

Strengthening the Defense of NATO's Eastern Frontier



Key Insights and Recommendations

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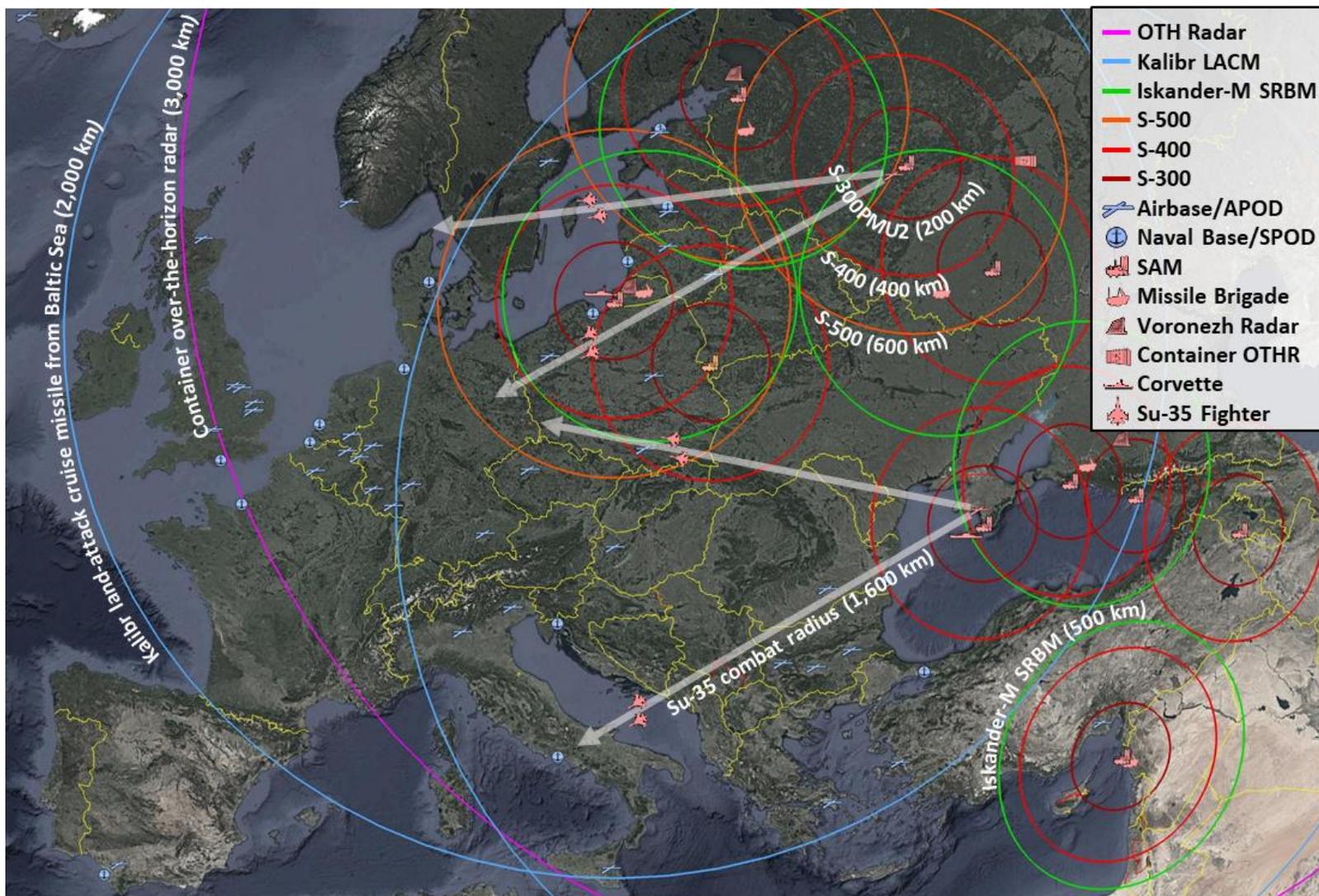
Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Characterizing the strategic problem

