Duty to Protect: The Case for Baltic Basing

By David W. Helton[[1]](#footnote-1)†

**Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe.**

The Baltics nations are Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. All three have a long unsettled relationship with Russia, having been forcibly annexed against their will into the Soviet Union under Stalin in 1940. These three small countries are NATO members wedged between Russia, Russian ally Belarus , and the Baltic Sea - a dangerous piece of real estate. Recent estimates suggest that if Russia invaded the Baltics, NATO would be unable to aid them for at least a month. That is unacceptable as it leaves our allies to fend for themselves in an untenable situation pitted against a military vastly superior to their own. Regardless of Russia’s next move regarding the Baltics, the US should take action to ensure they are secure. This case transitions US deployments from rotational to tour type or forward stationed deployments in Lithuania, as that country has recently built infrastructure capable of permanently housing our troops currently rotating in the country. The US has no troops of its own in the other Baltic states, unless those troops are rotating in and out as part of a NATO conglomeration of forces. The advantages of switching the type of deployment we have in the Baltics are numerous. A permanent presence of forward stationed troops are better at working with NATO allies, they are more cost effective, and they provide the unique deterrence of US permanence. The Baltic States have long called for this kind of permanent defense, and it’s time we answer those calls.

Note: This case can be run many different ways, but almost all of them will involve the switching from temporary rotating deployment to permanent basing of US troops. It could be altered to base troops in any or all of the Baltic States or permanently base the rotating troops in Lithuania. All three Baltic states advocate such policies and would welcome them and even pay some of the cost. The plan does not (and does not need to) fiat that the Baltic States would agree and accept the deployment, since they've already publicly said they want it. Find the advocacy you prefer and use whichever plan it advocates.   
 Note: A "tripwire" policy, mentioned in some of the evidence, is where the US puts just a few troops in some country we want not to get attacked. The troops are not sufficient in numbers to really do very much, but they serve as a "tripwire" that an invading force would have to hit and destroy to invade the country. The potential invader, knowing that he would have to attack and kill US troops during an invasion, might think twice about doing so, since it would automatically draw the US into the war.

Duty to Protect: The Case for Baltic Basing 4

OBSERVATION 1. Definitions 4

Substantial 4

Reform 4

Policy 4

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the structure of the Status Quo. 4

FACT 1.  Small Rotational Deployment 4

The US doesn't permanently station troops in the Baltics, but instead has 500 troops on a rotational deployment 4

FACT 2. Insufficient 4

US troop presence in the Baltic nations is insufficient for security 4

OBSERVATION 3. We need our Plan, to be implemented by Congress and the President 5

OBSERVATION 3. ADVANTAGES 5

ADVANTAGE 1. Deter the threat. Our plan increases deterrence of the threat from Russia. 5

A. Dangerous Geography. The Baltics are uniquely vulnerable 5

B. Political Risk. Front-line defense capability is essential because the Baltics are at risk of invasion 5

C. US troops needed. We need to permanently station ten to fifteen thousand troops in the Baltics 6

D. The Impact: War prevented. The Baltics would welcome US troops to deter Russian hostility 6

ADVANTAGE 2. Defeat the threat. If deterrence fails, we need to be able to defeat an invasion 7

A. The Vulnerability. NATO currently cannot defend the Baltics against a Russian attack 7

B. The Risk. Putin is angry and reckless enough to attack 7

C. The Impact: Wiped off the map. Insufficient NATO defense means they could be wiped off the map before help arrives 8

2A Evidence: Baltic Basing 9

DEFINITIONS / TOPICALITY 9

List of Baltic states– all in Europe 9

Rotational deployment 9

COUNTERPLAN RESPONSES 9

A/T “Give military aid” - Good idea, but it’s not mutually exclusive and won’t help them for years 9

A/T “Give military aid” - We already do 9

INHERENCY 10

No permanent US troops in the Baltics – detail on basing on Poland 10

Current US policy is having no permanent troops in the Baltics 10

Detail on NATO troops in Lithuania 10

A/T “increasing troop presence” - Not permanent in the Baltics 11

Rotational deployments are substantially inferior to full deployments 11

SQ troop deployments are a "joke": Nowhere near enough to deter Russian invasion of the Baltics 11

SOLVENCY/ADVOCACY 12

Advocacy: Permanent troops 12

Advocacy: Permanent basing 12

US military based in Lithuania would strengthen US and European defense 12

US permanent troop presence in Baltics would deter Russian attack 13

Must have US military presence in the Baltics to successfully deter or win a war with Russia 13

"General Federal Revenues" = $4.17 trillion per year 13

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 14

A/T “China is the bigger threat” - Doesn’t mean we should ignore Russia 14

A/T “Baltics not threatened” - Face outsized threats 14

Geography makes Baltics easily threatened 14

A/T “Baltics not important” - Important NATO ally 15

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES 15

A/T “Violates treaty” - Not legally binding 15

A/T “Violates treaty” - No longer applies 15

A/T “Violates treaty” - Only if destabilizes military balance, it won’t 16

A/T “Western expansion threatens Russia” - Do what is necessary to protect our allies 16

A/T “Not enough infrastructure” - Lithuania just built a new base 16

A/T “Not enough infrastructure for permanent basing” - Allies will build 17

A/T “cost of base building” - Better than cost of liberating 17

A/T “Increased cost” - Operational cost of permanent troops comes out to around $1Bn more for 15k troops 17

A/T “Permanent troops are more expensive” - Turn: proven less expensive 18

A/T “Rotational troops are less expensive” - More expensive in Europe 19

A/T “Rotational troops are less expensive” - Turn: rotational costs add up 19

A/T “Rotational troops are more prepared” - Training is offset by other factors 20

A/T “Forward stationing is hard for families” –Rotational is even harder. 20

Duty to Protect: The Case for Baltic Basing

The Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are members of NATO and past victims of Russian aggression. They've signed on to NATO and we are bound by treaty to help their military defense. And because we believe that current US defense posture fails to secure these vulnerable allies, we stand resolved: that the United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe.

