similar to the Cold War, the United States remains committed to countering Russian subversion and aggression (U.S. President 2017, 48). The ongoing debate centers on how, or if, NATO can deter Russia's aggressive activities that fall below the threshold of full-scale war. A series of war games conducted by the Rand Corporation in 2015 concluded that "as currently postured, NATO cannot successfully defend the territory of its most exposed members." (Shlapak and Johnson 2016, 1). Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, NATO has implemented "enhanced Forward Presence" (eFP) in Eastern Europe, by positioning soldiers and conducting multinational exercises in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Aligned with NATO's efforts, the United States has conducted Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), which includes the U.S. military operations in support of NATO eFP as well as additional U.S. initiatives to support European allies and partners. The recently published U.S. National Defense Strategy reaffirms that the United States and

NATO will “deter Russian adventurism . . . and address the arc of instability building on NATO’s periphery” (DoD 2018, 11). In this paper, the author focuses on the role of the United States Military in deterring Russia and uses the context of Poland to compare the strategic impact of rotational forces versus permanently-based forces to achieve the strategic objective of countering Russian aggression.

### Primary Research Question

Deterrence policy has served as a linchpin of U.S. foreign policy towards the Soviet Union (and now Russia) since the end of World War II. While the nuclear umbrella continues to serve a vital role in the deterrence posture of both countries (i.e. United States and Russia), conventional forces also play a critical part in fulfilling each country’s national security objectives. With the assumption that both countries will maintain their nuclear postures, at least in relative terms, the more dynamic factor is how the United States and Russia use their conventional forces along the geopolitical fault lines of Eastern Europe. Russia’s recent acts of aggression have exposed the vulnerability of NATO’s eastern flank. This in-depth analysis starts with the primary research question, “should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces [e.g. Task Force, Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), etc.] in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?”

Prior to addressing this question, it must be acknowledged that, since the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, the United States, along with NATO allies, has started to rotate combat forces to Eastern Europe (via Operation Atlantic Resolve) to participate in training exercises, build allied and partner militaries’ capacity, and to send a message to Russia. The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw resulted in further commitments to

reinforcing NATO's eastern flank. In regards to Poland, NATO has established a command, Multinational Corps Northeast, in Szczecin, Poland, and the United States has embarked on infrastructure improvements as well as the forward positioning of sets of equipment. In addition to establishing staging bases in Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, the U.S. is currently building a base in Powidz, Poland, at a cost of \$200 million, to hold prepositioned armor and artillery equipment (Stoutamire 2017, 1). Furthermore, the construction of an Aegis Ashore Missile Defense System in Redzikowo, Poland has had a big impact on manifesting the U.S. commitment to Poland, meeting collective defense responsibilities for Europe. However, the construction of the missile defense system has also drawn Russia's ire, as expressed in the commentary of Igor Korotchenko (Sokolsky 2017, 13). This research study raises the question if permanently stationing U.S. combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) would more effectively deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe than the current model of rotational forces, which is referred to as "enhanced Forward Presence".

### Secondary Research Questions

To answer the primary research question—"should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?"—the answers to four secondary questions must be pursued. These secondary research questions flow chronologically to first briefly review the impact of the drawdown in U.S. forces in Europe from 2007-2014, determine the effect of eFP, and then pursue the answer to the question of how a permanent presence in Poland would potentially be different than projecting forces on a rotational basis. Finally, the author will look at how establishing

permanently-based forces in Poland could allow the U.S. Army to transition from deterrence to seizing the initiative.

The secondary questions to be answered in this thesis are:

1. How did the drawdown of U.S. forces in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility (AOR), from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture?
2. What impact has NATO enhanced Forward Presence (as well as Operation Atlantic Resolve) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?
3. How would establishing a permanent base with combat forces in Poland impact U.S. deterrence posture?
4. Would permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0?

These secondary questions address multiple aspects related to the primary research question and will be assessed using specific evaluation criteria. These evaluation criteria will be introduced in chapter 3. Those findings, when aggregated in chapter 4, will lead to answering the primary research question and developing conclusions and recommendations for decision makers and well as for future research. Those conclusions and recommendations will be provided in chapter 5.

Without question, the U.S. has drastically decreased its military presence in Europe. Initially, the U.S. significantly decreased its military presence in the early 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. More recently, from 2007-2014, the U.S. military once again decreased its force posture in Europe. In 2007, the U.S. Army had over 40,000

soldiers stationed in Europe; by the end of 2014, those numbers had decreased to approximately 28,450 (NCFA 2016, 29). The jury is still out regarding how the reduction in U.S. force posture has impacted deterrence policy towards Russia. While the nuclear umbrella still provides strategic deterrence, land forces, through deterrence-by-denial, can potentially deter lower level acts of aggression. Examples of lower level acts of aggression include “non-contact clashes between highly maneuverable interspecific fighting groups” as well as the “use of asymmetric and indirect methods” (Berzins 2014, 4). Various actors – such as undeclared conventional forces, peacekeepers, special operators, Cossacks, private military companies, foreign legionnaires, biker gangs, Russian-sponsored non-governmental organizations, and cyber/propaganda warriors – have been employed to execute these lower acts of aggression (Bartles 2016, 33). With this context in mind, the first secondary research question looks at how the drawdown of U.S. forces in the EUCOM AOR has impacted U.S. deterrence posture.

In response to Russia’s intervention in Ukraine, NATO leaders at the 2014 Wales Summit expressed alarm at Russia’s aggressive actions and committed to “respond swiftly and firmly” (NATO 2014, 1). The United States took an early lead by deploying forces to Eastern Europe as part of OAR. All U.S. efforts in support of NATO allies and partners are part of OAR. Building on its initial response at the NATO Wales Summit, at the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw, NATO leaders agreed to posture forces on a rotational basis in Eastern Europe to fill the capabilities gaps left from the drawdown (Heritage Foundation 2017, 70). The European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) partially funds OAR. Implemented in 2014 with \$985 million in funding, ERI’s budget has grown over the years (Pellerin 2017, 1). For 2018, ERI has a forecasted budget of \$4.8 billion

(Comptroller 2017, 1). The ERI budget is predominantly used to “increase presence” and for “enhanced pre-positioning” but also has funding allocated for conducting training and exercises, improving infrastructure, and building partnership capacity (Pellerin 2017, 1).

The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw resulted in the agreement of even more robust measures to defend NATO’s eastern flank (Dempsey 2017, 4). Canada, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom committed to provide the forces to meet the goal of one rotational battalion in each of the Baltic States and Poland; the U.S. took the lead in Poland by providing the battle group there (Heritage Foundation 2017, 70).

Building off the first secondary research question, the second secondary questions asks what has been the impact of NATO eFP over the last three years, especially regarding Russia?

After comparing the pros and cons of eFP to permanently-based forces on a regional level, it is then important to focus on Poland and answer how a permanent U.S. military base there could potentially impact the U.S. national security paradigm. How does employing rotational forces in Eastern Europe compare to permanently-based forces? Poland is the focus of this study, because it is the hub of U.S. rotational forces in Europe and is centrally located. An assessment of the pros and cons will provide the framework to answer this question. For this study, it is important to develop a holistic approach that includes the U.S. perspective as the priority for this study as well as the perspectives of our allies and that of the aggressor (Russia). The evaluation criteria, which will be introduced in chapter 3, provide a framework to achieve this objective.

While deterrence is inherently defensive, it still requires a good, credible offense (i.e. big stick) to be effective. Focusing on Poland, the fourth and final secondary



research question looks at whether permanently-based forces in Poland would be more effective at transitioning from the deter phase to the seize the initiative phase as outlined in the recently updated Army Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*. Furthermore, this research study helps to answer the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC) Army Warfighting Challenge (AWFC) #16, by defining the capabilities needed for current and future force combat effectiveness.

### Assumptions

It is important to address some assumptions which relate to the primary research question, "should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?" Assumptions are ideas that cannot be confirmed but are necessary to continue with the research.

First, the author assumes that Poland serves as the linchpin for U.S. deterrence strategy towards countering Russian aggression in Eastern Europe and that Poland supports the stationing of additional U.S. forces. This assumption is based on the historical role (i.e. land bridge) that Poland has played for connecting Western Europe and Russia (CEPA 2015, 7). Poland not only borders four NATO allies (and connects Western Europe to the Baltic States via Lithuania) but also shares a long border with Belarus and Ukraine as well as a 144-mile border with Russia alongside Kaliningrad (Heritage Foundation 2017, 80). While the Baltic States are also important, Poland has the highest geopolitical importance of the Eastern European countries and is the focus of this study. Poland's participation in the Visegrad Group (defined on page 9) and that

body's, generally, cohesive stance on political and military matters is another assumption that plays into Poland's high geopolitical stature.

Second, the author makes assumptions regarding the impact of U.S. actions on Russia, as conclusive information is not available regarding Russian key decision makers' (especially President Vladimir Putin's) feelings and the basis for how they make decisions. Existing scholarly literature, discussed in chapter 2, is critical for enabling the author to use this assumption. This assumption allows the author to apply the evaluation criteria to both the U.S. and Russia in chapter 4.

Another assumption is that NATO will remain unified and consistent with its policies, budgets, and posture. With the recent change in leadership in France, geopolitical strife in Turkey, and the impending Brexit (the United Kingdom's announced plan to exit from the European Union), this assumption is surely optimistic. Nevertheless, this assumption is necessary to consider how policy and posture changes in Poland would impact U.S. strategy to counter Russian aggression.

