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## 23. Baltic perspectives on the European Security and Defence Policy

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### I. Introduction

Given the choice between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Security and Defence Policy as providers of their national security, the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—look to the USA. One reason is their perception of Russia as a source of instability. Another is their lack of confidence in the ability of the ESDP to deal with present-day threats. Although these three states are eager to be ‘normal’ members of the European Union and thus to join in its initiatives, their enthusiasm for the EU’s development of its own military muscle is lukewarm. An EU with some military capability but without the USA’s military strength and leadership holds little promise for them. Since the ESDP vehicle is already on the move, the Baltic states see their main function as ensuring coordination between the ESDP and NATO. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania want to be ‘Atlanticists from within the ESDP’.<sup>1</sup>

The Baltic states see themselves as exposed to challenges similar to those confronting the Nordic countries: notably the challenge of the new transatlantic dynamic, which

makes it almost impossible to avoid taking sides between the US and Europe on an increasing range of global and specific issues. Being torn in this way is bound to be especially painful for Scandinavian [and Baltic] societies which have strong ties of history, culture and values with both sides of the Atlantic, and which in strategic terms are relatively dependent both on American military and European economic strength.<sup>2</sup>

The Nordic countries are seen by the Baltic states as allies in this context. Being just as Atlanticist as the Baltic states, the Nordic countries could be of great help in countering what the former see as some EU members’ efforts to push the USA out of Europe. As one Baltic security policy maker expressed it: ‘If only the Nordics had more courage to speak their minds, if only they were younger in spirit and less frightened of becoming “noise makers”’.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Baltic opinions quoted in this chapter were expressed in 20 interviews conducted by the author in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in ministries of defence and foreign affairs, in foreign embassies, and with local and foreign scholars in Nov.–Dec. 2004. They are also supported by conversations with students at the Baltic Defence College in 2003–2004. Some additional interviews were conducted by the author in Denmark and Sweden.

<sup>2</sup> Bailes, A. J. K., ‘Transatlantic relations, Europe and Norden’, Talk, Reykjavík University, 8 Nov. 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews (note 1).

Since not all the Nordic countries can be expected to join both the EU and NATO, the Baltic states must look elsewhere to optimize the experience gained in a wide range of Baltic–Nordic defence cooperation projects. Their ‘partners of choice’ for participation in the EU battle groups are, however, not available: Sweden prefers cooperation with Finland and Norway, although Norway is not an EU member, while ‘Denmark is able to join any peace support mission but those under the EU cap’.<sup>4</sup> The Baltic states briefly contemplated, but abandoned, the option of security cooperation within the ESDP. Thus, the Baltic states, like the Nordic countries, are currently in the process of separately finding their own paths to security. As with the five Nordic countries, it will be interesting to see whether ‘at the end of the process they will find themselves drawing together again or be split among themselves in new ways’.<sup>5</sup> The hope expressed in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius is for a northern Baltic sub-group of the transatlantic or European security community. Meanwhile, the security discourse in the Baltic states is influenced both by enthusiasm at the opportunity to join in the new structures and the democratic decision-making process of the ESDP and by frustration over the lack of leadership and the time wasted on discussions in the same structures. The Baltic states have confidence in a safer future where soft security issues are handled jointly with international security cooperation, and they are concerned about hard security threats that call for traditional power politics and sabre-rattling. The younger echelons in the Baltic ministries of defence and foreign affairs must deal with the tempo of the EU’s evolution and the braking effect of their own societies. The outcome is complicated and sometimes confusing, since contradictory opinions may be expressed in reaction to the sheer complexity of the task of formulating national security policy.

The postmodern approach to security that is characteristic of the EU member states is gradually being internalized by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Many younger security managers, in particular, have taken to their hearts the European Security Strategy’s words about the importance of new threats and of international security cooperation.<sup>6</sup> The new generations of public servants in the Baltic states do their utmost to become involved in the integration process and to become valuable and reliable partners to the EU and NATO. To them, the ESDP is an opportunity to become providers, rather than merely consumers, of security. However, as keen students of history, they are nevertheless wary of their situation as small states and retain a pragmatic approach to alliances. Norman Davies’s conclusion that the chemistry of international coalitions is a complex business, and that actions and reactions within them are by no means

<sup>4</sup> Gade, S., Danish Minister of Defence, ‘Forsvarsforbehold spænder ben’ [The defence opt-outs are a hindrance], *Berlingske Tidende*, 3 Dec. 2004, URL <[http://forsvaret.dk/FMN/Ministeren/Taler+og+artikler/BT\\_031204.htm](http://forsvaret.dk/FMN/Ministeren/Taler+og+artikler/BT_031204.htm)> (author’s translation). On the Danish opt-outs as a factor constraining regional cooperation see chapter 11 in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> Bailes (note 2).

<sup>6</sup> Council of the European Union, ‘A secure Europe in a better world: European Security Strategy’, Brussels, 12 Dec. 2003, URL <[http://ue.eu.int/cms3\\_fo/showPage.ASP?id=266](http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.ASP?id=266)>.

predictable,<sup>7</sup> is widely shared by the new members of NATO and the EU. Just as democracy is not the best but the least deficient political system, however, security alliances are the best option available—and, in awareness of their defects, ‘it can never hurt to have the USA as a friend’. Thus, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will do ‘everything, everything’<sup>8</sup> to enhance and enforce their relationship with their most important ally, the USA.

This chapter looks in turn at definitions of national security (section II); definitions and perceptions of threat (section III); Russia as a hard security issue (section IV); providers of national security in the Baltic (section V); and the Baltic approach to the ESDP and the role of the Nordic countries (section VI). Conclusions are given in section VII.

## II. Definitions of national security

The classic elements of the Westphalian state provide the backbone of definitions of national security in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.<sup>9</sup> The newly gained independence which made possible the three countries’ return to Europe, to the West or to ‘Yule-land’<sup>10</sup> is sacrosanct. The state is the focus and the referent object. Sovereignty and territorial integrity are to be preserved and protected along with their dividends: democracy and the market economy; constitutional order; and public safety. Security is understood as a broad spectrum of issues divided into hard and soft security. A two-tier hierarchy persists, where the distinction is between political and military issues in the principal tier, and economic, environmental and other dimensions as secondary issues. The principal tier includes issues that affect the state directly, while the secondary factors have an impact on the state by affecting the political and military sectors. While the first-tier issues—sovereignty and territorial integrity—are identical for all three states, the second-tier priorities vary from country to country. They generally include such issues as economic security, protection of the country’s natural environment, integration of society, protection of human rights and protection of the long-term development of the state and society. The essence of

<sup>7</sup> Davies, N., *Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw* (Pan Books: London, 2004), p. 620. According to Davies, the Warsaw rising demonstrated ‘that great powers may have democracy on the tip of their tongues but not always on the tip of their priorities. Anyone who joins them should not be expected to be treated as an equal, or to see their interests fully defended.’

<sup>8</sup> Interviews (note 1).

<sup>9</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘National Security Concept of the Republic of Estonia (2004)’, Tallinn, 14 July 2004, URL <[http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat\\_177/4665.html](http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat_177/4665.html)>; Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘National Security Concept’, Riga, 24 Jan. 2002, URL <<http://www.am.gov.lv/en/nato/basic/4534/>>; and Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence (MOND), *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania* (MOND: Vilnius, 2002), URL <<http://www.kam.lt/index.php?ItemId=9671>>. The Lithuanian National Security Strategy is undergoing revision. Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, ‘Lithuania establishes new guidelines for ensuring national security’, Press release, 6 Oct. 2004, URL <<http://www.kam.lt/index.php?ItemId=28332>>.

<sup>10</sup> Ilves, T. H., Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, ‘Estonia as a Nordic country’, Speech, Swedish Institute for International Affairs, Stockholm, 14 Dec. 1999, URL <[http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat\\_140/1210.html](http://www.vm.ee/eng/kat_140/1210.html)>. ‘Yule-land’ refers to the north European culture to which Estonia is assumed to belong.

national security remains protection of the autonomous nation state and its territory, features that are related to the definition of a 'modern state' and are linked with a focus on military security and state borders as lines of closure. This definition of security also reflects the understanding of national security among large segments of the societies of the Baltic states.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have joined the EU. The member states of the EU are heading towards another definition of national security and a post-Westphalian form of international relations. Their security agendas address a postmodern world in which classic threats are exchanged for new ones: threats to the stability of global economic and environmental systems and to openness to the international system.<sup>12</sup> Postmodern states are no longer governed by the territorial imperative. They are embedded in an international framework in which the distinction between domestic and international has been eroded, where borders matter less and where force is prohibited.<sup>13</sup> A dilemma in relation to the ESDP is that, while protection of democracy and the market economy as such is supported by the EU, the protection of national territories is not an issue for the ESDP. Although there is substantial overlap between the Baltic and EU visions, the EU is aiming higher in its definition of security, seeking to build 'an area of freedom, security, and justice with respect for fundamental rights'.<sup>14</sup>

### III. Definitions and perceptions of threat

Despite their modernist definitions of security, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania apply a postmodern definition of threats. Terrorism, trafficking and other forms of organized crime—issues which do not affect state security directly—are at the top of their lists while issues with a direct impact on sovereignty and territorial integrity—such as military conflict—are assumed to be unlikely in contemporary Europe. Lithuania's National Security Strategy does not even contemplate the contingency of a military attack from another state.<sup>15</sup> Estonia and Latvia do not totally preclude the occurrence of military conflicts in the region but rely on the prevailing power structure in Europe as a guarantee against invasion.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., in 2003 the Estonian public's perceptions of what guaranteed Estonia's national security were: NATO membership (52%); good relations with Russia (45%); Baltic defence cooperation (36%); strong national defence (33%); economic prosperity in the world (33%); membership of the EU (31%); strong border control (19%); strong national feelings/patriotism (16%); neutrality policy (15%); and high standard of living (13%). More than one option could be selected. Estonian Ministry of Defence, *Avalik Arvamus ja Riigikaitse 2000–2003* [Society and national defence 2000–2003] (Eesti Vabariigi Kaitseministeerium: Tallinn, 2003), URL <<http://www.mod.gov.ee/?op=body&id=83>>, table 4, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Buzan, B. and Wæver, O., *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations no. 91 (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Cooper, R. quoted in Kaldor, M., *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* (Polity Press: Oxford, 2003), p. 136.