OBSERVATION 1. Definitions

Substantial

*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022.* [*https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantially*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantially) *(accessed 6 June 2022)*

: considerable in quantity : significantly great

Reform

*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022* [*https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reform*](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reform) *(accessed 6 June 2022)*

: to put or change into an improved form or condition

Policy

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy

(accessed 6 June 2022)

**:**a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the structure of the Status Quo.

FACT 1.  Small Rotational Deployment

The US doesn't permanently station troops in the Baltics, but instead has 500 troops on a rotational deployment

Lithuanian National Radio and Television 2022 (a non-profit public broadcaster that has been providing regular radio services since 1926 and television broadcasts since 1957) February 10, 2022 “Lithuania seeks permanent US troop deployment in face of Russian build-up” <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1612175/lithuania-seeks-permanent-us-troop-deployment-in-face-of-russian-build-up> (accessed August 16 2022)

Since 2019, the US has deployed non-overlapping rotations of its own groups of around 500 troops and equipment in Lithuania, adding to NATO’s efforts to deter Russia in the region.

FACT 2. Insufficient

US troop presence in the Baltic nations is insufficient for security

Sarah White 2022 (Senior Research Analyst and Editor at the Lexington Institute. M.A. in Latin American Studies from Georgetown Univ.) May 11, 2022 “How To Make Sure Russia Never Invades The Baltics” <https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/05/how-to-make-sure-russia-never-invades-the-baltics/> (accessed 9 Aug 2022)

In March, NATO’s summit in Brussels did not produce a permanent agreement that would fortify any of the Baltic countries and create a credible deterrent. Rihards Kols, chair of the Latvian parliament’s foreign affairs committee, stated afterward that “We welcome these reinforcements, but it’s not enough — absolutely not enough.”

OBSERVATION 3. We need our Plan, to be implemented by Congress and the President

1. The US Defense Dept establishes permanent stationing of 15,000 troops in the Baltic States.  
2. Funding from general federal revenues  
3. Enforcement through normal means, including the president and the military chain of command.   
4. Plan is phased in during the next 3 years after an Affirmative ballot  
5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 3. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Deter the threat. Our plan increases deterrence of the threat from Russia.

**We see this in in 4 sub-points:**

A. Dangerous Geography. The Baltics are uniquely vulnerable

Sarah White 2022 (Senior Research Analyst and Editor at the Lexington Institute. M.A. in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University. B.A. in political science and Spanish from Wake Forest University.) May 11, 2022 “How To Make Sure Russia Never Invades The Baltics” <https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/05/how-to-make-sure-russia-never-invades-the-baltics/> (accessed August 9 2022)

As of now, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania do not have allies in close proximity in the Baltic region. The three countries are essentially trapped between Russia and the Baltic Sea with few NATO allies close by. In terms of logistics, this means that it will be difficult to send troops and supplies to the Baltic states on short notice in the event of a Russian attack. Estonia and Lithuania share a border with Russia; potentially worse is the fact that Latvia is hemmed in by Kaliningrad, the heavily armed Russian enclave loaded with nuclear-capable Iskander-M missiles.

B. Political Risk. Front-line defense capability is essential because the Baltics are at risk of invasion

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings Institition; member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

To my mind, the answer must be both. Some front-line capability will be essential at this juncture. The greatest threats Russia might pose to Europe are those places where Russian speakers live, notably in eastern Estonia and eastern Latvia. The fact that the Baltics were once annexed by the Soviet Union only reinforces the problem. These are enduring challenges that will likely remain as long as Putin’s concept of a greater Russia persists — meaning at least as long as he is in the Kremlin, at a minimum.

C. US troops needed. We need to permanently station ten to fifteen thousand troops in the Baltics

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings. Member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

My recommended additional American force posture would include an Army brigade combat team, an Army combat aviation brigade, and two to three squadrons of Air Force tactical aircraft, all permanently stationed in the Baltic states. After such augmentations, the American force posture in Europe would grow by 10,000 to 15,000 uniformed personnel relative to pre-2022 levels [**END QUOTE**] (that might in fact allow a slight reduction relative to what is in Europe today, post-Ukraine invasion, with the total number of American troops winding up just under 100,000 on the continent). Other NATO states should collectively add comparable amounts of capacity to the Baltic region. [**HE CONTINUES LATER IN THE CONTEXT QUOTE:]** Such an addition can be made from the existing force posture without necessitating a net growth in the size of the American armed forces, despite the challenges posed by China and North Korea in the Indo-Pacific theater.

D. The Impact: War prevented. The Baltics would welcome US troops to deter Russian hostility

Daniel Kochis and Roy Matthews 2021 (Kochis - a senior policy analyst for European affairs in the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom. MA in Comparative Political Science from Fordham Univ. Matthews - Public Policy Associate at the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure) November 3, 2021 “It’s Past Time for U.S. Military Base in Baltics” <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/its-past-time-us-military-base-baltics> (accessed August 6 2022) (brackets and ellipses in original)

While the U.S. has rotational forces in the region, a permanent military presence would demonstrate America’s long-term commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and serve as a permanent obstacle against Russian forces being able to seize the Baltic States quickly. The U.S. would be welcomed, with allies willing to take on some of the financial burden to permanently station U.S. forces in the region. Latvia’s Defense Minister Artis Pabriks called the U.S. in August 2020 “the most powerful ally and its deterrent effect is not comparable to other allies … we are ready to invest in this [a permanent military presence].” The Baltic States deserve to be secure in their sovereignty. A permanent U.S. presence on the ground would further secure a vulnerable region from further Russian hostility.

ADVANTAGE 2. Defeat the threat. If deterrence fails, we need to be able to defeat an invasion

A. The Vulnerability. NATO currently cannot defend the Baltics against a Russian attack

Colonel John B. Gilliam and Major Ryan C. Van Wie 2022 (Gilliam - U.S. Army Armor Officer; senior executive fellow at the Strobe Talbott Center on Strategy, Security, and Technology at Brookings Institution. Bachelor of Science from US Military Academy, master’s degree in public policy from Princeton, master’s degree in national security strategy from National War College. Wie - U.S. Army Infantry Officer, international affairs instructor in the Social Sciences Dept at US Military Academy. Master of Public Policy from Univ of Michigan.)  March 2022 “Feasible US steps to strengthen NATO deterrence in the Baltics and Poland” <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FP_20220322_nato_deterrence_gilliam_van_wie.pdf> (accessed August 6 2022) ("Kaliningrad oblast" - 'oblast' is a "region" or "district"; Kaliningrad is a small district of Russian territory on the Baltic coastline separated from the homeland of Russia (like Alaska is to the USA). You would get there either by driving from Russia through Belarus and Poland or else by driving through the Baltic states.)