### Definitions and Terms

To ensure a common language for presenting certain, critical concepts to the reader, the following key terms are defined accordingly for the purpose of this paper.

Deterrence. The policy of producing a credible threat to cause the enemy not to strike due to the defender's ability to defeat an attack or inflict unacceptable damage in retaliation (Betts 2013, 1).

Deterrence-by-denial. This type of deterrence makes it physically difficult for the attacker to achieve its objective through a mixture of fear and (more importantly) by increasing the costs associated with taking and/or keeping the target (Mitchell 2015, 1).

Deterrence-by-punishment. This type of deterrence depends on fear that the defender will inflict a level of pain that exceeds whatever gains the attacker hoped to achieve through aggression (Mitchell 2015, 1).

Forward Presence. Maintaining forward-deployed or stationed forces overseas to demonstrate national resolve, strengthen alliances, dissuade potential adversaries, and enhance the ability to respond quickly to contingencies (DoD 2017, 93).

NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). As outlined in the NATO Warsaw Summit communique, NATO established enhanced Forward Presence to “unambiguously demonstrate, as part of our overall posture, Allies' solidarity, determination, and ability to act by triggering an immediate Allied response to any aggression.” To achieve this objective, NATO - led by the framework nations of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany – agreed to establish robust multinational presence in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland respectively (NATO 2016, 1).

Operation Atlantic Resolve. Initiated in 2014, the operation demonstrates the continued U.S. commitment to collective security through a series of actions designed to reassure NATO allies and partners of the U.S.’ dedication to enduring peace and stability in the region in light of the Russian intervention in Ukraine (Znamenacek 2017, 26).

Visegrad Group. This geopolitical group consists of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia and regularly walks lock-step on political and military matters (Kagan 2016, 36).

### Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are potential soft spots, while delimitations define the left and right limits and enable the author to focus on particular issues. One limitation is that the author

does not speak Russian or Polish. A related limitation is that the author did not have the opportunity to travel to Poland or Eastern Europe for research. For this research project, only unclassified, English-written publications have been analyzed. Regarding sources, the author needed to set an information cut-off point to ensure that all publication milestones were met in accordance with the Command and General Staff College's academic calendar. The author used February 1, 2018 as the information cut-off point for this project.

Additionally, the thesis title and primary research question refer to the U.S. military. The author intentionally did this to highlight that the fact that the U.S. Army frequently operates in a joint environment along with the other services within the Department of Defense (DoD). What is missing is the fact that in Europe the U.S. acts in conjunction with its NATO allies as well as with other European partners. While NATO programs such as eFP are discussed, this study focuses on recommendations for U.S. decision makers.

In today's interconnected world, it is hard to isolate problems to international borders. However, for the sake of scope, this paper is only looking at Poland, though the Baltic States as well as other members of the Visegrad Group (plus Romania) must surely be considered in regard to countering Russian aggression. The author recommends further study to assess the vulnerabilities of other countries on NATO's eastern flank and to research what steps can be taken to reassure those allies and partners as well as mitigate the effects of Russia's subversion and aggression tactics. Increasing permanent forward presence of the U.S. military is only part of the solution.

Finally, hybrid warfare, especially in the cyber domain, is a big issue when discussing Russia. While Russia's heavy use of hybrid warfare (especially information warfare) is noted in this study, it is not a subject pursued in great depth. This paper is predominantly focused on the role that land forces play in deterrence.

### Chapter Conclusion

The next chapter, chapter 2, discusses how the available literature provides answers to the following secondary research questions:

1. How did the drawdown of U.S. forces in EUCOM AOR, from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture?
2. What impact has NATO eFP (as well as OAR) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?
3. How would establishing a permanent base in Poland impact U.S. deterrence posture?
4. Would permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0?

Answering the secondary research questions sets the conditions for drawing conclusions regarding the primary research question, "should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?"

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

It would be bad enough to have Europeans, Latin Americans, and Asians think that we are immoral or cowardly. It would be far worse to lose our reputation with the Soviets.

—Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*

#### Chapter Introduction

Determining the answer to the primary research question, “should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?” requires a literature review. This literature review will set the groundwork and identify gaps that need to be addressed in this study as well as in future research endeavors. This literature review is organized by secondary research questions. By assessing what information has already been established on each of these secondary research questions, the conditions will be set to answer those questions in chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis.

#### Deterrence Revival

Deterrence served as the “essential military strategy behind containing the Soviet Union and a crucial ingredient in winning the Cold War without fighting World War III” (Betts 2013, 1). The defense of Europe against the prospect of Russian aggression was and, in many corners still is, seen as an obsolete task for NATO (CEPA 2015, 29). Through the expansion of the European Union and NATO as well as through Russia’s aggressive attempts to reclaim “lost” lands (especially in both Crimea and the Donbas),

Europe is experiencing a redrawing of geopolitical lines. This tension has brought the concept of deterrence back into the fold. Put simply, there are two main ways to deter an enemy. Deterrence-by-punishment relies on the threat to inflict enough pain on the enemy that the potential response by the defender negates the value of the enemy's goal. Since the end of World War II, the United States has predominantly relied on its nuclear arsenal to achieve deterrence-by-punishment. However, there is renewed debate regarding how a nuclear umbrella may embolden an adversary to use conventional weapons against U.S. friends and allies (Gerson 2009, 35).

America's adversaries are refining their tactics to operate below the threshold of deterrence-by-punishment. For example, Russia has introduced limited-war (i.e. "jab and grab") techniques designed to avoid trigger mechanisms of extended deterrence (Mitchell 2015, 2). The 2015 war games, conducted by the Rand Corporation, looked at how Russia could execute "jab and grab" offensive operations to "reach the outskirts of the Estonian and/or Latvian capitals of Tallinn and Riga, respectively," in 60 hours, at most (Shlapak and Johnson 2016, 1). The focus on the role that conventional forces play in deterring an adversary's aggression is known as deterrence-by-denial. Deterring potential belligerents from starting wars is arguably the most widely discussed goal of U.S. forward presence (O'Mahony, Priebe, Frederick, Kavanagh, Lane, Johnson, Szayna, Hlavka, Watts, and Povlock 2018, 23). To achieve deterrence-by-denial, the critical requirement is that the defender needs forces on or near the terrain or target that needs to be defended. However, forces on the ground do not necessarily mean deterrence-by-denial can be achieved. A limited number of forces on the ground can serve as a "trip-wire." The key distinction for the forces used to achieve deterrence-by-punishment is that

forces deployed for denial are not intended to die and trigger punishment but are expected to live and inflict pain on the attacker (Mitchell 2015, 4).

### U.S. Force Drawdown

Significant and conclusive literature exists regarding the first secondary research question: how did the drawdown of U.S. forces in EUCOM AOR, from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture? First, to quantify the drawdown, John Deni describes how the U.S. Army has seen its forward-presence in Europe shrink from approximately 122,000 soldiers in 1992 to around 30,000 soldiers today (Deni 2016, 36). There is overwhelming consensus that the drawdown of U.S. forces in Europe has created a capabilities gap (Coffey 2012, 17). Providing a Polish perspective, one of the harshest assessments describes U.S. force posture in Europe as “an illusion” (CEPA 2015, 25). Richard Betts assesses that U.S. deterrence policy has become “mixed and sloppy” (Betts 2013, 1). John Deni laments that the “U.S. approach to reassurance and deterrence still suffers from some strategic shortcomings” (Deni 2016, 35). Furthermore, Jakub Grygiel challenges the assumption that “the United States can maintain a credible extended deterrent by promising to project forces to the conflict zone once hostilities have started is simply no longer valid” (Grygiel 2015, 47).



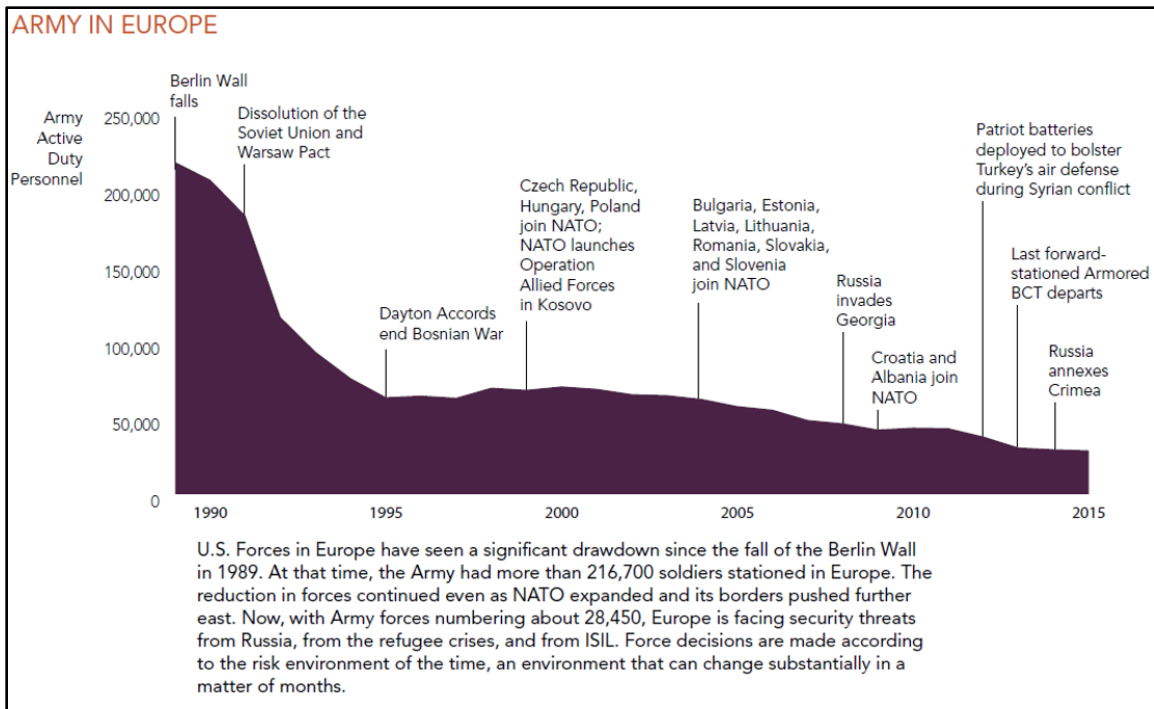


Figure 1. U.S. Army in Europe (1990-2015)

*Source:* National Commission on the Future of the Army, “Report to the President and the Congress of the United States,” January 28, 2016, accessed September 18, 2017, [http://www.ncfa.ncr.gov/sites/default/files/NCFA\\_Full%20Final%20Report\\_0.pdf](http://www.ncfa.ncr.gov/sites/default/files/NCFA_Full%20Final%20Report_0.pdf).