<sup>14</sup> Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, European Convention, Brussels, 18 July 2003, URL <<http://european-convention.eu.int/DraftTreaty.asp>>, Article III-158(1) and (3).

<sup>15</sup> Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence (note 9), chapter 4.

The dilemma is that membership of NATO and the EU has also brought insecurity. First, belonging to NATO and the EU has significantly expanded the Baltic states' security interests into regions of no previous security relevance. Local and regional crises can now be expected that affect the Baltic states irrespective of geographical distances. Second, the list of 'securitized' issues has become long and abstract.<sup>16</sup> None of the 'new threats' emphasized in the general Western discourse is directly related to the modern understanding of security and the focus on the state that are predominant in the Baltic states' definitions of national security. For example, 'terrorism'—the issue most strongly emphasized within the ESDP and in the 'Solidarity Clause'—is not necessarily accepted in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a threat to the state as a political or military entity.<sup>17</sup> The Baltic states' reason for joining the US-led 'coalition of the willing' in Iraq in 2003 was not fear of terrorism or of weapons of mass destruction, but determination to guarantee the USA's friendship even after NATO membership had become a reality. It was explained to the Baltic publics as a demonstration of loyalty that was necessary 'if we want others to come to our help when we need them'.<sup>18</sup> What the Baltic publics fear is a spill-over from political instability in Belarus, Ukraine or Russia into both military and non-military threats to their countries. However, the military threat from Russia is not on the security agenda of the EU and—as the Baltic states were told during their NATO accession period—it is not to be mentioned as such. Even so, the risk of Russia challenging their hard security interests has not been forgotten by the Baltic states and can still be discussed in other forums. The risk of non-military threats from the region is not high on the EU agenda either: Africa is the region envisaged for ESDP operations, not the states of the former Soviet Union.

Thus, while applying the same terminology as the other EU member states, the Baltic states' understanding of the character and origin of threats differs from the understanding of West European or Mediterranean countries such as France, Germany and Italy. It also differs among the three Baltic states. For example, Estonia's 2004 National Security Concept articulates threats of social origin, and lists alcoholism, HIV/Aids and other contagious diseases among them, but it sees such threats as emerging in 'Estonia's vicinity', that is, as external threats;<sup>19</sup> for Latvia, alcoholism, HIV/Aids and similar problems are a

<sup>16</sup> This is particularly the case in Estonia's National Security Concept, although it reflects the new orientation of all 3 states towards a much larger world than would normally be expected from a 'small state'.

<sup>17</sup> An Estonian commentator has accused the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs of being dishonest with the public when bringing the issue of terrorism to the forefront of threat analysis without mentioning Russia other than euphemistically. Lobjakas, A., 'Kas tõesti terrorism?' [Terrorism? Oh, indeed?], *Eesti Päevaleht*, 10 June 2004, URL <[http://www.epl.ee/artikkel\\_267270.html](http://www.epl.ee/artikkel_267270.html)>.

<sup>18</sup> Laaneots, A. (Gen.), Commandant of the Estonian Defence College, *Defence Review* (Baltic News Service), no. 28/2003, 14–20 July 2004; and Kõuts, T. (Vice-Adm.), Chief of the Estonian Defence Forces, 1 May address to the troops and army officials, *Defence Review* (Baltic News Service), no. 18/2003, 28 Apr.–3 May 2004. See also Interviews (note 1).

<sup>19</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 1.3.

direct consequence of social and economic developments within the country, that is, the origin of the threats is internal.<sup>20</sup>

Economic security is a major concern for all three states. For Estonia a threat of economic origin means the fear that its economy, which is highly integrated into the world economic system, will be vulnerable to worldwide crises or instability in foreign markets.<sup>21</sup> Lithuania's National Security Strategy expresses concern about the dominance of the country's economy by foreign capital investments of unclear origin.<sup>22</sup> The issue is about investments by Russian companies or foreign capital with Russian background, and it is a worry shared in Estonia and Latvia.<sup>23</sup> The problem arises from a lack of transparency in the Russian companies and their business methods, from Russia's geo-political ambitions, and from the potential security policy repercussions of the NATO and EU states' increasing dependency on Russian energy supplies.

Indeed, substantial differences in business law and practices persist between Russian and EU companies. Some of the main reasons are the absence in Russia of: (a) accounting and auditing standards, and corporate governance and accounting rules; (b) legislation on intellectual property rights; and (c) banking system regulations. The Western business community investing in Russia is continually calling for these absences to be rectified, but the EU's initiatives aimed at prompting economic and political reforms in Russia seem to have had little effect. Among the numerous calls for change are those made by the EU–Russia Industrialists' Round Table, a regular event which brings together private economic operators, providing opportunities to develop contacts and stable networks between top industry representatives on both sides.<sup>24</sup> The sixth Industrialists' Round Table, held in November 2004, requested that Russia continue its reform process of transition to a rules-based market economy and emphasized the measures needed to improve the business and investment climate. The absence of appropriate corporate legislation both acts as a stumbling block for Western companies' investments in Russia and hinders insight into Russian companies that are seeking investment opportunities in the Baltic states (and elsewhere). While the concerns voiced at the EU–Russia Industrialists' Round Table by EU companies focused on barriers to Western investment opportunities in Russia—for example, 'excessive government regulations of business activities'<sup>25</sup>—for the three Baltic states the Russian Government's

<sup>20</sup> Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), sections 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.

<sup>21</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 1.3.

<sup>22</sup> Lithuanian MND (note 9), section 4.1.3.

<sup>23</sup> Interviews (note 1).

<sup>24</sup> The usual outcomes of EU Industrialists' Round Tables are recommendations addressed to the EU and the respective governments on, e.g., market access, trade policy and foreign direct investment issues. See European Commission, 'Business round tables and dialogues: overview', URL <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/business\\_dialogues/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/business_dialogues/)>.

<sup>25</sup> EU–Russia Industrialists' Round Table, 5th general meeting, General conclusions, Moscow, 1–2 Dec. 2003, URL <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/business\\_dialogues/russia/russiaoverview.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/business_dialogues/russia/russiaoverview.htm)>, section 6, 'Creating favourable conditions for investments in Russia'.

regulation of business activities gives rise to the different concern that Moscow is exploiting Russian investment in the Baltic states for political purposes.

The oil pipeline in Ventspils, Latvia, illustrates the reasons behind the Baltic states' fear of Russia exercising its geopolitical ambitions through energy policy. Until February 2003 nearly one-eighth of Russia's oil exports were piped to this port, helping make Ventspils' gross domestic product per head among the highest in the country. Then Russia's state pipeline monopoly, Transneft, shut off the oil. The theory in Latvia was that Russia was strangling Ventspils in order to force the Latvian Government to give Transneft its remaining 39 per cent stake in the oil pipeline. Similar steps were taken in December 2004 in Ukraine—or, at least, Baltic observers assumed that Russia was the driver behind Turkmenistan's threat to cut gas supplies just three hours after the results of the second round of Ukraine's presidential election were announced.<sup>26</sup>

The Baltic concern about Russia's geopolitical appetite being exercised by means of investments and energy policy is supported by US analysis. Fiona Hill of the Brookings Institution states that Russian 'foreign policy and domestic policy are inter-twined'.<sup>27</sup> This is seconded by a US diplomat's recollection of his experiences from Vilnius: 'Russian energy policy is used as an instrument by the Kremlin and its power ministries as leverage to affect foreign security policy in importing countries, particularly in East Central Europe.'<sup>28</sup> It is claimed that Russia has recently experienced 'dramatic increases' in the numbers of former intelligence officers occupying senior positions in its government and energy firms, and that this has led to a return to the period when energy companies were more political instruments than profit centres.<sup>29</sup> Usually, national embassies' commercial departments are expected to be at the service of their countries' industrialists, but these reports indicate that the relation is reversed in Russia and that it is Russian government officials who steer their industrialists' investments—using capital whose origin is, at best, unclear.

Finally, the assumption that NATO and EU countries might become more likely to pander to Russia's demands since they depend on Russian energy supplies is widespread in the Baltic capitals, although some point out that Russia is equally dependent on cash from the EU.<sup>30</sup> The fear is that Russia may be trying

<sup>26</sup> 'Ukraine strikes Turkmen gas deal', BBC News Online, 3 Jan. 2005, URL <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/4143053.stm>>.