Contemporary academic research on conventional deterrence highlights clear gaps in the deterrence capacity of the United States and NATO, despite their concerted efforts to strengthen conventional military capability since Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea. For example, studies indicate that the rotational military forces established by the United States’ Operation Atlantic Resolve and NATO’s enhanced Forward Presence, still lack the requisite conventional capability to prevent a Russian fait accompli in the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. **[END QUOTE**] However, these studies lack a well-defined formula for what constitutes adequate capability and say little about what adjustments the United States and NATO must make to strengthen NATO’s deterrence posture in the Baltics and Poland. To help clarify capability requirements in the region, we reviewed conventional deterrence theories and models from the Cold War. Though long-standing, this research provides a clearer picture of the ideal defensive force posture and adequate force ratios needed to improve deterrence, compared to recent policy analyses. Focusing on land-based operations, we then applied these correlation of forces models to analyze the current balance of conventional ground forces in the Baltics. [**THEY GO ON LATER IN THE CONTEXT TO CONCLUDE QUOTE**] Through comparing the relative combat power of NATO’s forces in the Baltics with Russia’s forces in its Western Military District and Kaliningrad oblast, we confirmed that the NATO capability gaps identified in previous studies remain large. We also found that potential NATO high readiness reinforcements would be incapable of closing the gaps for at least a month in a crisis scenario. These capability shortcomings clearly hinder the United States’ and NATO’s ongoing efforts to conventionally deter Russian aggression in the Baltics or to decisively respond in a crisis.

B. The Risk. Putin is angry and reckless enough to attack

**Referring specifically in context to the Baltic states, Michael O'Hanlon in 2022 wrote QUOTE:**

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution. Member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

In addition to his callous brutality, President Putin has demonstrated such recklessness in this horrible attack on a sisterly neighbor that he no longer seems predictable. While not crazy, he is angry and vindictive. Meanwhile, Russian forces have suffered huge attrition and the Russian economy is in bad shape (even if Ukraine is hurting worse overall). That makes his next move hard to foresee. Particularly if he thought that by attacking part of NATO territory he could split the alliance internally and weaken its current strong consensus to punish Russia’s aggression, he might lash out. This would be, at a grand strategic level, a version of Russia’s “escalate to de-escalate” nuclear doctrine — by doing something big and bold, Russia might be able to change the whole game, and persuade some Western countries that it was time to seek some type of compromise peace rather than risk wider war and even nuclear conflict. If Putin finds his economy in great duress with no end in sight, his forces mired in a war they cannot decisively win, and NATO already treating him like an enemy, he might try to shake things up — soon, or at some point in the future.

C. The Impact: Wiped off the map. Insufficient NATO defense means they could be wiped off the map before help arrives

Sam Meredith 2022 (journalist) 27 June 2022 CNBC " Russia’s neighbors fear NATO’s defense plans are not fit for purpose and they could be quickly overrun" <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/27/russia-ukraine-war-baltic-nations-push-for-change-at-nato-summit.html> (accessed 24 Aug 2022)

The Baltic countries have also pushed for an urgent update to the alliance’s so-called “tripwire” approach. That’s because, under NATO’s existing strategy, Estonia’s Prime Minister Kaja Kallas has warned that the former Soviet state and its historic capital city of Tallinn would be “wiped off the map” in the event of a Russian attack, according to [The Financial Times](https://www.ft.com/content/a430b191-39c8-4b03-b3fd-8e7e948a5284). Kallas told reporters last week that NATO’s tripwire approach, which involves a relatively small number of troops, would likely see Estonia overrun before NATO then took measures to liberate them after 180 days.

2A Evidence: Baltic Basing

DEFINITIONS / TOPICALITY

List of Baltic states– all in Europe

[Romuald J. Misiunas](https://www.britannica.com/contributor/Romuald-J-Misiunas/3974) Encuclopedia Britannica ©2022 (Ambassador of Lithuania to Israel from 1996 to 2001) “Baltic states” <https://www.britannica.com/place/Baltic-states> (accessed August 14 2022)

**Baltic states**, northeastern region of Europe containing the countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, on the eastern shores of the [Baltic Sea](https://www.britannica.com/place/Baltic-Sea).

Rotational deployment

Edward Eagerton 2021 (Public Affairs Specialist at Alaska National Guard. Former Noncomissioned in Charge of Public Affairs at the Alaska Army National Guard.) March 5, 2021 “Alaska National Guardsmen return from deployment to Poland” <https://ak.ng.mil/Media/News/Article/2531076/alaska-national-guardsmen-return-from-deployment-to-poland/> (accessed August 16 2022)

U.S. Army Europe and Africa has led the Department of Defense’s Atlantic Resolve land efforts by rotating U.S.-based units to Europe since 2014. There are approximately 6,000 regionally allocated Soldiers participating in nine-month Atlantic Resolve rotations at any given time.

COUNTERPLAN RESPONSES

A/T “Give military aid” - Good idea, but it’s not mutually exclusive and won’t help them for years

Sarah White 2022 (Senior Research Analyst and Editor at the Lexington Institute. M.A. in Latin American Studies from Georgetown Univ. B.A. in political science and Spanish from Wake Forest Univ.) May 11, 2022 “How To Make Sure Russia Never Invades The Baltics” <https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/05/how-to-make-sure-russia-never-invades-the-baltics/> (accessed August 9 2022)

This would require bypassing two obstacles. First, the process of approving the sale and the schedule of delivering the systems would have to be massively accelerated. Poland, which ordered the F-35 in 2020, only began to receive them this year, and has yet to receive the other systems. Second, the U.S. and the Baltic countries would have to agree to a plan that ameliorates the cost to the three countries’ governments. The current system of rotating troop deployments and other reinforcements from NATO exists because Tallinn, Vilnius, and Riga do not have the budget to purchase systems like the F-35 on their own. And in addition to making the decision to deliver these weapons systems, the logistical challenges of delivering them have to simultaneously be addressed. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania may need military support now more than ever, as all three have depleted their own weapons reserves in order to aid Ukraine. There is no more opportune moment than the present to prepare for a second onslaught of Russian aggression in Europe, and there is no place where NATO’s credibility is more at risk than in the Baltic countries.