The drawdown of U.S. military forces also did not take place in a vacuum. Figure 1 shows that as the U.S. Army forward presence in Europe continued to drop, Russian acts of aggression, as seen in Georgia and Crimea, increased. Furthermore, as the U.S. decreased its military presence in Europe, Russia reintroduced divisions on its western border (Grau and Bartles 2016, 33). Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 dynamically impacted security perceptions and led to an increase in anxiety in Eastern Europe, even among NATO member states (Fryc 2016, 1). While the U.S. decreased conventional forces forward-deployed, the role of conventional forces for deterrence was increasing (Gerson 2009, 32). Russia’s limited war tactics, demonstrated in Crimea and

the Donbas, are “well-designed to [*sic*] defeating NATO’s security posture characterized by weak perimeter states reliant upon distant reinforcements” (CEPA 2015, 7).

Much more than Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008, Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea and subsequent hybrid warfare in eastern Ukraine has struck NATO’s nerve. To the present day, Russia’s aggression against Ukraine continues to present a “significant challenge to the security and stability of Europe and to the credibility of NATO” (U.S. Congress 2014, 2). The aggressive actions by Russia in Europe instigated the NATO community to discuss the role of forward troop deployments in deterring Russia (O’Mahony et al. 2018, 84). In response to Russia’s actions, the United States and its NATO allies attempted to course correct from the negative impact of the extended drawdown of forces (Coffey 2012, 17). At the 2014 NATO conference in Wales, NATO leaders announced a plan to rapidly and robustly reinforce the eastern flank and to address the identified capabilities gaps (NATO 2014, 1). The United States went further with Operation Atlantic Resolve and started to rotate forces to eastern and central Europe (Fryc 2016, 4). At the 2016 NATO conference in Warsaw, NATO built on the 2014 commitments and solidified its plans to use the “enhanced forward presence” of rotational NATO forces in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Poland to reassure allies and counter Russian aggression (NATO 2016, 1).

#### NATO eFP

The second secondary research question is “what impact has NATO eFP (as well as OAR) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?” The simple answer to this question is not enough, though experts’ assessments vary. Richard Betts notes that deterrence posture must provide “loud and clear” warnings to be effective (Betts 2013, 1). Some see

the rotational forces under eFP as providing sufficient “skin in the game” and as a “tangible indicator of American willingness to fight” (Hunzeker and Lanoszka 2016, 20-21). Building on the commitment that U.S. presence demonstrates, these forces also “benefit from interoperability and adaptability skills and the greater cultural awareness gained” (Lostumbo, McNerney, Peltz, Eaton, Frelinger, Greenfield, Halliday, Mills, Nardulli, Pettyjohn, Sollinger, and Worman 2013, 26).

On the other hand, other assessments continue to see U.S. presence in Europe as too weak to confront Russia’s aggression. The Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) argues that, as currently postured, “America’s role as the ultimate guarantor of European security could be over in a matter of hours” (CEPA 2015, 22). A Rand Corporation war game in 2015 determined that Russian forces could reach the capital cities of Latvia and Estonia in 60 hours or less (Shlapak and Johnson 2016, 1). Some scholarly articles suggest that the rotational forces in the Baltic States and Poland have been “nascent and unable to constitute a meaningful deterrence” (CEPA 2015, 29). John Deni describes the steps already taken, such as eFP, as “necessary but insufficient” (Deni 2016, 37). Along the same lines, other publications argue that security measures such as sending rotational forces to Eastern Europe have not gone far enough to meet the expectations of the Baltic States and Poland (Fryc 2016, 2).

The goal of eFP was to fill a capabilities gap, yet some reviews assess that the rotations and other exercises “lack the constancy of heel-to-toe rotations... which Russia could exploit to achieve a *fait accompli*” (Deni 2016, 35). Judy Dempsey highlights that the eFP rotations were purposefully designed to be constantly on the go to comply with the intent of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act regarding military forces near the

border (Dempsey 2017, 4). Kathleen Hicks and Heather Conley note that the NATO-Russia Founding Act “expresses NATO’s intent to refrain from the ‘additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces’ on the territory of the newer, eastern allies” (Hicks and Conley 2016, 23). However, other authors, such as John Deni, argue that the NATO-Russia Founding Act is a “dead letter” that is out of date (i.e. made in a different, Pre-Putin, political environment), not being followed by Russia, and is not even a legally binding treaty (Deni 2017, 1). In his 2017 European Command Posture Statement to the Senate Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Army General Curtis Scaparrotti, the NATO Supreme Allied Commander and also the EUCOM Commander, assessed that “without fully-resourced heel-to-toe rotational forces the ground force permanently assigned to EUCOM is inadequate to meet the combatant command’s directed mission to deter Russia from further aggression” (U.S. Congress 2017, 1). U.S. military planners have been working to close these gaps between the rotations of BCTs. Commentators such as Mariusz Fryc did not expect “heel-to-toe rotations” likely to be implemented until early in 2018 (Fryc 2016, 8). However, in October 2017, the 3rd ABCT, 4th Infantry Division returned to Fort Carson, Colorado, and the 2nd ABCT, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kansas, rolled in on a nine month, heel-to-toe rotation (Judson 2017, 1). Time will tell how, or if, closing the gaps between rotations will enhance the benefits of using rotational forces to counter Russian aggression.

Experts also disagree about the economic savings of using rotational forces instead of permanently-based forces. While cost-savings were an alleged benefit from the drawdown of U.S. forces from Europe (Lostumbo et al. 2013, 29), detractors suggest that temporary rotations of troops and equipment are costlier in the long run than keeping

them permanently in theater (CEPA 2015, 25). In concurrence with that view, Judy Dempsey makes the case of the high “costs of moving personnel and equipment back and forth” (Dempsey 2017, 4). Looking at the Fiscal Year 2018, the Department of Defense assesses that the cost of forward deploying an ABCT to Europe to be around \$700 million (Comptroller 2017, 2). While it is hard to reach consensus on how the financial costs of rotational forces compare to permanently-based forces, the political (diplomatic) costs are even more hotly debated. In addition to the financial costs, political costs also factor into the debate between rotational forces and permanent forces. Mariusz Fryc, citing polling from Germany, France, and Italy, suggests that it will be hard, politically, to maintain rotational forces (Fryc 2016, 12).

To date, Russia seems to be more annoyed than deterred by eFP. In Judy Dempsey’s estimation, Russia has regarded NATO’s measures as “provocative, offensive, and threatening its own security” (Dempsey 2017, 9). A study by the Rand Corporation assesses that placing deterrent forces too close to an adversary “may increase the number of disputes and provocations by a potential adversary” (O’Mahony et al. 2018, 83). Russia’s large-scale posturing of its conventional forces “were designed to pressure Kyiv, shield Russia’s other activities inside Ukraine, and intimidate Kyiv with the prospect of a larger-scale conflict with Russia” (Covington 2016, 10). Russia is continuing to use conventional forces to intimidate eastern European NATO members, as demonstrated with the major “Zapad” military exercise (Fryc 2016, 3). While the “Zapad” exercise only takes places once every several years, Russia regularly conducts other exercises such as Slavic Brotherhood and Union Shield to achieve the same effect (Frear 2015, 1). Regardless of the name of the exercises, Russia has, in recent years,

“ramped up the number of regular and snap exercises involving all of its armed forces”. (Sokolsky 2017, 7). In addition to using these exercises for diplomatic and informational gain, these exercises have also helped to increase the Russian military’s interoperability and decision making and rapid mobilization capabilities. Furthermore, Russia has extensively invested in conventional capabilities and thoroughly exercised its general-purpose forces over the last five years (Fink 2017, 2). President Trump’s recently published *National Security Strategy (NSS)* discusses how “the risk of conflict due to Russian miscalculation is growing” (U.S. President 2017, 26). Of note, “the assumptions and values of traditional Russian General Staff strategic culture . . . are very different from Western values and assumptions” (Covington 2016, 5-6). Another article suggests that Russia’s plan of “tailored escalation” increases the risk of unintended escalation, especially regarding Kaliningrad (Fink 2017, 1-2). Kaliningrad is Russia’s Baltic enclave, sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania (Sokolsky 2017, 8). Previously called East Prussia, the Soviet Union annexed Kaliningrad from Germany at the end of World War II. In recent years, Russia has built up its military presence in Kaliningrad (including with the placement of Iskander medium-range ballistic missile system) and by conducting snap exercises to increase its military leverage on NATO’s allies and partners (CEPA 2015, 82). Studies indicate that Kaliningrad not only would play a critical role in offensive operations against NATO member states but also a critical role for defensive operations due to the narrow chokepoint that the “Kaliningrad corridor” creates between Poland and the Baltic States (Shlapak and Johnson 2016, 4).