<sup>27</sup> Hill, F., *Energy Empire: Oil, Gas and Russia's Revival* (Foreign Policy Centre: London, Sep. 2004), URL <<http://fpc.org.uk/publications/>>, p. 59.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, K. C., *Russian Energy Politics in the Baltics, Poland, and Ukraine: A New Stealth Imperialism?* (Center for Strategic and International Studies: Washington, DC, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> Although this is an argument repeated in interviews with Baltic officials, here it is a direct quotation from Smith, K. C., Seminar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 26 Aug. 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Such views are in line with those expressed in an EU report: 'EU–Russia economic relations are increasingly important for both sides . . . The European Union is the major destination for Russian exports and more than 50% of Russia's total external trade is with the EU. The EU is also the main source of technology, know-how and investment for Russia. In turn, Russia has immense resources and a qualified

to weaken the Baltic states' membership of the EU by imposing 'special provisions' for economic relations between Russia and the Baltic states, thus turning the latter into 'second rank' EU members that cannot fully comply with EU rules. An example substantiating the Baltic concern might be the conclusions drawn at the EU–Russia Industrialists' Round Table in 2003. The impact of EU enlargement on bilateral EU–Russia relations was extensively discussed during the sessions: the Russian participants argued that application of the EU internal market rules might hurt Russian industry's traditional trade interests in Central and East European states and, further, that subordination of the national legislation of acceding states to EU laws would invalidate a large number of bilateral trade and economic agreements with these states. The response from the European participants—none of whom was from the Baltic states, although Hungary and Poland were represented—was not calculated to lessen Baltic concern. It was concluded that special provisions have been negotiated and are still being negotiated in areas of Russian interest in order to avoid or reduce the problems.<sup>31</sup> Yet such 'special provisions' are exactly what the Baltic states fear. In particular, they are aiming for membership of the Schengen Agreement on the free movement of people and consider any 'special provisions' as endangering this target.

One of the burning issues between the Baltic states and Russia, and also between the Baltic states and the West European democracies, is the rights of the Russian-speaking minorities.<sup>32</sup> The national security guidelines of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania take different approaches to the issue of Russian-speaking minorities. In Latvia's 2002 National Security Concept considerable attention is given the goal of integrating society, defined as 'one of the most significant factors which stabilises [the] internal political situation in the country'.<sup>33</sup> The Estonian National Security Concept is preoccupied with external threats, while the Russian-speaking minority is considered to be an internal problem that would only become a security issue if it were exploited by a foreign power, for example, by placing Estonia in a negative light vis-à-vis its EU partners.

Progress on the minority issue is reflected in recent reports from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In Estonia and Latvia treatment of the Russian-speaking minorities has been of considerable concern to both the OSCE and the EU. The OSCE Mission in Estonia focused its attention on broad-reaching issues such as the language law, election law and the

labour force. Furthermore, Russia's energy supplies to the EU can help to enhance Europe's energy security.' European Commission, 'The EU's relations with Russia: overview, economics and trade', Material from the EU–Russia Summit, The Hague, 25 Nov. 2004, URL <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/russia/intro/eco\\_trade.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/russia/intro/eco_trade.htm)>.

<sup>31</sup> EU–Russia Industrialists' Round Table (note 25), section 2, 'The EU enlargement and bilateral cooperation'.

<sup>32</sup> Russians accounted for 25.6% of the population of Estonia in 2001, 32.5% of the population of Latvia in 1997, and 6.3% of the population of Lithuania in 2001. Turner, B. (ed.), *The Statesman's Yearbook 2005* (Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 600, 1037, 1066.

<sup>33</sup> Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 2.2.4.



ombudsman.<sup>34</sup> The mandate of the OSCE Mission to Latvia initially focused on citizenship issues and gradually extended to a wider range of social integration issues such as citizenship, non-citizens' language and education, the Latvian Government's integration programme, and the regime for protection of civil rights.<sup>35</sup> The issues outstanding in these missions' 2003 reports are related to social guarantees for military pensioners and their families residing in Latvia (18 438 people); and the issue of permanent residence permits not being granted to military pensioners (450 people) in Estonia.<sup>36</sup>

The attitudes expressed in interviews conducted by the author for this study are best summed up in the following quotation: 'This is a small country on the crossroads of big politics. Therefore, we must reduce all possible threats, including the threat posed by instability of society. We must integrate the Russian-speaking community. It makes things easier when minorities are from civilisations with whom we can still find common principles. It is not easy, but it is possible to integrate them.'<sup>37</sup> Integration remains a problem, nonetheless. It is difficult to find names of Russian origin among political decision makers, in the higher echelons of the civil service and in public life. The absence of Russian-speaking voices in public debate on issues other than those of minorities is striking. Although some other minorities seem to be coping better, nationality problems lurk below the surface and frequently appear as a complication in the Baltic states' domestic and international relations.

While Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are eager to become part of the international community and they emphasize their strong commitment to the EU and NATO, they view globalization not just as the major generator of economic and technological development but also as the force driving the spread of non-military threats. Penetration of the three countries by, for example, economic crime, HIV/Aids and illegal migration typifies the negative impact of globalization on their societies. Eager to take part in the globalization process and to benefit from its positive effects, Estonia in particular is concerned with global threats originating outside its borders and penetrating its society. Latvia is concerned about becoming the breeding ground of global threats because of the country's uneven economic development. Lithuania's approach is that threats originate globally and should be fought globally, while not denying its own share in both processes.

<sup>34</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2001 on OSCE Activities (1 November 2000–31 October 2001)* (OSCE: Vienna, Nov. 2001), URL <<http://www.osce.org/publications/>>, p. 33.

<sup>35</sup> OSCE (note 34), p. 34.

<sup>36</sup> Some of these ex-servicemen have been denied extension of their short- (1–3 years) or longer-term (4–5 years) visas, and they and their families are facing expulsion as a result. While Latvia is cooperating with the responsible Russian authorities to solve the problems, Estonia appears to take a firm stand on this issue. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2003 on OSCE Activities: Security and Co-operation for Europe* (OSCE: Vienna, Oct. 2004), URL <<http://www.osce.org/publications/>>, p. 124.

<sup>37</sup> Interviews (note 1).

The semantic gymnastics executed in the national security guidelines of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in order to avoid mentioning the words ‘Russia’ and ‘Russian’ among potential threats are remarkable. Nevertheless, Russia cannot help spring to mind when passages such as the following are read: ‘due to the contradictory democratisation processes and foreign policies of certain neighbours of these alliances, it is still not possible to rule out threats to Estonia’s security’;<sup>38</sup> or ‘While the likelihood of a direct military confrontation in the region is low, such conventional risk factors as the demonstration of military force, the threat to use force, the presence of undemocratically controlled military forces, the failing states and unsolved regional conflicts still threaten the security of the Republic of Lithuania’.<sup>39</sup> Russia lurks behind every second sentence of the threat analyses of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

#### IV. Russia as a hard security issue

The absence of reference to Russia in the Baltic states’ national security guidelines compared with its presence between the lines of the same documents, and in nearly every conversation on the Baltic states’ security, reflects a ‘do not provoke the bear’ attitude. It also reflects a concern not to upset EU partners and not to expose the Baltic states to renewed accusations that they are playing the Russian card in order to keep the USA engagement in Europe.<sup>40</sup> Finally, an explicit mention of Russia might open a Pandora’s box of internal debates, including debates on the usefulness of the ESDP.<sup>41</sup>

West European views on Russia are perceived by the Baltic publics and security managers as being slightly naive. They hear that Western Europe believes Russia to be a democracy with a kind of market economy—not stable, yet, but with a vast economic potential.<sup>42</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin’s build-up of a dictatorship is looked on as a setback in a laborious but ultimately progressive process. Although he has centralized the formulation of foreign policy, Putin is seen in Western Europe as a pragmatic and cautious leader. The present state of international affairs far from satisfies Russia’s ambitions for the status of a great power, but it is believed that Russia still prefers it to the alternative of being ousted from the ‘good society of civilized countries’. Indeed, if Russia wanted to recreate its empire it would have to recreate its military: but the Russian military is perceived as being in such poor condition that the

<sup>38</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 1.3, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence (note 9), section 4.1.2, p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> This view is summarized in Sloan, S. R., ‘U.S. hegemony and the transatlantic alliance’, *Baltic Defence Review*, no. 11, vol. 1/2004, URL <<http://www.bdcol.ee/pages/research-and-publications/>>, pp. 21–38; it was also encountered in Interviews (note 1).

<sup>41</sup> Interviews (note 1).

<sup>42</sup> This section is based entirely on the author’s Interviews (note 1) and conversation with students and staff at the Baltic Defence College in 2003–2004. Where other references are made (to books and articles) it is with the intention of cross-checking information or because similar views were expressed in print by others. Many interviews were conducted at the time of the election crisis in Ukraine in late 2004. The mounting concern for Ukraine’s fate might have sharpened some of the opinions on Russia.

West's warning period of an attack has been expanded from 10 hours, as it was during the cold war period, to a comfortable 10 years.<sup>43</sup> It is not, therefore, a problem for West European analysts if Russia's defence remains structured according to a cold war threat perception—against a military attack from the USA and NATO.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, Russia is seen by West European analysts as a country where state institutions are weak and the armed forces have little legitimacy.<sup>45</sup> A true reform of the defence system is thus thought to be highly unlikely to succeed.<sup>46</sup> Reform would require an assessment of the internal and external security threats to the country—both current and in the foreseeable future—and the organization, training and equipping of the armed forces would have to be based on proper threat assessment.<sup>47</sup> In Russia, however, elements of reform such as structural changes to the conscription system, professionalization of the forces, improvement of the defence management system, enhancement of capabilities and, above all, the introduction of proper civilian control of the armed forces all seem far away. The West European conclusion is that Russia's internally praised defence reform is best likened to a Potemkin village: it appears impressive, but lacks substance.<sup>48</sup>

Much as Baltic security managers might agree with this assessment of Russia's failed reforms, they do not believe that Russia acts according to the logic of a rational cost–benefit analysis. Nor do they put their faith in any strong urge for democracy in a country that lacks civil society structures or education in the most basic democratic principles. Furthermore, they express doubts about how much the membership of the club of 'civilized states' really means to President Putin.