A/T “Give military aid” - We already do

US Department of State 2022 (United States Department of State, or State Department, is an executive department of the U.S. federal government responsible for the nation's foreign policy and international relations.) February 2, 2022 “U.S. Security Cooperation With the Baltic States” <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-the-baltic-states/> (accessed August 9 2022)

Since the beginning of FY 2015, the United States sold approximately $503.9 million worth of U.S-origin defense articles and services to the Baltic states under the Foreign Military Sales program, using partner national funds and FMF through the Department of State.

INHERENCY

No permanent US troops in the Baltics – detail on basing on Poland

Aaron Metha 2022 (editor in chief of Breaking Defense. Mehta has a particular interest in nuclear issues, foreign weapon sales and NATO issues. BS in History and Communication from Tufts University.) June 29, 2022 “US increasing troop presence in Europe, while new NATO strategy eyes China” <https://breakingdefense.com/2022/06/us-increasing-troop-presence-in-europe-while-new-nato-strategy-eyes-china/> (accessed August 15 2022)

The Baltic region: Despite long-standing hopes from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania of getting a permanent presence in their nations, the US did not commit to a Poland-like permanent basing move there. However, the US did promise to “enhance” its rotational deployments.  
  
**END QUOTE. HE GOES ON LATER IN THE ARTICLE WRITING QUOTE:**The US announced today it will be increasing its forces across the continent, starting with the creation of a permanent presence in Poland, made up of the V Corps Headquarters Forward Command Post, an Army garrison headquarters, and a field support battalion. In a statement, the Defense Department described this as the “first permanent U.S. forces on NATO’s Eastern Flank,” and will be accompanied by continued support for rotational forces in Poland, including “an Armored Brigade Combat Team, Combat Aviation Brigade element, and Division Headquarters element.”

Current US policy is having no permanent troops in the Baltics

The Baltic Times 2022 (independent monthly newspaper that covers events in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) April 6, 2022 “US wants bases in eastern Europe, but for short-term deployments” <https://www.baltictimes.com/us_wants_bases_in_eastern_europe__but_for_short-term_deployments/> (accessed August 16 2022)

WASHINGTON - The United States supports having permanent US military bases on the eastern flank of NATO, but for regular short-term rotations of US troop units rather than long-term basing, a top Pentagon general said Tuesday. In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Joint Chiefs Chairman General Mark Milley told a hearing in the House of Representatives that the key allies on the eastern edge of NATO are willing to host permanent US bases.

Detail on NATO troops in Lithuania

Reuters 2022 (international news agency) February 3, 2022 “Factbox: NATO troops and possible reinforcements in Eastern Europe, Baltics” <https://www.reuters.com/world/nato-troops-possible-reinforcements-eastern-europe-baltics-2022-02-03/> (accessed August 9 2022)

LITHUANIA:   
- A NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) battlegroup of 1,200 since 2017. Led by Germany, includes troops from the Netherlands, Norway, Czech Republic, Belgium and Luxembourg. Includes 12 Leopard tanks, armoured vehicles, anti-tank capabilities, air defence, radio intelligence.   
- A U.S. infantry battalion of 500 troops, includes Abrams tanks and Bradley armoured vehicles.  
- NATO Baltic Air Policing: 4x F-16 fighter jets from Poland  
- Additional deployment from Jan. 27: 4x F-16 fighter jets from Denmark

A/T “increasing troop presence” - Not permanent in the Baltics

Darlene Superville and Zeke Miller 2022 ( Superville - White House reporter at Associated Press. BA in Journalism from New York Univ.  Miller - White House Reporter at Associated Press. BA in Political Science from Yale.) June 29, 2022 “Biden says U.S. will increase long term military presence in Europe” <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/biden-says-u-s-will-increase-long-term-military-presence-in-europe> (accessed August 4 2022)

Biden said the U.S. will permanently station the U.S. Army V Corps forward command in Poland , a move that he said would strengthen US-NATO interoperability across the alliance’s eastern flank. The move marks the first permanent basing of U.S. forces on NATO’s eastern edge. Biden added that the U.S. is also stepping up its rotational deployments of troops to Romania and the Baltic region.

Rotational deployments are substantially inferior to full deployments

Colonel [Joseph Goetz](https://mwi.usma.edu/author/joseph-goetz/) 2017 (served as the last Chief of Staff for the Gulf Region Division in Baghdad, Iraq; bachelor’s degree in General Engineering from US Military Academy ; Master of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from Johns Hopkins Univ. He is a 2017 graduate of the Army War College and its Advanced Strategic Art Program.) August 24, 2017 “The Rotational Force Fig Leaf” <https://mwi.usma.edu/rotational-force-fig-leaf/> (accessed 4 August 2022)

This concern is not trivial. NATO has doctrine and standards and the United States is a member of NATO. Frequently, though, Army formations rotating into Europe for a short period do not know and do not practice these NATO norms and inevitably default to US doctrine and standards. This frustrates NATO allies and erodes trust and effectiveness. Forward-stationed brigades, by contrast, learn and apply NATO doctrine through habit and organizational inculcation over a sustained period of time that rotational brigades cannot match.   
Technical interoperability is the ability of allied forces’ equipment to function with each other. In most cases, allied units encounter problems working with each other for the first time because of small differences in equipment. Clausewitzian friction manifests itself during mundane but essential tasks like refueling operations when fuel nozzles require adapters, or during vehicle recovery operations when a US wrecker cannot safely shackle itself to a Romanian BRDM armored patrol vehicle. Perhaps more serious is the discovery learning that takes place when allied units need to communicate with each other, but are hindered by both language and technology barriers. The resulting confusion frustrates allied integration and can lead to several, disparate, small-unit engagements at the expense of an integrated and synchronized battle. These friction these difficulties create is preventable, but every time a rotational unit arrives, it relearns these things. Dependence on rotational forces places the United States at a self-imposed disadvantage.