The crux of the matter is how large of a forward presence is needed to deter Russian aggression. John Deni notes that the rotationally-deployed U.S. ABCT has its

forces split amongst six countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria (Deni 2016, 39). Therefore, while the U.S. military talks of having a rotational ABCT based out of Poland, its forces are actually spread across at least six countries. Furthermore, analysis by the Rand Corporation highlights that not all U.S. overseas force posture contributes to deterring potential adversaries and assuring friends and allies” (Lostumbo et al. 2013, 25). More specifically, Robert Kaplan argues that the limited number of U.S. military personnel stationed on a rotating basis in frontline NATO states “constitutes such a small presence that they are unlikely to deter Russian aggression” (Kaplan 2016, 40). Figure 2 provides a snapshot of U.S. military presence in Europe between 2014 and 2018.

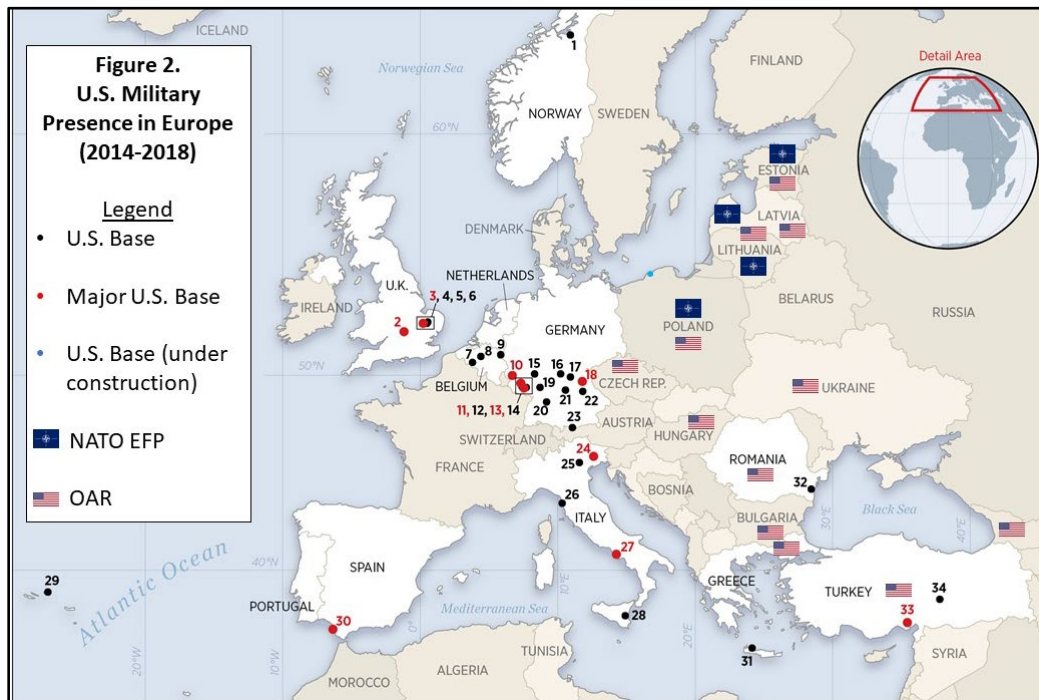


Figure 2. U.S. Military Presence in Europe (2014-2018)

Source: Modified by author using information from The Heritage Foundation, “Global

Assessment: Europe,” *2016 Index of U.S. Military Strength*, 2017, accessed September 09, 2017, [https://s3.amazonaws.com/ims-2016/PDF/2016\\_Index\\_of\\_US\\_Military\\_Strength\\_FULLL.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/ims-2016/PDF/2016_Index_of_US_Military_Strength_FULLL.pdf), 65-102.

### Permanent Base in Poland

While the preceding secondary research question considers the impact of rotational forces on countering Russian aggression, this secondary research question asks, “how would establishing a permanent U.S. base with combat forces in Poland impact U.S. deterrence posture?” First, numerous articles and studies recommend the permanent establishment of combat forces in Poland (U.S. Congress 2014, 4; CEPA 2015, 25), while other reports just more generally call for an increase in permanent U.S. forces in Europe (NCFA 2016, 52; Fryc, 2016, 15). In terms of capabilities, a major concern identified is regarding the lack of armored capability in Europe (Shlapak and Johnson 2016, 8).

While the presence of U.S. forces in a country is generally associated with providing a credible threat to potential belligerents and thereby decreasing the likelihood of conflict, there are other potential second- and third-order effects from the presence of U.S. troops. For example, increasing the U.S. troop presence in Poland could reassure Poland and provide leverage for the U.S. to restrain Poland from acting rashly. On the other hand, increasing the presence of U.S. troops in Poland could embolden Poland to assume additional risk or could disincentivize Poland from investing in its own defense (O’Mahony et al. 2018, 23). Currently, Poland is one of just five NATO members who spends at least 2 percent of GDP on defense (Heritage Foundation 2017, 71). While there are risks and indirect effects associated with the deployment of any U.S. forces abroad, a recent study by Rand suggests that Poland’s location could provide the right balance of



being far enough away from Russian forces to minimize provocations but close enough to respond quickly to contingency operations on NATO's eastern flank (O'Mahony et al. 2018, 85).

When making the case for why a permanent U.S. base should be established in Poland, scholars tend to highlight Poland's historic, geopolitical significance and/or see the opportunity to reinforce good behavior, namely Poland's recent buildup of its own defense forces (CEPA 2015, 21). Luke Coffey provides an argument that fostering the "U.S.-Polish defense relationship would also send the right political messages to Poland" (Coffey 2012, 19). Furthermore, in some ways, the ball is already rolling. Figure 3 highlights where NATO and the United States have already established a presence in Poland. The U.S. military has already started to stockpile rolling stock (including tanks) and other equipment in Poland (Dempsey 2017, 3). As it is easier to withdraw rotational forces than permanently-based forces, establishing permanently-based forces in Poland is more likely to reassure Poland as well as to deter Russia (Hunzeker and Lanoszka, 2016, 24). Additionally, substituting rotational forces for permanently stationed forces could increase flexibility for conducting NATO exercises and further develop interoperability and shared understanding of forces (Lostumbo et al. 2013, 27). In addition to strengthening the defense of front-line states, Jakub Grygiel also argues that adding offensive capabilities in the hands of frontline states strengthens the extended deterrence supplied by a distant security patron (Grygiel 2015, 42). A recent study by the Rand Corporation assesses that strengthening NATO's presence on the eastern flank could "change the Russian calculus" (O'Mahony et al. 2018, 84).

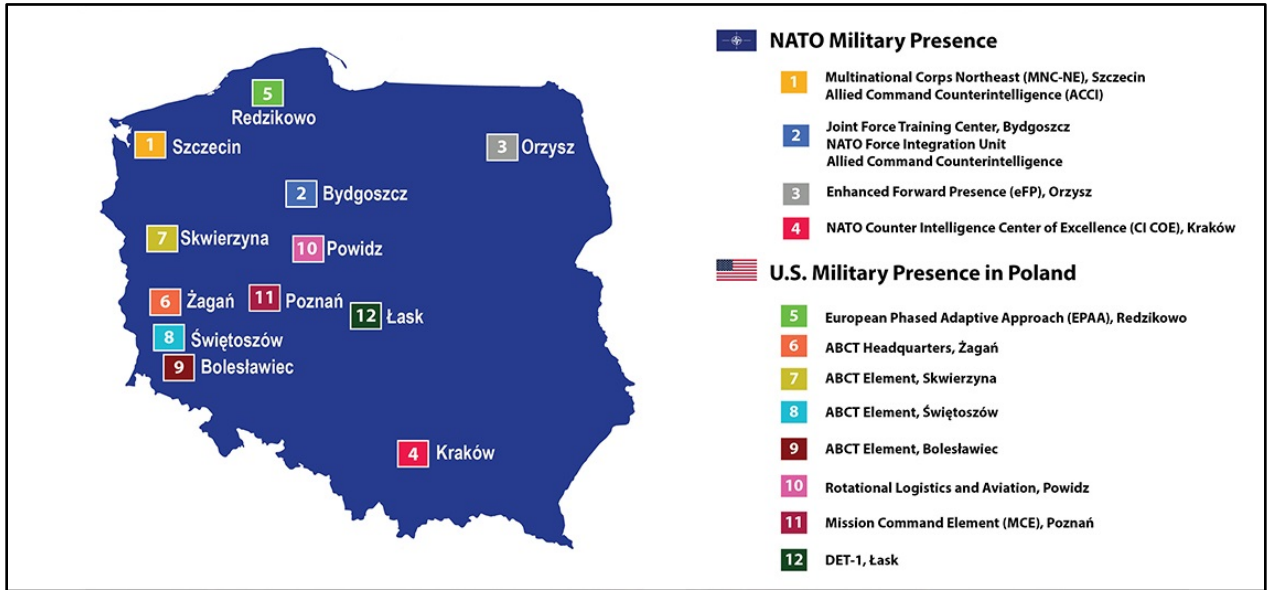


Figure 3. NATO-U.S. Military Presence in Poland (2017)

Source: U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Poland, “NATO-U.S. Military Presence in Poland,” accessed February 09, 2018, [https://pl.usembassy.gov/nato\\_us/](https://pl.usembassy.gov/nato_us/).