Baltic military analysts are not convinced that Russia lacks instruments to pursue its imperial ambitions. First, they point out that such conclusions are based on studies of the Russian armed forces, while Russia also has a security

<sup>43</sup> A recent report assumes a warning time of 1 month for invasion of the Baltic states, however. Larson, E. V. et al., *Assuring Access in Key Strategic Regions: Toward a Long-Term Strategy* (RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, Calif., Oct. 2004), URL <<http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG112/>>.

<sup>44</sup> McDermott, R. N., 'Putin's military priorities: the modernization of the armed forces', eds A. C. Aldis and R. N. McDermott, *Russian Military Reform 1992–2002* (Frank Cass: London, 2003), pp. 260–77. McDermott concludes in this article that Russian military reform has taken a 'dreaming approach' (p. 273).

<sup>45</sup> This view was expressed in guest lectures at the Baltic Defence College, including Kværnø, O., department director, Royal Danish Military Academy, Copenhagen, Lecture at the seminar on Obstacles and Possible Ways Ahead in Russian Military Reform, Baltic Defence College, Tartu, 22 Nov. 2004.

<sup>46</sup> Cottey, A., Edmunds, T. and Forster, A. (eds), *Democratic Control of the Military in Postcommunist Europe: Guarding the Guards* (Palgrave: London, 2002), in particular the editors' Introduction, pp. 1–17. See also Karkoszka, A., 'Defense reform in Poland 1989–2000', eds I. Gyarmati and T. Winkler, *Post-Cold War Defense Reform: Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States* (Brassey's: Washington, DC, 2002), pp. 165–88. These authors define true reforms as establishing effective democratic civilian control over defence policy (Cottey et al.) and as actions which are undertaken with a clear purpose of improving the defence system, rather than merely adapting it to worsened economic conditions (Karkoszka).

<sup>47</sup> Donnelly, C. N., 'Reshaping Russia's armed forces: security requirements and institutional responses', eds Aldis and McDermott (note 44), pp. 296–315.

<sup>48</sup> Kværnø (note 45).

establishment whose uniformed and civilian personnel outnumber the armed forces.<sup>49</sup> Second, the Russian military is not perceived in the Baltic states as thoroughly impotent: although its equipment is elderly and rusty, Russia's army is still the biggest in Europe. With the Russian economy having overcome its crisis and with oil prices soaring, the Russian military is getting new injections of cash. While Western defence forces are facing budgetary reductions, the Russian defence budget increases annually.<sup>50</sup> Finnish estimates, quoted particularly often in Estonia, conclude that the Russian defence budget has increased since the year 2000.<sup>51</sup> Although Russian gross domestic product may still be at the level of a South American country, as it rises more funds will be available for Russia's military procurement.<sup>52</sup>

Third, although the Russian forces overall may be ageing, some priority areas for military development are maintained. The one that is particularly worrying for Russia's Baltic neighbours is the Leningrad military district.<sup>53</sup> A concentration of resources on units at permanent high readiness, such as motorized infantry brigades and air regiments, is taking place in this region. 'Troops stationed there retain the capabilities to use tactical nuclear weapons',<sup>54</sup> states the Finnish Security and Defence Policy, a document which is respected in Estonia as expressing concerns more freely than Estonia can.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Saranov, V., 'Critical mass: there are too many armed formations in Russia', *Versiya*, no. 47 (11–17 Dec. 2001), *CDI Russia Weekly*, no. 184 (14 Dec. 2001), URL <<http://www.cdi.org/russia/>>. Citing Saranov, McDermott (note 44) states that the security forces include 'the Internal Troops (<200 000 servicemen), the Special Assignment Units of Interior Ministry (3–4000), Federal Border Guard Service (planned reduction to 183 000 by 2003), Civilian Defence Troops (30 000), Railway Troops (50 000), Federal Service of Special Construction (<14 000), Main Directorate of the Special Programmes of the President (20 000) and others, such as Special Assignment Units Alpha and Vypel, et al. In total, there are about 531 800 to 533 500 servicemen available in forces that are growing in strength and numbers.' A similar opinion is expressed in another context in Trenin, D., 'Gold eagle, red star', eds S. E. Miller and D. Trenin, *The Russian Military: Power and Policy* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: Moscow, 2004), URL <<http://www.carnegie.ru/en/pubs/books/71318.htm>>, pp. 219–34.

<sup>50</sup> Stålenheim, P. et al., 'Tables of military expenditure', *SIPRI Yearbook 2005: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), pp. 345–71.

<sup>51</sup> Finnish Prime Minister's Office, *Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2004*, Government Report no. 6/2004 (Prime Minister's Office: Helsinki, 2004), URL <<http://www.vnk.fi/vn/liston/vnk.lsp?r=88862&k=en>>, p. 71. According to this source, the budget for 2004 was €13.4 billion, representing 3.1% of Russian GDP; the aim is to increase the budget to 3.5% of GDP: a drop in the ocean compared to NATO's spending, but nevertheless of concern to Russia's small neighbours.

<sup>52</sup> See also Suthcliffe, P. and Hill, C., 'An economic analysis of Russian military reform proposals: ambitions and reality', eds Aldis and McDermott (note 44), pp. 278–95. Suthcliffe and Hill's study, concluded in 2002, expresses concern for the Russian economy's dependence on energy exports and its lack of investments but suggests that a 'financial window of opportunity exists for significant progress towards the reform of the Russian armed forces'.

<sup>53</sup> The city of Leningrad changed its name to St Petersburg in 1991, but the military district did not.

<sup>54</sup> Finnish Prime Minister's Office (note 51), p. 67.

<sup>55</sup> Estonian military officers have sincere respect for Finland as the only country that fought 3 wars in the period 1939–45, practically alone. That is why many officers trust the Finns' military expertise more than any number of West European reports. In addition, a good number of Estonian officers have been trained in Finland.

Fourth, Russian defence policy guidelines are studied closely by the Baltic military leaderships.<sup>56</sup> It has been noted in the Baltic capitals that Russia's defence priorities have changed in favour of nuclear forces at the expense of conventional forces. From this it is understood that those arguing for a deterrence strategy have the upper hand in Moscow over those in favour of forces trained and equipped to handle Russia's regional conflicts. This could, ironically, be good news for the Baltic states if it did not reflect a persistent cold war attitude. Another important change alerting the Baltic states is Russia's declared doctrine of resorting to nuclear weapons both to defend its national territories and to prevent significant military defeat. Specific reference is made in this context to defence of Russian citizens in zones of 'political and other forms of instability'.<sup>57</sup> The deterrence strategy is openly aimed at Russia's strategic partners, NATO and the EU. Since the nuclear capabilities of the Leningrad military district are only a few hundred kilometres from the Estonian border, this is considered sufficient reason for the Baltic states to be on guard. These weapons, when aimed at NATO, are now also pointed at the Baltic capitals.

Finally, there is constant concern in the Baltic capitals about Russia's attempts to gain influence within NATO. These attempts are interpreted as a Russian hope to transform NATO from a defence alliance to merely a security alliance: a hope that might be further encouraged by some EU states' wish to edge the USA out of Europe. Since the influence of big states such as France and Germany on potential EU responses to Russia is strong, the EU's response when its help is really needed might be unpredictable at best, and negative at worst, for the three Baltic states.

The above arguments, which reflect the worst-case scenarios for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, should not be seen as constituting the Baltic governments' day-to-day agenda as of 2005. Russia is not considered an immediate threat to their hard security. The concern is, rather, for the potential failure of Russia's military, political and economic reform and for the prevalence of still stronger nationalistic trends. The pockets of efficiently functioning military capability might then be used with or without the consent of Moscow. What is frustrating for Baltic military analysts and security managers is their West European partners' lack of will to take the Baltic security concerns seriously, combined with European anger when the Baltic states turn to the USA on these

<sup>56</sup> E.g., Russian Federation, 'National Security Concept of the Russian Federation', Moscow, 10 Jan. 2000, English translation in Arbatov, A. G. and Chernikov, E. L. (eds), *Russian Federation Legal Acts on Civil-Military Relations* (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces: Geneva, 2003), URL <[http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/e-publications/Rus\\_legal\\_acts/contents.html](http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/e-publications/Rus_legal_acts/contents.html)>; Russian Federation, 'Military doctrine of the Russian Federation', Moscow, 21 Apr. 2000, English translation in Arbatov and Chernikov (eds); Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 'Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation', Moscow, 10 July 2000, URL <<http://www.in.mid.ru/Bl.nsf/0/1EC8DC08180306614325699C003B5FF0>>; and Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation, *The Priority Tasks of the Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation* (Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation: Moscow, 2003), URL <<http://www.mil.ru/articles/article5005.shtml>>.