SQ troop deployments are a "joke": Nowhere near enough to deter Russian invasion of the Baltics

John Grady 2022 (former managing editor of Navy Times, retired as director of communications for the Association of the United States Army) 16 June 2022 " Baltic States Need More NATO Forces to Deter a Russian Invasion, Says Estonian Official" <https://news.usni.org/2022/06/16/baltic-states-need-more-nato-forces-to-deter-a-russian-invasion-says-estonian-official> (accessed 24 Aug 2022)

Despite the Kremlin’s heavy losses in invading Ukraine, the Russians are “going to come back stronger” in a year or so to threaten the Baltics, Estonian Ministry of Defence Permanent Secretary said on Thursday. Speaking at a Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment event, Kusti Salm said that even given Moscow’s rising number of casualties, destruction of armored forces and depletion of precision-guided weapons, the Kremlin can still mass fires as it is showing in fighting in eastern and southern Ukraine. He called NATO’s “trip-wire” strategy and even its “forward presence” in limited numbers obsolete in light of Russia’s Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine. Because the Baltic nations are on Russian borders and small, they could be quickly overwhelmed in a [full-scale Russian invasion](https://csbaonline.org/about/events/deterrence-and-defense-in-the-baltic-region-new-realities). “Deterrence by denial,” Salm said Wednesday, cannot be achieved by a battalion of NATO troops in his country or any other Baltic member of the alliance. He called it “a joke” that “the second largest nuclear nation would be deterred by a battalion.” The presence “has to be at the divisional level” to “be able to project power across the Russian border.”

SOLVENCY/ADVOCACY

Advocacy: Permanent troops

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings. He specializes in U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force, and American national security policy. Member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

Even if the war in Ukraine were to end soon, events to date have already transformed the European security environment. Among the main questions that must now be addressed is this: How should the United States and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies strengthen their military postures on eastern NATO territory in the future? I believe there is now a need for a permanent forward defense posture of modest size and scale, going beyond the tripwire approach NATO has employed in the Baltic states and Poland since roughly 2017.

Advocacy: Permanent basing

Daniel Kochis and Roy Matthews 2021 (Kochis - a senior policy analyst for European affairs in the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at Heritage Foundation. MA in Comparative Political Science from Fordham Univ. BA in Political Science from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Matthews - Public Policy Associate at the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure. BA, double major, in politics and history from Bates college.) November 02, 2021 “It’s Past Time for US Military Base in Baltics” <https://www.dailysignal.com/2021/11/02/its-past-time-for-a-us-military-base-in-the-baltics/> (accessed August 9 2022)

The Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—continue to face ongoing aggression and attacks from Russia. The United States should establish a permanent military presence in one of the three Baltic States to defend the region from Russian aggression, and to reassert America’s security guarantee to our European allies.

US military based in Lithuania would strengthen US and European defense

John R. Deni 2021 (Research Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). He is also an adjunct lecturer at the American University’s School of International Service. Previously, he worked for 8 years as a political advisor to senior U.S. military commanders in Europe) September 24, 2021 “America needs a permanent military presence in the Baltics, and here’s why” <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2021/09/24/america-needs-a-permanent-military-presence-in-the-baltics-and-heres-why/> (accessed August 6 2022)

Much farther afield, China has opened a trade embargo against Lithuania and pulled its ambassador from Vilnius. These moves were in response to Lithuania’s seemingly innocuous decision to allow Taiwan to open a diplomatic post in Vilnius under the name “Taiwan” as well as Lithuania’s withdrawal from a Chinese-led effort to co-opt Central and Eastern European countries known as 17+1. Additionally, Lithuania has been subject to extensive cyberattacks attributed to both Russia and China. A small but permanent American presence in Lithuania would bolster U.S. and allied security in northeastern Europe in three ways. First, it would clearly indicate to allies and adversaries that Lithuanian sovereignty and territorial integrity is a vital American interest. Second, it could be utilized to fill gaps in Lithuanian defense capabilities today, particularly in terms of anti-tank, artillery, UAVs and electronic warfare. And finally, it would provide Vilnius the confidence it needs to invest more in advanced, offensive cyber, electronic warfare, and information operations, better enabling it to respond to the most likely attacks from Russia and China.

US permanent troop presence in Baltics would deter Russian attack

Jen Judson citing Lithuanian Defence Minister Raimundas Karoblis 2019 (the land warfare reporter for Defense News. MS in print Journalism from Boston Univ.) July 16, 2019 “Do the Baltics need more US military support to deter Russia?” <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2019/07/15/do-the-baltics-need-more-us-military-support-to-deter-russia/> (accessed August 12 2022)(brackets in original)

“On the other hand, let me be very clear: [The] U.S. is the most powerful ally and its deterrent effect is not comparable to other allies,” he told Defense News in a statement. “I am convinced that Russia would not dare to test NATO if U.S. military units are deployed on [a] persistent basis in the three Baltic states.” Karoblis suggested even a rather small U.S. military presence like short-range air defense units or an Army company in addition to each EFP battalion “would significantly boost NATO’s deterrence.” The desire for a stronger American presence doesn’t just stem from Lithuania’s Ministry of Defence; it’s also preferred by top military leaders of the country’s Iron Wolf Brigade and the German-led NATO EFP unit.

Must have US military presence in the Baltics to successfully deter or win a war with Russia

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution. Member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

Thus, what has been termed NATO’s enhanced forward presence (eFP) will need to beef up. Rather than have small and disparate combat formations from many countries, NATO should establish enough combat punch in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania that it could credibly fight to protect these countries’ territories in a future war against Russia, while awaiting reinforcement from points further west. As the alliance’s military and strategic backbone, U.S. military formations must be an integral part of that NATO mix, to make the alliance’s commitment to successful defense and military victory absolutely unambiguous. That is the most promising way to make deterrence robust, given what we now know about Putin and his romanticized, twisted, dangerous vision of a greater Russia. The force packages need not be particularly large, but they should be combat capable, positioned in forward locations, and set up for the long term, given the likelihood that Putin or a similar successor will remain on the scene for many years.