### Transition from Deter to Seize

The final secondary research question considers “would permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0?” The Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth produced an updated version of FM 3-0 in October 2017. The field manual addresses how the U.S. Army deters adversaries and devotes two chapters to describing operations to defeat aggression with subversion by U.S. partners and interests.

FM 3-0 states that “Army forces must demonstrate a credible level of readiness against regional peer threats to effectively deter adversaries and assure partners” (HQDA 2017, 2-53). A December 2017 report by the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)

assessed that a “lack of regional expertise and gaps in basing and sustainment will inhibit the command’s ability to respond in a crisis” (Znamenacek 2017, 26). Permanent forces may be able to get into the fight quicker than rotational forces and surely quicker than forces not initially located in theater (Hunzeker and Lanoszka 2016, 25). A study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated that NATO would need 13 brigades (eight from the U.S. Army and five from NATO allies) to have the proper force ratio to counter a Russian attack to NATO’s northeastern flank (Hicks and Conley 2016, 12). Michael Gerson makes the case that the U.S. can credibly signal its ability to respond to conventional aggression by “deploying robust conventional forces in and around the theater of potential conflict” (Gerson 2009, 35). Additionally, John Deni makes the case that the lack of a U.S. Army division headquarters in Europe limits wartime readiness (Deni 2016, 40). The last division stationed in Europe, 1st Armored Division, departed Wiesbaden, Germany in 2011 and reflagged its headquarters at Fort Bliss, Texas (Patton 2011, 1).

This secondary research question also ties to TRADOC’s Army Warfighting Challenges (AWFCs), which are current and mid-term military problems and gaps that help define capabilities needed for current and future force combat effectiveness (TRADOC 2014, 31). Two warfighting challenges are the most relevant to this research topic. AWFC #16 (Set the Theater) asks how the Army facilitates access to seize the initiative in early entry operations. AWFC #16 assesses how the Army underscores U.S. commitment to allies and partners and how the U.S. better assist the geographic combatant commanders to shape the theater and build partner capacity. Finally, tying back into FM 3-0, AWFC #20 (Develop Capable Formations) considers how to develop

formations that allow division and joint task force commanders to set the conditions for the close fight and seize, retain and exploit the initiative.

### Chapter Conclusion

The literature review summarizes current understanding by the academic community regarding the secondary research questions. In chapter 4, the author will provide the answers to these secondary research questions. First, though, chapter 3 will provide the methodology that will be used to get to those answers.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.

—Winston Churchill, “Churchill on Russia”

#### Chapter Introduction

The researcher follows a step-wise approach to answer the primary research question “should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?” The secondary research questions serve as guideposts throughout the research process. The researcher’s methods consist of a literature review, development of evaluation criteria, and then application of evaluation criteria. After individually evaluating each secondary research question, the researcher then aggregates the results to answer the primary research question.

This research study starts with a qualitative meta-analysis and literature review. As discussed in the last chapter, determining whether or not the United States should establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland, requires consideration of the existing literature. The secondary research questions will then be researched and addressed in a step-wise approach. By going through and answering each of the secondary research questions sequentially, the researcher will aggregate data which will lead to answering the primary research question and providing conclusions and recommendations. This approach will offer structure for further analysis. Next, evaluation criteria based on the four secondary research questions will be

developed to enable the identification of the best available answer to the primary research question. Success at hybrid warfare requires the integration of all instruments of national power. The evaluation criteria will look at how the secondary research questions impact all instruments of national power. Finally, based on the aggregation of the evaluation criteria analysis, the researcher will answer the primary research question. The answer to the primary research question as well as other research findings will assist the researcher with providing recommendations to decision makers as well as suggesting future research opportunities.

### Research Methodology

The author uses a step-wise approach for the research in this thesis:

Step 1: The first step of this research project is to conduct a literature review to assess with available academic literature how well the primary research question [“should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?”] can be answered. The author will divide the literature review into sections by the four secondary research questions. The literature review will be in chapter 2.

Step 2: The second step is to develop an evaluation criteria framework to assist in determining answers to the following secondary research questions:

1. How did the drawdown of U.S. forces in EUCOM AOR, from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture?
2. What impact has NATO eFP (as well as OAR) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?
3. How would establishing a permanent U.S. base with combat forces in Poland

impact U.S. deterrence posture?

4. Do permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0?

Step 3: For the third step, the researcher will apply the evaluation criteria to assess the degree of strategic and operational impact of permanently based and rotational forces in countering Russian aggression. Once the evaluation criteria have been applied, the author will aggregate the findings and answer the primary research question.

Step 4: The final step in the research project is to draw conclusions and make recommendations to decision makers and for future research.

#### Evaluation Criteria

Much like Russian aggression activities exploit the “gray zone,” there are no black and white answers for the primary and secondary research questions. Evaluation criteria based on the four secondary research questions will be developed to enable the identification of the best available answer to the primary research question. Evaluation criteria are used for both military and civilian purposes because these criteria can help establish if actions are suitable to achieve the desired results and “determine if the course of action is the best course of action to accomplish the mission” (Kem 2012, 223).

Table 1. Evaluation Criteria

Table 1. Evaluation Criteria (U.S. Army Europe Force Posture and Impact on Instruments of National Power)								
	Diplomatic		Informational		Military		Economic	
	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia
1. How did the drawdown of U.S. forces in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility (AOR), from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture?								
2. What impact has NATO EFP (as well as Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?								
3. How would establishing a permanent U.S. base with combat forces in Poland impact U.S. deterrence posture?								
4. Would permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0?								
<b>Total</b>								

Benchmark Scoring:  
Negative = -1, Neutral = 0, and Positive = 1

Source: Created by author.

The four evaluation criteria, listed above in table 1, are in line with the secondary research questions. The researcher selected these four criteria because, when examined in this context, these criteria can help determine whether basing permanent forces in Poland would better enhance U.S. deterrence posture than rotational forces. Navigating the gray area will be necessary because the primary research question asks, “Should the United States establish.” To holistically assess the impact of the U.S. military presence in Europe, the author uses the four instruments of national power: Diplomacy, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME). While this study is predominantly focused on the military, Joint Publication (JP) 1 notes that the “military instrument’s role increases relative to the other instruments as the need to compel a potential adversary



through force increases” (JCS 2013, I-13). The author uses the instruments of national power definitions from JP 1 to create a shared understanding.

**Diplomacy:** This instrument of national power is the principal instrument for engaging with other states and foreign groups to advance U.S. values, interests, and objectives, and to solicit foreign support for U.S. military operations. Diplomacy is a principal means of organizing coalitions and alliances, which may include states and non-state entities, as partners, allies, surrogates, and/or proxies (JCS 2013, I-12).

**Informational:** Previously considered in the context of traditional nation-states, the concept of information as an instrument of national power extends to non-state actors—such as terrorists and transnational criminal groups—that are using information to further their causes and undermine those of the United States Government and our allies (JCS 2013, I-12).

**Military:** Fundamentally, the military instrument is coercive in nature, to include the integral aspect of military capability that opposes external coercion. Coercion generates effects through the application of force (to include the threat of force) to compel an adversary or prevent our being compelled. The military has various capabilities that are useful in non-conflict situations, such as when conducting foreign relief (JCS 2013, I-13).

**Economic:** In the international arena, the Department of the Treasury works with other United States Government agencies, the governments of other nations, and the international financial institutions to encourage economic growth, raise standards of living, and predict and prevent, to the extent possible, economic and financial crises (JCS 2013, I-13).

While many differences exist between U.S. and Russian military doctrine, one similarity is that methods of conflict “now involve the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures” (Hoffman 2016, 3). Additionally, as it takes two to tango (and to deter), the author will evaluate each question from both the U.S. and Russian perspectives. As outlined in table 1, the author will make the assessment, and provide justification, as to where on the three-part scale of the impact it falls: negative (-1 point), neutral (0 points), or positive impact (1 point). The following explanation is provided to show how the author defines the benchmark scoring for this project. The scoring considers each of the four instruments of national power.

Negative (-1 points): For diplomacy, the author considers the impact negative if, from the U.S.’ perspective, the initiative detracts from the unity of effort for NATO. Looking at it from Russia’s perspective, the initiative is negative if it detracts from Russia’s ability to sew discord in NATO. For informational power, the initiative is negative for the U.S. if it detracts from NATO’s ability to further its cause and/or undermine Russia. From Russia’s perspective, the initiative is negative if it detracts from Russia’s ability to further its cause and/or undermine NATO. For military power, the initiative is negative if it degrades capability of U.S. forces to attack or defend. The same goes for Russian forces. For economic power, the initiative is negative if it detracts from economic growth and/or impairs standards of living for the respective country.