<sup>57</sup> Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation (note 56), p. 63. See also Ivanov, S., Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, 'Russia's geopolitical priorities and armed forces', *Russia in Global Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 2004), URL <<http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/6/506.html>>.

issues. The lesson they draw is that Russia is a strategic partner in the eyes of the other European states and is not to be mentioned as a threat. ‘The best thing is to shut up and do our work’, was one Baltic conclusion on how to ‘muddle through’ in the EU context.<sup>58</sup> ‘However, if the EU gets a strategy it could be helpful in discussions with Russia because it is large and has more tools to bargain. All our experience on discussions with Russia demonstrates that Russia prefers to deal with bigger partners.’<sup>59</sup>

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have adopted the position of not singling out any state as a potential enemy in their national security concepts. Lithuania, in particular, also stresses the need to cooperate with Russia. All three countries take active approaches towards the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in particular in the Caucasus region. While they aim at a cooperative approach with Russia, it is seen as a country capable of swift and dramatic changes and with an ability to manipulate developments in Belarus and Ukraine. Therefore, unless Russian political, economic, administrative and military reforms become deeply anchored and the country becomes more predictable, transparent and democratic, the Baltic states will continue to see a need to balance Russia with another strong power. The EU is not assumed to have the will or the ability to play this role; it simply does not have the muscle. Furthermore, Russia tends to ignore the EU if the Europeans are not supported by the USA.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, on hard security issues the Baltic states turn to the USA.

## V. Providers of national security in the Baltic

The national security concepts of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania each list a number of actors with an impact on their countries’ security: the USA; NATO and the EU; and regional partners such as the other Baltic states, the other countries around the Baltic Sea and the Nordic countries. The decisive role in the Baltic states’ national security, understood as the defence of their territorial integrity and sovereignty, lies with NATO backed by the USA. Generally speaking, NATO is in charge of military security, the EU of economic security.

For Estonia, the ‘cornerstone of European security is the U.S. military presence and consistent participation in the ensuring of this security’.<sup>61</sup> Military security is entrusted to NATO as the ‘only effective international defence and security organisation’. NATO provides the ‘common defence of its Members and the ensuring of international stability’.<sup>62</sup> Although people both inside and outside NATO are increasingly challenging the existence of any automatic

<sup>58</sup> Interviews (note 1).

<sup>59</sup> Interviews (note 1).

<sup>60</sup> Chechnya is mentioned as one of the many examples where Russia is hoodwinking Western negotiators. See, e.g., Bendersky, Y., ‘The Chechnya factor in Russia–EU relations’, *ISN Security Watch*, 5 Oct. 2004, URL <<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?ID=9850>>.

<sup>61</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 2.4.1.

<sup>62</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 2.1.

effect of NATO's Article 5 collective defence guarantee,<sup>63</sup> the Estonian security concept emphasizes this guarantee. As Stan Sloan has observed, while the major West European powers no longer rely on the USA to defend them against Russia, some of the new allies still see NATO as an important hedge against Russian power.<sup>64</sup> However, the value of a NATO without the USA is questioned: 'What will happen if the USA is unwilling or unable to assist Estonia? What is NATO's guarantee worth without the USA?' asks a commentator in an Estonian newspaper.<sup>65</sup> The role assigned to the EU in Estonia's 2004 National Security Concept is as provider of non-military security, covering the issues from the second tier which are important for the state's development rather than for its basic existence. The ESDP, and the military role that the EU is developing, may rely on participation by this dutiful new member, but the ESDP and its battle groups are not assigned any significant role in relation to Estonia's national security priority: the 'defence of Estonian statehood'.<sup>66</sup>

For Latvia, the USA, through NATO, is also the main provider of territorial security and the lead actor in the sphere of common defence. The role of the USA is strong in both multilateral and bilateral relations: 'Co-operation with the United States of America is one of the priorities of the foreign policy of Latvia which should further the resolution of security problems of Latvia'.<sup>67</sup> However, the major part of Latvia's national security concerns relates to state and society, to the risks to internal security created by economic disparities, and to efforts towards social integration. In order to attain security, Latvia focuses on economic and social development, and in this context the national doctrine pays substantial tribute to the European integration process. A list of specific recommendations is elaborated in the 2002 National Security Concept, including guidance on diversification of the economy, stability in the energy sector, and the liberalization of the agriculture and food industries as a means to improve public health.<sup>68</sup> The aim of security policy in this context is to prevent poor socio-economic conditions developing into security threats. It is difficult to envisage the USA or NATO being particularly useful in achieving any of those objectives. The EU, in contrast, possesses a wide range of economic, social and other instruments ranging from regional development funds to the coordination of structural measures and, if necessary, the use of the civilian and military tools of the ESDP. Therefore, Latvia's security political orientation is

<sup>63</sup> The text of Article 5 of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty (Treaty of Washington) is available at URL <<http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm>>. During a 16 Mar. 2004 seminar at the Baltic Defence College, Rob de Wijk of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence argued to civil servants from the Estonian Ministry of Defence and the Estonian General Staff that Article 5 does not come into effect automatically and it is doubtful whether an action would be initiated at all. See also Wijk, R. de, *NATO on the Brink of the New Millennium: the Battle for Consensus* (Brassey's: London, 1997), pp. 116–51.

<sup>64</sup> Sloan (note 40).

<sup>65</sup> Lobjakas (note 17) (author's translation).

<sup>66</sup> Estonian Ministry of Defence, 'National Defence Development Priorities 2004', Tallinn, 24 Mar. 2004, URL <<http://www.kmin.ee/?op=body&id=260>>, section 10.

<sup>67</sup> Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 3.1.

<sup>68</sup> Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 2.2.

focused on the EU and its instruments, and this trend will continue and become stronger.

Lithuania seeks enhancement of its security through international cooperation, as stated in its National Security Strategy. Although interviews indicate a very strong affiliation with the USA as security provider, Lithuania's National Security Strategy lists NATO, the EU, the United Nations and the OSCE as the organizations that constitute the framework for Lithuania's international involvement. NATO has the highest priority—when supported by the USA. Any overlap between NATO and the ESDP should be avoided: 'Lithuania will aim to ensure that NATO and EU military structures complement rather than duplicate each other.'<sup>69</sup> The unstable state of transatlantic relations is a major concern and, in a 2004 agreement, Lithuanian political parties promised to engage in improving the transatlantic link.<sup>70</sup> This is not a simple task for a small—but ambitious—European country.

Lithuania perceives itself as being both Nordic and Central European and also as belonging to the Baltic Sea region. Estonia defines itself as a Nordic country. Latvia emphasizes its Baltic roots and the need for cooperation between the three Baltic states. The three countries' respective focuses on different roots and cultural heritages seem to blur the vision of joint interests. They emphasize the same, or nearly the same, priorities and preferences in security policy, as well as the same frustrations. However, when bringing up cooperation or coordination issues they point to how time-consuming trilateral consultations are in relation to the limited value added. They declare their readiness to cooperate on an ad hoc basis—a pragmatic case-by-case approach—but then rush to point out how one of the others has ruined the opportunities for this or that joint project. As a result, they prefer to seek other partners: Estonia is marketing itself as a Nordic country, linking up to Finland; Lithuania turns first to the Nordic countries and then to Poland, but rarely to Estonia or Latvia; Latvia has nowhere to go with its good intentions for Baltic cooperation, so it turns increasingly to the EU.

## VI. The Baltic states, the Nordic region and the European Security and Defence Policy

Eager as they were to join the European Union, the European Security and Defence Policy was not the driving motive for Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania. None of the new Baltic members wished for an EU with hard capabilities: crisis management and soft security were quite enough. The ambiguous description of

<sup>69</sup> 'Accord of the parliamentary parties of the Republic of Lithuania on the defence policy for 2005–2008 aimed at Lithuania's security', Vilnius, 17 Mar. 2004, URL <[http://www.urm.lt/data/4/EF217182750\\_Gynybossusitarimas2004\(2\)EN.htm](http://www.urm.lt/data/4/EF217182750_Gynybossusitarimas2004(2)EN.htm)>, section 3.

<sup>70</sup> Section 1.1 of the Lithuanian accord on defence policy (note 69) states that Lithuania 'will contribute to the strengthening of the transatlantic ties and use its membership of NATO and the EU as the fora offering possibilities of co-ordination of the allies' foreign and security policies, which promote mutual integration, security and stability within as well as outside the Euro-Atlantic community'.



the EU forces' mission—taken from the Western European Union's Petersberg Declaration of 1992 and enshrined in the 1996 Treaty of Amsterdam, then in the 1999 Helsinki documents on the ESDP—was acceptable to the Baltic states. Any evolution of the EU into a security political actor is, moreover, only reluctantly accepted. The Baltic states' participation in European security and defence policy is essentially symbolic, and they will set limits to it if and when they perceive that the ESDP is competing with their NATO commitments. For Baltic security managers, the principal policy goal is to keep the transatlantic link strong. They are therefore particularly alert to anything that could be perceived as efforts to push the USA out of Europe.