"General Federal Revenues" = $4.17 trillion per year

Kimberly Amadeo 2022 (expert on U.S. and world economies and investing, with over 20 years of experience in economic analysis and business strategy. President of the economic website World Money Watch) 24 June 2022 " U.S. Federal Budget Breakdown" <https://www.thebalance.com/u-s-federal-budget-breakdown-3305789#:~:text=from%20quantitative%20easing.-,Revenue,in%20revenue%20in%20FY%202022>. (accessed 20 Aug 2022)

The federal government estimates it will receive $4.174 trillion in [revenue](https://www.thebalance.com/current-u-s-federal-government-tax-revenue-3305762) in FY 2022. Most of this revenue is in the form of taxes paid by taxpayers either through income or payroll taxes.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

A/T “China is the bigger threat” - Doesn’t mean we should ignore Russia

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution. Member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

American strategists anxious to prioritize China as the “pacing challenge” for U.S. defense strategy may object to any increase in the resources devoted to European security. That would be a mistake. Ensuring that Russia does not further destabilize Europe will have to be just as high a priority in the years to come as the China threat. That is because any scenarios that could involve hostile threats to NATO territory could raise terrifying questions about possible escalation, even eventually to the use of nuclear weapons, and could have existential implications. Moreover, despite the ongoing emphasis on Asia as the most dynamic region on Earth, Europe remains the region where America’s preponderance of democratic, advanced, prosperous allies is found — and also the region where the world wars originated in earlier eras. Its strategic significance should never be doubted. What is more, Europe’s role in addressing the rise of China will be central to any successful effort. Finally, to the extent China is seen as a major challenge, it is all the more reason that European security must be stabilized as an anchor of the future global order. The United States and allies do not have the military, economic, or diplomatic bandwidth to address escalating crises and conflict in both Europe and Asia at the same time. New crises and conflicts in Europe must be prevented before they begin, to the maximum extent possible.

A/T “Baltics not threatened” - Face outsized threats

John R. Deni 2021 (Research Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). He is also an adjunct lecturer at the American Univ. School of International Service. Previously, he worked for 8 years as a political advisor to senior U.S. military commanders in Europe) September 24, 2021 “America needs a permanent military presence in the Baltics, and here’s why” <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2021/09/24/america-needs-a-permanent-military-presence-in-the-baltics-and-heres-why/> (accessed August 6 2022)

Nonetheless, perception is reality, and the lack of an enduring American presence in the Baltic states looks even worse than it would in the absence of the Afghanistan debacle. This is particularly the case today in Lithuania, which is literally and figuratively on the front lines of Western efforts against both Russian and Chinese authoritarianism. Wedged among the Baltic Sea, a hostile neighbor in Belarus and the Russian territory of Kaliningrad — the most militarized piece of land in Europe — this relatively small ally confronts outsized threats.

Geography makes Baltics easily threatened

Svetlana Shkolnikova 2022 (journalist for Stars and Stripes. She previously worked with the House Foreign Affairs Committee as an American Political Science Association Congressional Fellow) March 2, 2022 “Congressional support increases for permanent US military bases in the Baltics” <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2022-03-02/congress-baltics-american-military-bases-russia-ukraine-nato-5203735.html> (accessed August 9 2022)

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the only former Soviet republics to join NATO and the European Union, are considered by military experts to be the alliance’s most vulnerable flank. The Baltic states are connected to the alliance’s main territory through a 40-mile sliver of land called the Suwalki Gap and fear they could easily be cut off from Europe by Russian forces, according to retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, who led the U.S. Army in Europe from 2014 to 2017.

A/T “Baltics not important” - Important NATO ally

Daniel Kochis and Roy Matthews 2021 (Kochis - a senior policy analyst for European affairs in the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom. MA in Comparative Political Science from Fordham University in New York. BA in Political Science from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Matthews - Public Policy Associate at the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure. BA, double major, in politics and history from Bates college.) November 3, 2021 “It’s Past Time for U.S. Military Base in Baltics” <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/its-past-time-us-military-base-baltics> (accessed August 6 2022)

The Baltic States continue to be important U.S. allies, champions of economic freedom, strong supporters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and committed investors in defense capabilities. The Baltic States have consistently met the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s benchmarks to spend at least 2% of gross domestic product on national defense.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T “Violates treaty” - Not legally binding

William Gallo 2022 (Voice Of America, Seoul bureau chief and regional correspondent; covered U.S. foreign policy and international affairs for VOA at the White House, Pentagon, and State Department.) March 23, 2022 “After Russia’s Ukraine Invasion, Baltics Push for Permanent NATO Presence “ <https://www.voanews.com/a/after-russia-s-ukraine-invasion-baltics-push-for-permanent-nato-presence-/6497246.html#:~:text=Baltic%20leaders%20have%20long%20pushed%20for%20a%20permanent,which%20are%20led%20by%20Germany%2C%20Britain%2C%20and%20Canada>. (accessed August 9 2022)

However, those agreements “can be regarded in significant part as null and void given Russian actions,” Plesch said. Another factor: the NRFA is not a legally binding document, added Mary Elise Sarotte, a Cold War historian and professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. “This reality gives the alliance flexibility with regard to NRFA’s terms,” she told VOA by email.

A/T “Violates treaty” - No longer applies

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution. Member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

The United States and allies should build facilities and position forces with the intent of making this forward defense enduring. The concept of rotational deployments is no longer appropriate given the scale of what is now needed, together with the severity and hostility of the Russian actions that have made such changes necessary. NATO should not adhere to its previous policy, dating to the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, that ruled out permanent stationing of allied combat forces on the territories of new members. Those days are gone. Russia, with its attack on Ukraine, has now violated the foundational principle of that Act — the peaceful resolution of disputes. Nor is rotational presence less expensive than permanent basing. Indeed, by placing upward pressure on the size of the U.S. force posture, it risks being much more expensive, given the large number of units it inevitably entails.