Neutral (0 points): For diplomacy, the author considers the impact neutral if, from the U.S.’ perspective, the initiative does not clearly help or hurt the unity of effort for NATO. Looking at it from Russia’s perspective, the initiative is neutral if it does not clearly help or hurt Russia’s ability to sew discord in NATO. For informational power,

the initiative is neutral for the U.S. if it does not clearly help or hurt NATO's ability to further its cause and/or undermine Russia. From Russia's perspective, the initiative is neutral if it does not clearly help or hurt Russia's ability to further its cause and/or undermine NATO. For military power, the initiative is neutral if it does not clearly help or hurt the capabilities of U.S. forces to attack or defend. The same goes for Russian forces. For economic power, the initiative is neutral if it does not clearly help or hurt economic growth and/or impact standards of living for the respective country.

Positive (1 point): For diplomacy, the author considers the impact positive if, from the U.S.' perspective, the initiative enhances the unity of effort for NATO. Looking at it from Russia's perspective, the initiative is positive if it enhances Russia's ability to sew discord in NATO. For informational power, the initiative is positive for the U.S. if it enhances NATO's ability to further its cause and/or undermine Russia. From Russia's perspective, the initiative is positive if it enhances Russia's ability to further its cause and/or undermine NATO. For military power, the initiative is positive if it enhances capabilities of U.S. forces to attack or defend. The same goes for Russian forces. For economic power, the initiative is positive if it promotes economic growth and increases standards of living for the respective country.

The aggregation of the results will provide the determination of the measured degree of impact. The author will use chapter 4 to evaluate the criteria and provide justification as necessary. Ultimately, this work will lead to answering the primary research question.

### Threats to Validity and Biases

There are two major issues that pose threats to validity for this research endeavor. Threats to validity affect the accuracy of the research and undermine the meaningfulness of its findings (Garson 2016, 11). Biases can potentially threaten the validity of a research project. One challenge is overcoming selection bias. The author of this study had an initial direction in which to take the research, and this preconception impacted how and what primary and secondary research questions were selected. Furthermore, the confirming evidence trap affects the scholarly sources examined by the author. This trap can lead to more weight being placed on evidence supporting the researcher's original thoughts and counter-evidence being cast aside. By acknowledging these threats to validity and biases, the researcher will mitigate the negative effects on this research project. The author also attempted to mitigate the threat to internal validity by conducting a robust literature review. The literature review includes various sources including government publications, think tank studies, and scholarly research. To balance perspective, the author also included perspectives that varied by time and location of publication.

### Chapter Conclusion

While recognizing the threats to validity, biases, limitations, and delimitations, the research methodology provides the framework to answer the primary research question. The literature purposefully casts a wide net to assess what thought and analysis is already available. The evaluation criteria results answer the secondary research questions and after aggregation navigate this study towards the answer to the primary research question "should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task

Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?” The next chapter, chapter 4, provides a presentation and analysis of the data collected during this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Russia's malign actions are supported by its diplomatic, information, economic, and military initiatives.

—General Curtis Scaparrotti, *EUCOM 2017 Posture Statement to Senate Committee on Armed Services*

#### Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected during the research process. The author analyzes how the data individually answer each of the secondary research questions. Ultimately, using a step-wise approach as outlined in chapter 3, the author assesses how the responses to the secondary research questions, on aggregate, lead to answer the primary research question, “should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?”

#### Step 1: Results of the Literature Review

While traditional deterrence theory seemed to be a relic of the Cold War, the role of deterrents has experienced a resurgence due to Russia's aggressive tactics against Georgia, Ukraine, and Eastern European countries. Though not discussed in this paper, the challenge to U.S. hegemony by China and the ambitious actions by Iran and North Korea also have helped to bring deterrence theory back into the spotlight. Focusing on Europe, Russia's hybrid war tactics have exploited the higher thresholds for response that traditional deterrence theory (especially deterrence-by-punishment) have used. This, in

turn, has caused NATO allies and partners to reassess deterrence theory and to reevaluate how deterrence-by-denial can change the dynamics of defending NATO's eastern flank. As part of this re-evaluation, NATO has looked at the role that troop presence plays in both deterring potential adversaries as well as reassuring allies and partners.

Additionally, the literature review highlights that the drawdown of U.S. forces in Europe was detrimental from a military perspective, partially answering the first secondary research question directly ("how did the drawdown of U.S. forces in EUCOM AOR, from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture?"). Luke Coffey makes the case that the drawdown of U.S. forces created a capabilities gap in Europe (Coffey 2012, 17). Richard Betts questions the effectiveness of U.S. deterrence policy due to the reduction of U.S. military posture in Europe (Betts 2013, 1). The literature review also provides a partial answer for the second secondary question: "what impact has NATO eFP (as well as OAR) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?" The consensus is that rotational forces have been necessary but insufficient, with even the EUCOM Commander, General Curtis Scaparrotti, calling for more to be done (U.S. Congress 2017, 1). Rotational forces provided a quick stopgap measure to fill an identified capabilities gap. Furthermore, the impact of rotational forces seems to be limited, and the sustainability of NATO members' contributions to eFP has been questioned (Fryc 2016, 12).

While the EUCOM Posture Statement suggests that more effects can be reaped through better resourced, heel-to-toe rotations, others make the case for increasing permanently-based forces in Europe to provide a more robust and viable solution (NCFA 2016, 52; Fryc 2016, 15). The general assessment is that the U.S. Army needs to increase its permanent presence, especially its armored capability, in Europe. While the location

of the increased permanent presence is still up for debate, several authors make the case for establishing a permanent base in Poland (U.S. Congress 2014, 4; CEPA 2015, 25). Furthermore, the Rand's recent study assesses that basing additional U.S. military forces in western Poland, eastern Germany, or eastern Czech Republic may achieve the right balance between deterring Russia and not causing unnecessary provocations (O'Mahony et al. 2018, 85). Establishing a permanent base with combat forces in Poland could expand the ability of NATO to respond to contingencies in the Baltic States. Investing in Host Nation Support for Poland "will be critical in the event of a Russian attack on the Baltic states [*sic*]" (Kochis 2015, 2).

The available literature does not do an adequate job holistically assessing (beyond the military perspective) the impact of both the drawdown and then the introduction of rotational forces to NATO's eastern flank starting in 2014. The author has developed evaluation criteria, which incorporate the DIME framework, to provide a more well-rounded assessment. The second step in the research design will apply this framework to assist with answering the primary research question.

The second step in the research design will integrate the DIME framework into the evaluation criteria to assist with answering the primary research question. This technique will enable the author to provide a more wholistic approach to systematically answer the secondary questions.

### Step 2: Application of the Evaluation Criteria

Applying a framework of evaluation criteria will enable the author to determine whether the U.S. should establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian



aggression. To achieve this objective, the author will first answer each of the secondary research questions using the evaluation criteria. In the following section of this paper, each of the separate criterion will be answered and explained individually.

Table 2. Impact Evaluation Criterion – Drawdown								
Table 2. Impact Evaluation Criteria - Drawdown								
	Diplomatic		Informational		Military		Economic	
	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia
1. How did the drawdown of U.S. forces in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility (AOR), from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture?	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)
Benchmark Scoring: Negative = -1, Neutral = 0, and Positive = 1								

*Source:* Created by author.

Criterion 1: How did the drawdown of U.S. forces in the EUCOM AOR, from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture? The consensus opinion, from the literature review in chapter 2, is that the drawdown of U.S. forces in the EUCOM AOR negatively impacted U.S. deterrence posture. Antithetically, this drawdown benefitted Russia’s strategic positioning. Across the instruments of national power, this is how the drawdown impacted the United States and Russia.

Diplomatic: The drawdown sent the wrong political message to NATO European allies, resulting in a negative diplomatic impact (Coffey 2012, 1). For the Russians, the drawdown provided the opportunity for exploiting the geopolitical isolation of NATO allies and partners along the flank.

Informational: Along the same lines as the diplomatic angle, the drawdown facilitated the perception that the U.S. had bigger priorities than safeguarding Europe and that the NATO alliance had fractures. This negative impact for the U.S., at the same time, helped to positively impact Russia. Additionally, Russia used a strong sticks and carrots campaign to target vulnerable European countries, especially on NATO's eastern flank. Russian-language media publications have played a key role in Russia's information operations.

Military: As Luke Coffey notes, the drawdown of U.S. forces in Europe had a negative impact and resulted in a capabilities gap (Coffey 2012, 17). While Russia did not automatically gain an advantage from the U.S. drawdown, the Russians' subsequent reorganization and repositioning of forces along their western border had a positive, strategic impact from their perspective (Grau and Bartles 2016, 28-29).

Economic: No significant economic impact was recorded for either side. While proponents of the U.S. drawdown cited cost savings as part of the justification for the action, the significant costs of relocating forces and closing down bases largely negated these purported cost savings.

Table 3. Impact Evaluation Criterion – Rotational Forces

Table 3. Impact Evaluation Criteria – Rotational Forces								
	Diplomatic		Informational		Military		Economic	
	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia
2. What impact has NATO EFP (as well as Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	Positive (1)	Positive (1)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)

Benchmark Scoring:  
Negative = -1, Neutral = 0, and Positive = 1

Source: Created by author.

Criterion 2: What impact has NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (as well as Operation Atlantic Resolve) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date? The concise summary of the impact of NATO Enhanced Forward Presence is necessary but not sufficient (Deni 2016, 37). Across the instruments of national power, this is how rotational forces have impacted the United States and Russia.