This does not mean that they are wary of European security and defence policy per se. In particular, the younger bureaucrats of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are eager to join the ESDP structures. They are excited about participating in building up the policy, rather than just joining in. 'When there is a new structure we want to participate; we do not want to be left out', was a comment in Lithuania.<sup>71</sup> 'It is interesting, challenging and allows us to take an active role; in the ESDP we work to gain credibility in Europe', echoed a speaker in Estonia. The emphasis is placed on participation in decision making and on the chance of acquiring new abilities. One important skill is the art of compromise: 'Only after we became members [of the EU] did we learn how important compromise is in this culture in Europe. We were—and from time to time we still are—frustrated when the decision-making process is slow', admitted a speaker in Tallinn. However, the ESDP decision-making process 'permits other countries to participate and is therefore more advanced and more flexible than NATO's', was a positive view of the EU culture from Latvia. This enthusiasm is impressive, given the workload the EU bureaucracy imposes on such small countries. A foreign diplomat observed: 'Sometimes we call them and ask for their country's position on this or that. Nobody knows the answer, because this particular issue is dealt with by someone who happens to be in Brussels or somewhere else. There is not a sufficient number of people to "back up" in case of absence. So, altogether the workload is enormous for them.'

Two elements of the ESDP were highlighted in interviews with Baltic respondents: the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the battle groups. The decision to create a defence agency emphasized the need to harmonize national efforts in: development of defence capabilities; research into future defence and security needs; coordination of the production and acquisition of armaments; and identifying and implementing policies towards strengthening the EU defence-industrial base.<sup>72</sup> Within this framework, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

<sup>71</sup> In this section, quotations from Baltic observers are, unless otherwise referenced, from Interviews (note 1).

<sup>72</sup> Schmidt, B., 'European capabilities: how many divisions?', ed. N. Gnesotto, *EU Security and Defence Policy: The First Five Years (1999–2004)* (EU Institute of Security Studies: Paris, 2004), URL <<http://www.iss-eu.org/>>, pp. 100–102. See also Lindley-French, J. and Algieri, F., *A European Defence Strategy*, Venusberg Report 2004 (Bertelsmann Foundation: Gütersloh, 2004), URL <<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/>>, pp. 50–55. The EDA's aims are 'developing defence capabilities in the field of crisis management, promoting and enhancing European armaments cooperation, strengthening the European

are joining in the activities to be coordinated by the EDA. Estonia foresees opportunities to use its youthful 'intellectual capital' in the area of defence-related science, technology and research programmes as well as openings for its small-scale defence industry. Both Estonia and Lithuania are also planning to support the EDA with personnel, but Latvia does not foresee its experts working there. 'We have many people working in NATO', was the explanation given.

While the interest in the EDA is significant, Baltic enthusiasm for the EU battle groups is lukewarm. The battle group concept was proposed in order to address one of the shortfalls identified in the Headline Goal process: the lack of an ability to deploy smaller rapid-response elements from the pool of more than 100 000 personnel, 400 combat aircraft and 100 naval vessels contributed by member states to the EU.<sup>73</sup> Africa is envisaged as the most likely area for battle group operations.<sup>74</sup>

When an ESDP initiative risks calling on resources that are also needed to meet NATO commitments, the ESDP is viewed with significant reservations by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This has a strong impact on their attitude towards the battle groups. The first issue is that of complementarity with NATO; the second is possible diversion of resources from NATO; the third is a concern that failure to resolve these first two issues will affect force planning and training for some, resulting in two tiers of participants; and the fourth issue is the likely geographic direction of ESDP interventions, Africa.

In theory, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania express their support for the concept of battle groups: the official attitude is that 'EU Rapid Response Forces are the most important element of the Headline Goal 2010'.<sup>75</sup> However, all three states emphasize their limited resources, and in the same breath point to the 'Berlin Plus' arrangement.<sup>76</sup> Under the principle of a 'single set of forces',<sup>77</sup> the larger part of the EU's most capable troops will be wearing two hats, available for both ESDP and NATO missions. The Baltic states' concern is, however, that the different political imperatives underpinning the NATO and ESDP initiatives

defence industrial and technological base and creating a competitive European defence equipment market'. Council of the European Union, 'Council Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP of 12 July 2004 on the establishment of the European Defence Agency', *Official Journal of the European Union*, vol. L 245, 17 July 2004, URL <<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/JOIndex.do>>, pp. 17–28. See also chapter 10 in this volume.

<sup>73</sup> Schmidt (note 72), pp. 89–102. On battle groups see also chapter 6 in this volume.

<sup>74</sup> EU Institute for Security Studies, *European Defence: A Proposal for a White Paper*, Report of an independent task force (EU Institute of Security Studies: Paris, 2004), URL <<http://www.iss-eu.org/>>, pp. 59–60.

<sup>75</sup> Latvian Ministry of Defence, Personal communication with Kristine Atmante, acting Dean, Baltic Defence College, Tartu, Nov. 2004.

<sup>76</sup> 'Berlin Plus' refers to a package of agreements reached in 2002–2003 between the EU and NATO dealing primarily with the EU's access to NATO planning capabilities but also with other assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations.

<sup>77</sup> EU Institute for Security Studies (note 74).

will lead not to coherent capability development, but to a situation where they themselves are torn between different loyalties.<sup>78</sup>

Although training and equipment for participation in the NATO Response Force and the EU battle groups should be the same—since the ESDP is supposed to adhere to NATO standards and doctrine whenever possible—Baltic security managers foresee the differences that will occur. They argue that, if for no other reason, these differences will occur because ‘the standards might be the same but will not be identical’ when the NATO Response Force has more than 20 000 troops while the EU battle groups each have 1500. The consequent differences in demands to be met by contributors will also affect force interoperability and compliance with NATO standards.

For Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the proximate problem has been to find partners for a battle group formation and decide whether to create a new battle group or to join an existing one. At stake are both the capabilities they can offer and more subjective issues of compatibility. When looking for partners, as Latvia and Lithuania were doing in late 2004, it is important to ensure coordination with NATO, internal coherence, interoperability and a similar mentality. The limited ‘niche’ capabilities offered by each Baltic state must fit into the structure of the battle group in question. The Baltic states are concerned that the principle of a ‘single set of forces’ might be ignored if the training and development of forces and the terms of availability are not coordinated over the long term with NATO. Without proper coordination the bigger countries that can afford to have two sets of forces, one for NATO and another for the ESDP, will choose this option. Some of these countries’ forces will thus be trained to meet the specific needs of the ESDP and others the needs of NATO. At the same time, forces from the smaller countries will need to be trained for both NATO and ESDP purposes, but they will never be adequately adapted to either of them.

Transparency is another principle that is supposed to guide ESDP–NATO cooperation, in order to promote the coherent provision of forces to both. Situations may be envisaged where battle group forces which are also earmarked for the NATO Response Force are urgently required by both institutions, and decisions on where to engage the forces must be coordinated between NATO and ESDP. It is precisely decision making that the Baltic states perceive as the EU’s Achilles heel. ‘It is very difficult to reach any agreement because it seems more important who is going to take orders from whom’, was a comment arising from Baltic frustration on the EU battle groups.

Another problem is that of mentality: ‘Multinational forces look very good on paper. But out there you need to cooperate, to understand each other. Our forces need to accept commanders from another nation.’ It is widely known that the Latvian forces in Iraq did not feel comfortable working under Polish command, and a separation into two different camps was the result. Military leadership by

<sup>78</sup> Interviews (note 1). The problem of follow-up standards and procedures is not limited to the ESDP; it is also frequently discussed within NATO.

the USA is by far Latvia's preferred option: but the USA is not in the ESDP. Meanwhile, for Estonia, one benefit of the ESDP is the possibility of re-entering military cooperation with Finland. Such cooperation was intensive in the first years of Estonia's post-1991 independence, but it declined when Estonia decided to join NATO. Working together with Finland is possible again in ESDP peacekeeping operations. Unlike the two other Baltic states, Estonia seems not to doubt that it belongs with Finland and the other Nordic countries. The Swedish–Finnish battle group, however, is said to have a preference for Swedish speakers. The acceptance of Estonia's participation in this battle group conveyed by the Finnish Government in the very last days of 2004 was conditional on Estonia's 'coming to terms' with Sweden, the group's lead nation.<sup>79</sup> According to Estonian President Arnold Rüütel, defence cooperation between Estonia and Finland—which is continuing through the Nordic battle group—is working well; and this is precisely because of the ESDP.<sup>80</sup> As of October 2005, Estonia's contribution to the Nordic battle group is 25 personnel.<sup>81</sup>

Another nation high on the Baltic states' list of priorities for military cooperation within the ESDP is Denmark. Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian officials choose their words carefully in order to avoid expressing disappointment or imply political pressure, but Finland, Norway, Iceland and Denmark 'are now a bit backwards, after we have joined both the EU and NATO'. Although Denmark is embedded in both NATO and EU structures, it is only able to take part in former NATO ESDP civilian missions. The Danish 'handicap', highlighted by the increasing takeover of missions by the ESDP, has made it necessary for Estonia to revise its long-term defence cooperation strategy. Although most Baltic–Nordic military cooperation still takes place within NATO, the fact that Denmark cannot participate in ESDP military actions is an obstacle to using the experience of joint Danish–Baltic peacekeeping missions dating back to 1995. It was stressed in several interviews that 'to have cooperation experience and to share mentality is the key issue'. If this is true, then cooperation with Finland, Norway and Sweden, and perhaps one day also with Denmark, might ultimately render the battle groups more attractive to the Baltic states.

<sup>79</sup> *Defence Review* (Baltic News Service), no. 50/2003 (15–21 Dec. 2004).

<sup>80</sup> Office of the President of the Republic of Estonia, 'The President of the Republic met with the Defence Committee of the Finnish Eduskunta', Press release, Kadriorg, 14 Oct. 2005, URL <[http://www.president.ee/en/duties/press\\_releases.php?gid=68818](http://www.president.ee/en/duties/press_releases.php?gid=68818)>; and *Defence Review* (Baltic News Service), no. 41/2004 (11–17 Oct. 2005).