A/T “Violates treaty” - Only if destabilizes military balance, it won’t

John R. Deni 2021 (Research Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). He is also an adjunct lecturer at the American Univ. School of International Service. Previously, he worked for 8 years as a political advisor to senior U.S. military commanders in Europe) September 24, 2021 “America needs a permanent military presence in the Baltics, and here’s why” <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2021/09/24/america-needs-a-permanent-military-presence-in-the-baltics-and-heres-why/> (accessed August 6 2022)

The principal objections to a durable U.S. presence are that it might somehow violate the terms of a 1997 agreement between NATO and Russia, or that it might intimidate Putin, causing a spiraling counter-reaction. Assuming a carefully calibrated presence that’s nested within an already persistent NATO commitment to the region, these concerns are overblown relative to the wide-ranging security benefits. For example, under NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence initiative, Germany has led a multinational battlegroup of roughly 1,100 troops in Lithuania since 2017. Adding a company-sized American contingent of about 120 U.S. troops to this NATO presence as well as to similar Enhanced Forward Presence units in Latvia and Estonia could hardly be considered destabilizing, but would go far in reassuring allies and deterring Russia.

A/T “Western expansion threatens Russia” - Do what is necessary to protect our allies

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution. Member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Dept of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia Univ.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

I have historically been skeptical of NATO’s decision to expand eastward after the Cold War, and critical of NATO’s 2008 decision at the Bucharest Summit to promise Ukraine and Georgia eventual membership someday. These policies were, I believe, ill-advised. They were likely to strengthen the internal political standing of Russian nationalists who would portray such NATO decisions as threatening and aggressive. Such hyper-nationalistic Russians were wrong, but their perspectives were predictable. By feeding into their narratives, NATO may have strengthened them internally, led them to adopt more extreme positions, and thereby made more likely the subsequent Russian aggression against Georgia and Ukraine. That is my view. However, this take on recent history does not exonerate Russia for its brutal invasion of Ukraine. At a moral level, this war is Russia’s fault, plain and simple, even if NATO’s policies on expansion were imprudent at a strategic level. Therefore, whatever one’s previous skepticism about NATO expansion, Western strategists should not be hesitant to do what is necessary to protect member states today. They should make no distinction, moreover, between those countries already in NATO prior to 1989 and those that entered thereafter. Successful deterrence requires equal commitment to defend all alliance members.

A/T “Not enough infrastructure” - Lithuania just built a new base

Jacqueline Feldscher 2022 (Senior national security correspondent at Defense One. MA in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern Univ.) June 15, 2022 “‘Obsolete’ NATO Force Presence in Baltics Needs Upgrade, Estonian Defense Leader Says” <https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2022/06/obsolete-nato-force-presence-baltics-needs-upgrade-estonian-defense-leader-says/368224/> (accessed August 9 2022)

Eastern Europeans have long called for a larger troop presence to fend off growing threats from Russia. In 2018, Poland offered to name one of its military bases after President Donald Trump to get thousands more American troops permanently stationed in the country. In August, Lithuania unveiled a brand-new 7-million-euro base just 10 miles from the Belarussian border to try to get Washington to make its rotational deployment permanent. The Pentagon released its force posture review in November, which made modest changes in Europe, but prioritized troop presence in the Indo-Pacific.

A/T “Not enough infrastructure for permanent basing” - Allies will build

 Dan Lamothe 2022 (journalist for the Washington Post. BA in journalism from University of Massachusetts, MA in Journalism from Univ of Maryland.) April 5, 2022 “As Ukraine war drags on, Pentagon makes long-term plans for Europe” <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/04/05/us-troops-europe-russia-ukraine/> (accessed August 4 2022)

“I believe a lot of our allies, especially those such as the Baltics or Poland or Romania, they are very willing to establish permanent bases,” Milley said in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee. “They will build them and pay for them.” In testimony before the same committee last week, Air Force Gen. Tod D. Wolters, who leads U.S. European Command, said that NATO’s existing policy of rotating troops through Eastern Europe “has got to change” and that countries there “are very willing” to take on NATO forces permanently.

A/T “cost of base building” - Better than cost of liberating

Daniel Kochis and Roy Matthews 2021 (Kochis - a senior policy analyst for European affairs in the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, Heritage Foundation. MA in Comparative Political Science from Fordham Univ. Matthews - Public Policy Associate at the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure. BA, double major, in politics and history from Bates college.) November 3, 2021 “It’s Past Time for U.S. Military Base in Baltics” <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/its-past-time-us-military-base-baltics> (accessed August 6 2022)

Despite these challenges, as a North Atlantic Treaty Organization member, the U.S. is obligated to defend the Baltic States. As Heritage experts have noted, “Deterring Russian aggression and defending the Baltic States will be far easier and cheaper than liberating them.”

A/T “Increased cost” - Operational cost of permanent troops comes out to around $1Bn more for 15k troops

Michael E. O’Hanlon 2022 (Director of Research - Foreign Policy at Brookings. He specializes in U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force, and American national security policy. He also serves as a member of the Defense Policy Board at the U.S. Department of Defense. Adjunct professor at Columbia University.) June 21, 2022 “Strengthening the US and NATO defense postures in Europe after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine” <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strengthening-the-us-and-nato-defense-postures-in-europe-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed August 6 2022)

The good news is that these changes do not require huge additional expense and therefore need not fundamentally disrupt the Pentagon’s understandable desire to focus much future modernization on the Indo-Pacific. Once facilities are built, keeping U.S. forces abroad rather than at home typically adds about 10% to their annual cost. For 15,000 U.S. military personnel, that would equate to the rough vicinity of $1 billion a year. Local partners can handle many of the expenses of building those new facilities.

A/T “Permanent troops are more expensive” - Turn: proven less expensive

John R Deni 2017 (Research Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). He is also an adjunct lecturer at the American University’s School of International Service. Previously, he worked for 8 years as a political advisor to senior U.S. military commanders in Europe) September 12, 2017 “Reverse the Tide: A Forward-Stationed Army is Better for America” <https://warontherocks.com/2017/09/reverse-the-tide-a-forward-stationed-army-is-better-for-america/> (accessed August 4 2022)

In summary, the WBB Consulting study concluded that rotationally deploying a SBCT (\*Army's best Stryker Brigade Combat Team\*) would entail an increase of somewhere between $275 million and $502 million over a 3-year period. This conclusion was based on several factors:

Increased procurement costs under a rotational deployment scenario of between $379 million and $569 million, in order to complete the equipment set that rotating units would use while in Europe.