Diplomatic: Overall, the diplomatic impact of NATO eFP has been positive. The presence of additional NATO forces, on a rotational basis, to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland has helped to reassure allies (Hunzeker and Lanoszka 2016, 20-21). On the other hand, the downside is that there is a finite amount of military forces available to augment NATO’s flank. This causes the alliance to pick favorites, in this case the three Baltic states and Poland over the southern flank (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria, etc.) (Dempsey 2017, 1).

Informational: To a certain extent, both the United States and Russia have seen a positive impact from the deployment of rotational forces to Eastern Europe. For the U.S.,

the rotational forces have sent the message that the U.S. military stands ready to defend allies in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the exercises, especially in the summer months, provide buzzworthy headlines. However, there are enough headlines to go around. Russia's information operations have not been sidelined by the arrival of rotational forces. Instead, Russia has framed the rotational forces as aggressive tactics by NATO which threaten Russia (Dempsey 2017, 9). Furthermore, Russia has attempted to spread false allegations in countries hosting eFP forces (e.g. German forces in Lithuania) to create a wedge between the local population and the broader NATO community (Luiks and Praks 2017, 11). Figure 4 highlights how Russia used media coverage, especially in Russian-language publications, to target NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic States and Poland. Additionally, Russia has also exploited divides, such as NATO picking favorites, and continues to message that it is in the game for the long-haul, while the Americans are only making a short-term play.

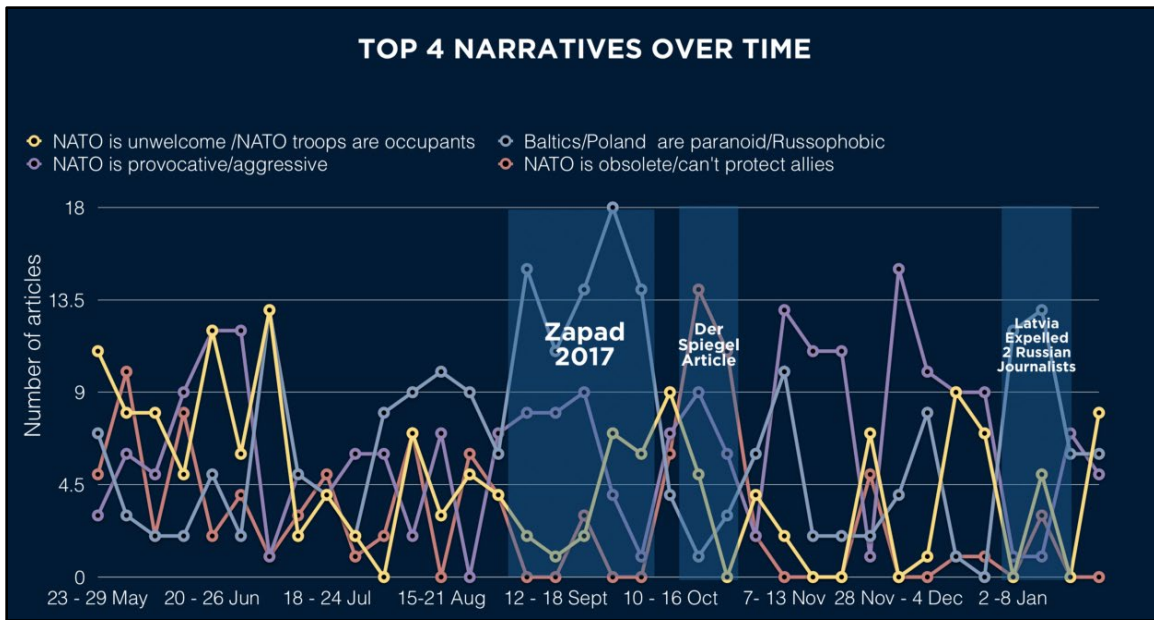


Figure 4. Enhanced Anti-NATO Narratives (23 May 2017-29 January 2018)

Source: Digital Forensic Research Lab, “Russian Narratives on NATO’s Deployment,” April 1, 2017, accessed February 07, 2018, <https://medium.com/dfrlab/russian-narratives-on-natos-deployment-616e19c3d194>.

**Military:** The rotational forces increased the armored capability of the U.S. Army in Europe. Less tangibly, the rotational forces have worked to build the interoperability of NATO forces (Lostumbo et al. 2013, 26). Maintaining business as usual, the Russian military has not experienced a major impact from the introduction of rotational forces. If anything, the increased presence of NATO troops along NATO’s eastern flank has been seen as a provocation by Russia. In response, Russia has increased the scale and scope of some of its exercises (such as Zapad) in the Western Military District.

**Economic:** ERI and OAR have surely brought millions of dollars to Poland. However, the Polish economy’s robust growth is largely driven by consumer demand

(European Commission 2017, 114). Furthermore, the limited number and nature of U.S. troops moderates the economic impact of these forces.

Table 4. Impact Evaluation Criterion – U.S. Base with Combat Forces in Poland								
Table 4. Impact Evaluation Criteria – U.S. Base with Combat Forces in Poland								
	Diplomatic		Informational		Military		Economic	
	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia
3. How would establishing a permanent U.S. base with combat forces in Poland impact U.S. deterrence posture?	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	Neutral (0)	Positive (1)	Neutral (0)	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)

Benchmark Scoring:  
Negative = -1, Neutral = 0, and Positive = 1

*Source:* Created by author.

Criterion 3: How would a permanent base with combat forces in Poland impact U.S. deterrence posture? A permanent base with combat forces in Poland would send the right message to Poland and other NATO allies and partners and strengthen U.S. Army’s posture in Eastern Europe. Establishing permanently-based forces in Poland is more likely to reassure Poland as well as to deter Russia (Hunzeker and Lanoszka 2016, 24). While more speculative, establishing a robust, permanent presence in Poland would also have positive impacts on both informational and economic power. A more thorough analysis across the instruments of national power follows.

Diplomatic: As previously discussed, establishing permanently-based forces in Poland sends a strong political message to NATO allies. While Poland would surely benefit the most politically, the Baltic States would also benefit from the proximity of

permanently-based U.S. forces. As noted by Rand, positioning U.S. troops in Poland could provide the right balance of being far enough away from Russian forces to minimize provocations but close enough to respond quickly to contingency operations on NATO's eastern flank (O'Mahony et al. 2018, 85). The permanent presence of forces would also strengthen multinational relationships. For Russia, the positioning of permanently-based U.S. forces decreases its leverage over Poland and possibly the Baltic states. However, as Judy Dempsey has discussed, the U.S. still has to play favorites when selecting to permanently station Army forces in Poland, and so Russia could still work to exploit those divisions either in the Baltic states or, more likely, in central Europe with the other countries in the Visegrad Group. Finally, establishing a permanent base in Poland would also represent a political paradigm shift, as with this action, the U.S. would be definitively breaking from the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. However, this NATO and the Russian Federation signed this agreement in the context of the 1990s, during Russia's experimentation with democracy and the open market.

Informational: Aligned with the diplomatic impact, the positive informational impact is also based on the strong political message that establishing a permanent base brings to the NATO Alliance. Not only would the political message be strong to NATO allies and partners, but permanently-stationed U.S. forces in Europe have tended to have good messaging. The 2nd Cavalry Regiment, based out of Vilseck, Germany, provides a model for how a permanently-stationed unit can still create buzzworthy news through participation in multinational exercises and execution of unique training events.

Military: Basing an ABCT in Poland would help to fill the existing capabilities gap for countering Russian aggression. While the U.S. Army currently has two BCTs

stationed in Europe, the Rand Corporation assesses that a “total force of six or seven brigades, including at least three heavy brigades,” could prevent losing the war in the first few days (Shlapak and Johnson 2016, 8). The addition of one solo ABCT to Poland is not enough to deter the Russian military. The recent Rand study, “U.S. Presence and the Incidence of Conflict,” suggests that 10,000 troops forward deployed is the minimum amount to have considerable deterrence impact (O’Mahony et al. 2018, 47).

Nevertheless, the addition of an ABCT would still change the calculus for Russian military decision making. Furthermore, over time, a permanently-based ABCT would reap bigger dividends with enhancing multinational interoperability, not only with the Polish military but also with the NATO Multinational Division-Northeast and Multinational Corps-Northeast stationed in country.

Economic: Forecasts from the European Commission suggest that Poland’s future growth (+3 percent) will continue to be driven by consumer demand. However, permanently stationing U.S. Army forces in Poland could still have a positive impact on Poland’s economic growth rate. A study by Tim Kane and Garrett Jones found that increasing from one troop to having 10,000 troops in a country is associated with 0.9 percent higher economic growth rate every year (Kane and Garett 2005, 5). Based on that analysis, adding an ABCT to Poland combined with other initiatives (e.g. missile defense in Redzikowo and staging base in Powidz) would likely have a positive impact of 0.1-0.9 percent on Poland’s economic growth rate.



Table 5. Impact Evaluation Criterion – Transition from Deter to Seize Initiative

Table 5. Impact Evaluation Criteria – Transition from Deter to Seize Initiative								
	Diplomatic		Informational		Military		Economic	
	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia
4. Would permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0?	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)

Benchmark Scoring:  
Negative = -1, Neutral = 0, and Positive = 1

Source: Created by author.

Criterion 4: Do permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0? The simple answer is yes. Adding an ABCT to Poland enables the U.S. to get significant combat power into the fight. As noted in the above table, the ability to transition from deter to seize initiative is largely a military question. Therefore, the answer to this secondary question only impacts the military aspect.