<sup>81</sup> Estonia's expected total contribution is 45 personnel. In addition to an approximately 30-strong protection unit, Estonia will send staff officers, logisticians and medics to serve with the battle group. Sweden will contribute an 1100-strong battalion, Finland 180–200 personnel and Norway c. 150 personnel. Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Finland and the Ministry of Defence of the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden Concerning the Principles for the Establishment and Operation of a Multinational Battle Group to be Made Available to the European Union, 23 May 2005 <<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/5108/a/44972>>; and Estonian Ministry of Defence, 'Estonia signed Memorandum of Understanding on EU battle group', Press release no. 36, 23 May 2005, URL <<http://www.kmin.ee/?op=news&id=756>>. See also chapter 6 in this volume.

At the end of 2004 both Latvia and Lithuania decided to ask to join the Polish–German–Slovakian battle group, led by Poland. They did not consult or coordinate with each other beforehand,<sup>82</sup> but in the end they were both accepted by the group. Latvia decided in this context to offer combat support and combat service support units starting in 2007: specific assets provided could include one mine countermeasure vessel with 10 days' readiness; a military police platoon with 30 days' readiness; and an explosive ordnance disposal platoon with 30 days' readiness. Lithuania aimed to provide a substantial contribution (possibly a company-size infantry unit) for the Polish-led battle group, expecting it to be available after 2008.

As well as the Poland-led battle group, Lithuania has considered participation in the Netherlands-led battle group with Finland and Germany. While Poland seems like a natural political and military partner, Lithuania is already engaged with the Netherlands in the NATO Response Force. Cooperation with the same partners in both the battle group and the NATO force has advantages in organizational terms—with simpler legal agreements and decision-making procedures, for example—and also brings significant military benefits in terms of interoperability, training and personnel rotation. In addition, the Netherlands is seen as a good example of a small country with influence in both the EU and NATO. However, Lithuanian–Netherlands discussions on the matter have been affected by the fact that any Lithuanian contribution to the Netherlands-led battle group is not likely to take place before 2010.<sup>83</sup>

The initial geographical focus for the ESDP has been Africa, but Africa seems very far away for some Baltic politicians and even more so for the taxpayers. There is little understanding as to why European countries which consider themselves still relatively poor should engage with the colonies of the 'old Europe'. The Baltic states' own focus is oriented towards the Caucasus and other parts of the CIS; regions with failed or failing states that lie closer to 'their' Europe. Taxpayers are much more willing to pay their dues to NATO than to the ESDP and, if the ESDP is to focus on Africa, this will make matters no easier—not to mention the possible effect of casualties. After many internal discussions about whether and how to present the issue to the electorate, the Baltic elites have chosen the theme of the price of 'solidarity'. 'If we want to be treated as serious partners and rely on support in times of crises, if we want to have influence, we need to make a contribution to the ESDP, too.'

The ESDP is not a provider of hard security for Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania. The refrain in all three capitals is that the new structure, still under development, is 'not able to contribute to the security of our country'. Despite the Baltic states' absorption into the postmodern structures of the European Union

<sup>82</sup> The alleged reason for the lack of coordination was that, because the capabilities offered by the Baltic states would be so similar, they did not expect to be joining the same battle group.

<sup>83</sup> Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union, Brussels, Personal communication with the author, Feb. 2005; and Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, 'Lithuania ready to take an active part in the development of EU Rapid Reaction Force', Press release, 16 Dec. 2004, URL <<http://www.kam.lt/index.php?ItemId=29844>>.

and their increasing adaptation to postmodern national and international threats, the definition of security in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is related to the modern state's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The ESDP is not able, and was never meant to, address such issues.<sup>84</sup> Nor, indeed, do the Baltic states expect or desire such a service from the ESDP. The preferred provider of territorial security for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is NATO, the 'old NATO' with strong backing from the USA. The three Baltic states are not ready to abandon collective defence. The EU's present 'Solidarity Clause' is not quite the same, aimed at addressing terrorist threats, not threats to territorial integrity.

## VII. Conclusions: the Baltic states, the Nordic countries and the EU—closing the gap in discourse?

Russia is the litmus test for the relevance of ESDP to the national security of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. If the ESDP is to be useful for the Baltic states' national security, it must be able to address their major security concern. This requires a more widely shared understanding of Russia within the EU. It also requires courage to admit that the EU objective of achieving democracy in Russia has failed. On the other side, if the Baltic states are to join the ESDP fully they must define their place in Europe and the purpose of their NATO and EU memberships in terms that go beyond hard security cover against the perceived threats from Russia. This requires new decisions on their security priorities: decisions that should not be made by groups of experts but should draw in the electorate through public debate. What needs to be discussed is the relevance of the threats that Russia and its allies can pose to its neighbours, and the ways to address these threats. Russia must be explicitly mentioned, just as the option of building a security community with Russia must be discussed.

Developments in Russia worry many other Western politicians and analysts as well, but they fail to state it publicly—and to act adequately.<sup>85</sup> The conclusions of independent EU and US analyses suggest that EU–Russia relations are 'high on rhetoric, but light on substance'; the dialogue on security is 'wide but thin'; and economic interdependence has not resulted in greater political cooperation.<sup>86</sup> Such analyses conclude that an important element of Russia's foreign policy is to re-subjugate the previous Soviet states,<sup>87</sup> and President Putin

<sup>84</sup> Gnesotto (note 72), p. 74, concludes that the Helsinki Headline Goal made it clear that the EU aimed to acquire capabilities sufficient for the full range of Petersberg tasks: 'On the other hand . . . it was obvious that territorial defence was excluded from those tasks.'

<sup>85</sup> An important exception is the 28 Sep. 2004 open letter signed by 115 prominent European and US politicians and foreign policy experts. 'Open letter to the heads of state and government of the European Union and NATO', *Moscow Times*, 30 Sep. 2004, URL <<http://web.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/09/30/018.html>>.

<sup>86</sup> Lynch, D., 'The Russia–EU partnership and the shared neighbourhood', Report presented to the 'Eastern Europe and Central Asia' Working Group (COEST), The Hague, July 2004, URL <<http://www.iss-eu.org/new/analysis/analy090.html>>, section B.

<sup>87</sup> US National Intelligence Council, 'Russia in the International System', NIC conference report no. 2001-02, 1 June 2001, URL <[http://www.cia.gov/nic/confreports\\_russiainter.html](http://www.cia.gov/nic/confreports_russiainter.html)>.

is moving his country still further away from the 'common values' on which the EU–Russia 'strategic partnership' is supposed to be based. These values were, indeed, never accepted in Russia and were only rarely and vaguely referred to in the joint statements of the EU–Russia summits.<sup>88</sup> Russia's departure from a Western-style democracy should thus constitute a problem for the EU; but the fact that President Putin's policies enhance his domestic popularity reinforces the Baltic states' discomfort. In this context Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are on their guard against patronizing Western reactions to their need for hard security, but they have given up the hope of open discussion on the issue with such major EU powers as France, Germany and Italy. Their hopes are directed towards the other new EU members and the other countries on the fringe of the EU that border on Russia. In this situation, the Nordic countries could play the role of bridge-builders. They have experience of building a security community; they also have a tradition of paying close attention to non-military aspects of security. They could contribute with both.

The EU Common Strategy on Russia expired in 2004 and is to be replaced by four 'common spaces'.<sup>89</sup> Whether the common spaces will prove to be more common to Russia and the EU than were the 'common values' referred to above depends on whether the EU's post-enlargement policy towards Russia will be agreed internally among the member states and consistently implemented by the EU—not, as hitherto, by the EU in one way and the individual member states in bilateral relations in another.<sup>90</sup> In 2004 the EU's membership was enriched with a number of states that combine a vivid interest in positive developments in Russia and the CIS with a first-hand experience of those countries. The lessons of these experiences might be biased, but they are none the less valid and must be taken into consideration. Baltic security managers have too often found their comments on Russia discounted as 'emotions overshadowing analytical skills' or as 'feelings too visceral to make them reliable guides for a policy towards Russia'.<sup>91</sup> In the EU these reactions are perceived as being designed to defend policies that are based on interests rather than values: the European values of democracy, human rights and solidarity. If the EU is not to be split over its approach to Russia, a proper internal dialogue on these matters is badly needed.

<sup>88</sup> For a thorough analysis of the EU–Russia relationship based on summit statements and on Western politicians' comments on Russia see Schuette, R., 'E.U.–Russia relations: interests and values—a European perspective', Carnegie Paper no. 54, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, Dec. 2004, URL <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/>>.

<sup>89</sup> 'Common strategy of the European Union of 4 June 1999 on Russia', *Official Journal of the European Communities*, vol. L 157, 24 June 1999, pp. 1–9, URL <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/ceeca/com\\_strat/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/ceeca/com_strat/)>. The 4 common spaces are: economic; freedom, security, and justice; cooperation in the field of external security; and research, education and culture. The exact content of each 'space' is still being elaborated. EU Directorate General for External Relations, 'EU/Russia: the four "common spaces"', Memo 103, Brussels, 18 Mar. 2005, URL <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/russia/intro/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/russia/intro/)>.

<sup>90</sup> Schuette (note 88).

<sup>91</sup> Interviews (note 1).