* No difference in operations and maintenance costs.
* $79 million more in personnel costs for a forward-stationed unit, due to more overseas PCS moves and higher overseas housing/subsistence/currency adjustment allowances that were not offset by deployed per diem and family separation allowances.
* $55 to $92 million more in transportation costs for a rotationally deployed unit.
* Slightly higher garrison costs for a forward-stationed unit.
* Roughly $59 million less in DoD dependent school costs for a rotationally deployed unit, which were only partially offset by $24 million in U.S. Department of Education support payments to U.S. school districts attended by military school-age dependents.

A/T “Rotational troops are less expensive” - More expensive in Europe

Colonel [Joseph Goetz](https://mwi.usma.edu/author/joseph-goetz/) 2017 ( Colonel Goetz served as the last Chief of Staff for the Gulf Region Division (GRD) in Baghdad, Iraq. The colonel’s military career began as a Platoon Leader and Company Executive Officer in the 41st Engineer Battalion, 10th Mountain Division. He commanded the 863rd Engineer Battalion from 2001-2004. In 1983, Colonel Goetz graduated with a bachelor’s degree in General Engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point and later received a Master of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from Johns Hopkins University. He is a 2017 graduate of the Army War College and its Advanced Strategic Art Program.) August 24, 2017 “The Rotational Force Fig Leaf” <https://mwi.usma.edu/rotational-force-fig-leaf/> (accessed 4 August 2022) (ellipses in original)

At first, the Army maintained that rotational forces were less expensive than forward-stationed units. The costs of maintaining soldiers and their families were unsustainable. In fact, though, rotational forces were horrendously expensive in their first years in Europe. Congress, in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015, set aside $258 million of the Army’s $439 million in European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) funds just to establish an ABCT presence in Europe. Factually, rotational forces may have been cheaper to the Army because ERI was funded as an Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO). Not part of the base budget, rotational forces were a bargain to the Army but were not less expensive to the nation. Particularly damning to the argument that rotational forces are less costly to maintain, we learn through recent scholarship that forward-deployed units are less expensive, and not insignificantly so, unless $140 million is of no consequence. So the fig leaf moves . . . If rotational forces are not cheaper, then they must be more ready than forward-deployed units. This is similarly false. Forward-stationed units aren’t just “ready,” they are “prepared”—and that’s an important distinction. Living, operating, and training where the fighting will occur is an advantage both our allies and adversaries enjoy. Forward-deployed forces enjoy that same advantage. Contrary to assertion, a rotational unit arriving in Europe is not more combat ready solely because it had a training rotation in the Mojave Desert. Believing this completely discounts the complexity of coalition operations and the value of the tacit knowledge gained by living and operating in the environment in which units are expected to fight.

A/T “Rotational troops are less expensive” - Turn: rotational costs add up

John R Deni 2017 (Research Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). He is also an adjunct lecturer at the American University’s School of International Service. Previously, he worked for 8 years as a political advisor to senior U.S. military commanders in Europe) September 12, 2017 “Reverse the Tide: A Forward-Stationed Army is Better for America” <https://warontherocks.com/2017/09/reverse-the-tide-a-forward-stationed-army-is-better-for-america/> (accessed August 4 2022)

The study examines four areas — fiscal costs, diplomatic factors, family readiness and well-being, and unit training readiness.  In terms of fiscal costs, there is strong evidence to support the conclusion that in the cases of both Europe and South Korea, the Department of Defense is spending more than was originally anticipated to maintain heel-to-toe rotational presence.  Of perhaps greater concern is the fact that rotational heel-to-toe presence is more expensive than forward stationing, at least in terms of recurring average annual costs.

A/T “Rotational troops are more prepared” - Training is offset by other factors

John R Deni 2017 (Research Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). He is also an adjunct lecturer at the American University’s School of International Service. Previously, he worked for 8 years as a political advisor to senior U.S. military commanders in Europe) September 12, 2017 “Reverse the Tide: A Forward-Stationed Army is Better for America” <https://warontherocks.com/2017/09/reverse-the-tide-a-forward-stationed-army-is-better-for-america/> (accessed August 4 2022)

Moreover, the training readiness advantages of a rotationally deployed unit are balanced out by the significantly higher manning rates of forward-stationed units and the fact that forward-stationed units typically are more knowledgeable of foreign culture, military units, geography, political leaders, and military counterparts. Forward stationing yields more interoperable, culturally proficient forces.

A/T “Forward stationing is hard for families” –Rotational is even harder.

John R Deni 2017 (Research Professor of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). He is also an adjunct lecturer at the American University’s School of International Service. Previously, he worked for 8 years as a political advisor to senior U.S. military commanders in Europe) September 12, 2017 “Reverse the Tide: A Forward-Stationed Army is Better for America” <https://warontherocks.com/2017/09/reverse-the-tide-a-forward-stationed-army-is-better-for-america/> (accessed August 4 2022)

In terms of diplomatic or political-military factors, my research shows American allies prefer forward stationing over rotational deployments because it is seen as a sign of a stronger, more enduring commitment from the United States. Additionally, U.S. military families bring economic benefits to the communities where they’re based — benefits that balance out the downsides of having troops as neighbors, such as helicopter noise. From a family readiness and well-being perspective, I found strong anecdotal evidence indicating families and soldiers are dissatisfied with the shift to a U.S.-stationed force.  Soldiers and families based in the United States perceive they’re being asked to take on many of the same hardships as for a wartime rotation, but without the rewards of a combat patch, tax-free income, or combat pay. More worrisomely, this evidence appears to be reflected by lower reenlistment rates — from 4 to 12 percent lower — for some rotationally deployed units during the 12 months following their rotations to Europe or South Korea. However, thus far this is just a correlation and it’s premature to say exactly what the cause is.

1. † David passed away on 19 August 2022, a few days after writing this case. Coach Vance and the Monument team extend our deepest sympathies to his family for a young life taken from us too soon. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)