Diplomatic: No significant diplomatic impact was recorded for either side.

Informational: No significant informational impact was recorded for either side.

Military: Armored forces, in particular, take time to deploy. While the U.S. military has taken steps to pre-position equipment at select sites in Europe (including Poland), those stocks of equipment do not have the same level of readiness and lack the lethality that an ABCT provides. As noted by Rand, enablers (e.g. air/naval power, artillery, air defenses, and logistics) really set the conditions for combat forces to transition from deter to seize the initiative (Shlapak and Johnson 2016, 8). The ABCT

provides a foundation on which to seize the initiative, but the integration of enablers is really what will allow the U.S. Army to consolidate gains when conducting unified land operations.

Economic: No significant economic impact was recorded for either side.

### Step 3: Answer Primary Research Question

Having analyzed the evaluation criteria, the third step of the research design is to aggregate and present the findings. Completing this step leads to the answer of the primary research question.

<b>Table 6. Evaluation Criteria – Aggregate</b>								
<b>Table 6. Evaluation Criteria (Aggregate)</b>								
	Diplomatic		Informational		Military		Economic	
	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia	U.S.	Russia
1. How did the drawdown of U.S. forces in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility (AOR), from 2007-2014, impact U.S. deterrence posture?	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	<b>Positive (1)</b>	<b>Negative (-1)</b>	Positive (1)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)
2. What impact has NATO EFP (as well as Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE) had on U.S. deterrence posture to date?	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	<b>Positive (1)</b>	<b>Positive (1)</b>	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)
3. How would establishing a permanent U.S. base with combat forces in Poland impact U.S. deterrence posture?	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)	Positive (1)	<b>Neutral (0)</b>	<b>Positive (1)</b>	Neutral (0)	Positive (1)	Negative (-1)
4. Would permanent forces in Poland enable the United States to more effectively transition from the deter phase to the seize initiative phase as outlined in FM 3-0?	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	Neutral (0)	<b>Neutral (0)</b>	<b>Positive (1)</b>	Negative (-1)	Neutral (0)	None (0)
<b>Total</b>	1	-1	1	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	0	1	-1

Benchmark Scoring:  
Negative = -1, Neutral = 0, and Positive = 1

*Source:* Created by author.

Overall, the aggregation of the evaluation criteria establishes that the United States should establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of deterring Russian aggression. The drawdown of U.S. military presence in Europe between 2007 and 2014 exposed NATO's eastern flank to Russian aggression and subversion. While the arrival of NATO rotational forces has been necessary, this step has been necessary but not sufficient. Therefore, the answer to the primary research question, "Should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?" is in fact, yes. Not only would this enhance the United States' ability to use the military instrument of national power, but it would also have a positive, diplomatic impact. What is more unclear, however, is how significant and long-term the informational and economic impact of this positioning would be.

#### Step 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

The final step of the research design is to draw conclusions and provide recommendations. Chapter 5 provides the conclusions and recommendations for this study.

#### Chapter Conclusion

Should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of deterring Russian aggression? Based on the research, the answer to the primary research question is yes. The review of literature provides credible evidence regarding the negative impact on

U.S. military and diplomatic powers due to the drawdown of the U.S. military in Europe between 2007 and 2014. While the deployment of rotational forces has helped to close the capabilities gap, it has not been sufficient. The application of the evaluation criteria establishes that the United States Army should increase its deterrence posture in Europe by establishing a permanent base with combat forces in Poland. Based on these findings and other considerations, chapter 5 will provide some general conclusions as well as recommendations for policy makers and for future research.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Chapter Introduction

As the results in chapter 4 showcase, the answer to the primary research question, “Should the United States establish a permanent base with combat forces (e.g. Task Force, ABCT, etc.) in Poland to enhance the national strategic objective of countering Russian aggression?” is in fact, yes. While the recent addition of rotational forces to Europe have helped to close the capabilities gap created from the precipitous drawdown of U.S. forces, the fact remains that the United States does not have the land forces in Europe to provide a credible deterrent to counter Russia aggression much less a force that can rapidly deploy to decisively respond to contingency scenarios. Furthermore, the actions taken to date by NATO have not reassured member states located on the eastern flank.

#### Conclusions

The research supports the conclusion that the U.S. Army should add an Armored Brigade Combat Team to Europe. While other areas such as the Baltic States could be considered, Poland provides the comparative advantage for positioning due to its central geographic location and its political and historic significance. Furthermore, Poland balances the positioning of forces to be able to respond to contingencies while at the same time minimizing provocations to Russia. Adding permanently-based forces to Europe helps to close the capabilities gap that remains open since the end of the Cold War. Since Russia’s 2014 invasion of Ukraine, NATO leaders have noted with dismay

how Russia had increased its leverage and successfully used all the instruments of national power to exploit NATO's flank.

The steps taken by the United States and NATO since 2014 have been necessary but not sufficient in mitigating the vulnerabilities on NATO's flank. In particular, the deployment of rotational forces as part of NATO eFP as well as Operational Atlantic Resolve have helped to reassure European allies and partners and increase interoperability. However, these forces have not changed the paradigm of deterrence. If anything, the rotational forces have only thickened the conventional tripwire. Furthermore, an assessment of contributing member states suggests that the rotational forces is not a sustainable program.

Adding an ABCT to Poland would have an immediate impact on both the diplomatic and military instruments of national power. Diplomatically, establishing a permanent presence of combat troops in Poland would send a strong, deterrent message to Russia and would also help to reassure Poland and potentially the Baltic states. From a military capabilities' perspective, stationing an ABCT in Poland returns a critical capability to Europe and builds combat power.

### Recommendations

#### Recommendations for Decision Makers

While this research study presented the question of U.S. troop presence in Poland as a decision between continuing rotational forces (e.g. Operation Atlantic Resolve, NATO eFP, etc.) or going to permanently-based forces, the truth lies somewhere in the middle. The main takeaway from this paper is that rotational forces have been value-added in Eastern Europe, but they do not provide sufficient credibility to counter Russian

aggression. However, even if decision makers enact the recommendation to station an ABCT in Poland, the author still sees a need to continue the deployment of rotational forces to NATO's eastern flank. For NATO allies and partners, this provides a forum for contributing to collective security, and for U.S. forces, it helps to increase interoperability across the force (not just for a select number of units stationed in Europe). As highlighted in wargames conducted by Rand, the integration of enablers (especially aviation, artillery, and logistics) is critical to any fight. An ABCT would only come with a limited number of organic assets, and so rotational forces would likely still be incumbent for providing additional capabilities.

U.S. Army Europe currently maintains an atypical command structure as a three-star Army Service Component Command which also is responsible for 15+ subordinate commands. U.S. Army Europe has lacked a division command node since 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division left Germany in 2008. Even without the addition of more permanently-based troops to Europe, there is also a strong case for enhancing the mission command structure for U.S. Army Europe. In addition to adding an ABCT to Poland, the U.S. Army should add a division headquarters to Germany.

#### Recommendations for Future Researchers

As discussed in chapter 1, this study only focused how permanently basing U.S. forces in Poland could potentially have a larger strategic impact on deterring Russian aggression than rotational forces. Future researchers could pursue a similar study focused on the Baltic countries (e.g. Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia). Another opportunity for analysis would be to assess the political and infrastructure considerations that would drive the specific location for stationing an ABCT.

In chapter 1, the author made some general, yet critical, assumptions regarding the direction of NATO. However, with recent elections across Europe and the United Kingdom's planned exit from the European, numerous geopolitical dynamics could influence how NATO evolves in the 21st Century. One area for possible research is assessing how the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union could influence the role that the United Kingdom plays in NATO. On the operational and tactical levels, this study noted that NATO has already established Multinational Corps - Northeast and Multinational Division - Northeast in Poland. Another opportunity for further research would be to look at the command relationship of U.S. forces stationed in Eastern Europe with these NATO echelons during contingency operations.

On the subject of deterring Russian aggression, hybrid threats, especially in the cyber domain pose a unique challenge. Research on how to deter Russian aggression in the cyber domain is a relevant topic worth exploring. Are there different ways to deter in the cyber domain? While deterrence-by-denial has been discussed in regards to cyber warfare, is it also possible to conduct deterrence-by-denial against a potential adversary in the cyber realm?

One area of weakness identified in this report is how the U.S. military conducts information operations, especially when compared to Russia. Russia has made activities in the information domain an important component of how it conducts hybrid warfare. The application of the evaluation criteria in chapter 4 suggests that increasing the amount of permanently stationed forces in Europe will provide a positive impact to U.S. military power dynamics but will not address the dearth regarding information power.



### Final Thoughts

Over its history, the United States has gone through cycles of global engagement mixed with periods of stubborn isolation. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan coupled with economic woes led to the pulling back of U.S. military forces from Europe. U.S. force posture in Europe is still suffering from short-sighted decisions made between 2007-2014. More recently, the rise of nationalism within numerous NATO member states presents an additional geopolitical dynamic. These dynamics do not take away from the need to reassess the importance of forward presence for implementing the U.S. *National Security Strategy* to deter and defeat the numerous threats that the country faces. However, as former U.S. Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill famously said, “all politics are local” (O’Neill and Hymel 1994, XV). The challenge for U.S. military presence overseas is that Poland, Germany, and other critical allies are not represented by a U.S. Congressman or Senator. With these considerations, the Department of Defense must do a better job making the case for enhancing military forward presence, especially in Europe.

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