- A war between NATO and Russia remains unlikely, but is plausible
- Russia's actions to reestablish influence over its western boundary states challenges the credibility of NATO's deterrence and defense
- Russia could exploit its favorable geography and time-distance advantage to achieve its military objectives before the Alliance could marshal an effective response
- This would present NATO with the choice of embarking on a difficult and potentially escalatory counteroffensive to liberate allied territory, or accepting defeat

Characterizing operational challenges

- Russian A2/AD capabilities provide cover for gray zone aggression and increase the time required and difficulty for an Allied response to Russian aggression
- Current U.S. posture is insufficient to blunt Russian aggression and defend the Alliance



- **To strengthen deterrence and defense against Russian aggression, NATO should build and posture additional forces to blunt Russian aggression at the outset of conflict and prevent Russia from rapidly achieving its military objectives**
- **The viability of this strategy depends heavily on NATO's ability to offset Russia's time-distance advantage**
- **Enhancing the U.S. military's posture in Europe, improving European NATO members' military capabilities and force structure, and strengthening logistical networks across Europe support this strategy**



Recommendations for Poland's military modernization

Prioritize investments such that Poland's military can support Allied operations to blunt Russian aggression at the start of a conflict

- Increase intensity and realism of military training
- Increase capability and capacity of short- and medium-range air and missile defenses
- Increase long-range military fires to counter area-denial threats
- Procure small & medium-range UAVs for locating targets, cueing fires, and communications
- Procure 5th gen aircraft, improved ground combat vehicles, and additional ATGM capacity
- Increase cyber and electronic warfare capability
- Increase the readiness and capability of Poland's territorial defense forces

Prioritize resilient basing, logistics networks, sufficient munitions, and sustainment supplies

- Improve the capacity and resiliency of Poland's C3, basing, sustainment and deployment infrastructure, and engineer forces
- Increase stores of munitions, fuel, and other sustainment supplies

Improve Poland's ability to defend its homeland and counter A2/AD threats in support of NATO operations



Recommended changes to the U.S. European posture

To improve its deterrent posture and improve its ability to defend against Russian aggression, the United States needs to counter Russia's time-distance and A2/AD advantages, to do so, the United States should:

- **Pursue posture enhancements that increase the lethality and resilience of its forward forces in the opening days of a conflict to:**
 - Blunt a Russian invasion and buy time for NATO to respond
 - Degrade Russian A2/AD capabilities to create access and freedom of maneuver for reinforcing forces
 - Posture enhancements enable Poland to speed up modernization
- **Undertake measures that reduce response times for follow-on forces including:**
 - Enhancing prepositioned equipment sets, and stocks of munitions and sustainment material
 - Improving RSOI infrastructure for air and ground forces
 - Improving basing infrastructure to support distributed air operations
 - Creating a resilient web of intra-theater communications



Proposed enhancements to the U.S. military's posture in Europe

	Major Force Element or Capability	Posture Current	Posture Recommendations	Prepositioned Current	Prepositioned Recommendations
Land	Corps Headquarters	0	1	-	-
	Division Headquarters	0.25	1	1	1
	Brigade Combat Team	3	4	2	1
	Combat Aviation Brigade	2	2	--	--
	Field Artillery Brigade	1	2	1	1
	Patriot Battalion	1	1	--	--
	SHORAD Battalion to defend maneuver forces, critical basing, infrastructure	1	2-plus	1	1
	Division Enabler Set	0.25	1	1	1
	Corps Enabler Set	--	--	0	1
Air	Infrastructure enhancements to support the rapid deployment and dispersed operations of combat, tanker, and ISR aircraft squadrons				
Munitions	Sufficient munitions for 30 days of air and ground combat operations				
Sustainment Stocks	Sufficient sustainment stocks for 30 days of air and ground combat operations				

- **Assess specific improvements to trans-Europe infrastructure, including bases, that would reduce time needed to deploy reinforcing forces to NATO's eastern frontier**
- **Develop a working timeline of posture and force enhancement priorities and rationale for each proposed change**
- **Assess force structure and posture implications of alternate paths to conflict and associated Allied vulnerabilities**
- **Assess investments for other NATO partners that could raise the costs of Russian aggression**
- **Multi-national wargaming and Strategic Choices Exercises to evaluate best-of-breed options**



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