The EU is not alone in needing courage on the issue of Russia. Baltic security managers also need to decide whether there is any purpose in avoiding explicit mention of Russia in their security policy guidelines when so many hidden references to it are made in the same documents. How sensible is it to require the same skill from their societies in 2005 that were basic for every newspaper reader in Soviet times: the ability to read between the lines? Even if Russia is not mentioned as a threat, it is still mentioned when internal support for the ESDP and NATO has to be mobilized. The argument about the price of solidarity—‘if we want to get support in time of crisis . . .’—sounds to many in the Baltic states like a reference to the ‘threat from Russia’. Frankly addressing the hard and soft security considerations related to Russia is likely to stir up heated discussions in the Baltic societies, but public debate is paramount in the formulation of security policy.

Having obtained membership of NATO and the EU, the Baltic states now lack a ‘grand target’. After an intense period during which everyone worked together towards the goals of NATO and EU membership, political conflicts were put aside and even personal sacrifices were made in terms of long working hours, a ‘what now?’ attitude pervades. Numerous options are open: working towards greater security for the region through involvement in rephrasing the EU’s neighbourhood strategy is one;<sup>92</sup> working towards better and more integrated homeland security standards in the region could be another. As this volume shows, both are important issues for the Nordic countries as well; they might open the way for further Baltic–Nordic security cooperation that would also include Central Europe. However, the prerequisite is that the Baltic states properly define their place in the ESDP and NATO. The integration process is not possible without head-on discussion of priorities: economic, social, environmental and military. Since the ESDP’s hard capabilities will develop further and the Baltic states will be drawn further into its workings, the assumption that threats travel faster over short distances than long must be scrutinized through public debate. That will naturally lead to discussion of future ESDP operations and their directions: failed or failing states in Africa, or states closer to the Baltic states’ borders in the CIS and the Caucasus. Beyond that, however, is the need for recognition in the respective Baltic societies that national sovereignty is increasingly becoming a chimera. A fully fledged Baltic engagement in the ESDP with backing from the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian publics is not possible without a public debate on the countries’ geo-strategic priorities: conducted both internally and together with the Nordic and other EU partners.

The Baltic perception is that the USA is the partner most open to discussing their hard security fears, to listening and to understanding. Most outside analyses that address Baltic security concerns are prepared by US institutes. The RAND Corporation, as an example, undertook a study on assuring access to key

<sup>92</sup> The European Neighbourhood Policy was first outlined by the European Commission in Mar. 2003. See the website of the European Neighbourhood Policy at URL <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/>>.



strategic regions in time of crisis, including the Baltic states.<sup>93</sup> In one scenario in this study Russia is preparing an invasion of the Baltic states, allegedly to defend its national minorities. The report openly discusses the related—and often very sensitive—themes and issues ranging from the potential impact of the German peace movement to Poland’s poor roads and bridges. The message that the Baltic states’ hard security concerns are being treated by US analysts as something more than ‘anger and suspicion towards their former oppressor’ has a value going far beyond the study’s military conclusion that the Baltic states are not—as many local military experts fear—in danger of being overrun within a few days because of lengthy EU decision making. The Baltic states’ perception that the USA has a more sympathetic approach to them may owe something to a number of other factors. One of them is a congruency of perspectives between the USA and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on certain key issues, such as a preference for interventionist foreign policy and a sceptical attitude towards multilateralism.<sup>94</sup> Finally, there is also the feeling that a relationship with the USA is beneficial for the Baltic states’ security vis-à-vis other European states.<sup>95</sup> Perhaps most important of all, however, is the memory of Western Europe’s passive attitude towards Baltic security needs in the 1990s and of what the Baltic states saw as a European tendency to refer them back to NATO and to the USA as the sole arbiters of their fate.

Although the Baltic states may find it difficult to concentrate on any aspects of security that go beyond the military factor, they do not discount the importance of non-military security. The many references to other aspects of security in their official documents indicate a growing awareness of non-military threats. The example of Latvia and its tendency to turn to the EU for socio-economic support is indicative of developments in the region. It is difficult to envisage the USA being able to assist directly on issues of economic, societal or environmental risks. Although each Baltic country’s threat perception differs slightly from the others and all three differ from other, West European members of the EU, the instruments required to address these threats for Baltic purposes lie within the same range and are in fact available within the EU.

The Nordic countries have earlier impressed the Baltic states, among others, by having the courage to remain faithful to their values;<sup>96</sup> by the attention they have paid to non-military aspects of security; and by the frankness of their public debates. They could continue to be of assistance to the Baltic states

<sup>93</sup> Larson (note 43).

<sup>94</sup> See Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note 9), section 1.2: ‘the ability of international organisations to solve certain security problems has . . . not improved’.

<sup>95</sup> Observations on Poland adapted here to the Baltic states from Zaborowski, M., ‘From America’s protégé to constructive European: Polish security policy in the twenty-first century’, Occasional Paper no. 56, EU Institute of Security Studies, Paris, Dec. 2004, URL <<http://www.iss-eu.org/>>.

<sup>96</sup> Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, then Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, was the driving force behind Western Europe’s support for the Baltic states’ struggle for independence. See also Asmus, R. D., ‘The Atlantic alliance at a new crossroads: what does it mean for Denmark and northern Europe?’, eds P. Carlsen and H. Mouritzen, *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2004* (Danish Institute for International Studies: Copenhagen, 2004), URL <<http://www.diis.dk/sw3668.asp>>, pp. 26–48.

today. The situation has, of course, changed since EU and NATO enlargement in 2004: in some aspects of security cooperation the Nordic countries have been overtaken by the Baltic states, now organizationally embedded in both NATO and EU. The ESDP could, nevertheless, be a route for a revival of Baltic and Baltic–Nordic cooperation. After an enthusiastic period when many joint Baltic defence and security projects were supported by external advisers, the policy distance between Estonia and Lithuania is now endangering the continuation of several of them. The withdrawal of Nordic and other foreign advisers, justified by the argument that the Baltic states are now members of the EU and NATO, also bodes ill for trilateral cooperation projects.<sup>97</sup> The rush towards ‘Baltification’ has ignored the fact that there is no such thing as a Baltic identity and that it takes time to adopt the skills of international and, in particular, regional cooperation, just as it took time for the Baltic states to acquire the skills of EU compromise. Thus, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are in the process of being split by the strong attention they are paying to their different roots and national identities: Nordic, Baltic and Central European, respectively. Should all the Nordic countries decide to engage in NATO and the ESDP, with Denmark abandoning its opt-outs, they might be able to offer a new framework for Baltic involvement in the ESDP’s civilian and military instruments, as well as a framework for security cooperation between the Baltic states themselves. Much of the security-related activities remaining under the umbrella of the EU are supposed in the first instance to take place within a sub-region, between countries bordering each other. The Baltic states’ concern from the period before NATO and EU enlargement that such initiatives might be used as obstacles to and replacements for full-scale membership is now no longer relevant.

Countries cannot move to another place if they dislike their neighbours; but they can re-shape their geo-strategic position by changing their relations with them. Poland has done so in relation to Germany.<sup>98</sup> The Baltic states could achieve the same in relation to Russia. A Baltic–Russian security community sounds far-fetched, but would be much better than the prevailing tensions. Germany and Poland have already gained experience with each other; and Poland’s experience in building security communities with its former foes Germany and Ukraine, and with Lithuania was of key importance for the standing it gained vis-à-vis Western countries in the 1990s especially. Poland is now deeply involved in further building of its security community with Ukraine and has ambitions to be a regional leader. Lithuania, in the same spirit, is maintaining good relations with Russia over—or despite—the Kaliningrad exclave. Germany, meanwhile, continues to shy away from its potential role as a regional player despite numerous calls for it to become involved in the sub-

<sup>97</sup> The projects still active are the Baltic Defence College, the Baltic Battalion, the Baltic Naval Squadron and the Baltic Air Surveillance Network.

<sup>98</sup> Kuzniar, R. (ed.), *Poland’s Security Policy 1989–2000* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar: Warsaw, 2001).

region.<sup>99</sup> The Nordic countries have traditions of avoiding wars with each other, of building regional identity and of contact between their civil societies. The most relevant Nordic 'export product' relevant to the Baltic states' search for identity and security is, as pointed out by Hans Mouritzen, the experience of having constructed and maintained the Nordic security community.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, the role of the Nordic countries in relation to their Baltic neighbours is potentially crucial. The Baltic states already identify themselves as belonging to the Nordic culture, and they are eager to carry on the Nordic tradition of following 'policies aimed to ensure stability and a high standard of living in their own countries while actively providing aid to regions and countries in need of assistance'.<sup>101</sup>

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined the EU and NATO primarily for the same reasons that motivated the founding fathers of the EU: to avoid a repeat of history.<sup>102</sup> For the Baltic states the history is that of 1941–44, when the major powers were making deals over their heads. This is why Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania want to be part of the EU decision-making processes, including those on the ESDP. While taking part in the ESDP, however, they are searching for a way to reconcile the conflict between their perceived need for a US presence in the region and some major EU partners' dislike of having the USA so heavily engaged in European matters. They want to maintain the special relationship with the USA, their guarantor of hard security, and assume that the Nordic countries are sympathetic to this objective. The EU members close to Russia are also assumed to share both the need for a US strategic engagement and a similar approach to developments in Russia and the CIS. The voices of these EU members are expected to become louder as time goes on.

These EU members all certainly have a joint interest in influencing the progress of democracy in Russia and the CIS, and in achieving a situation where they no longer fear Russia and the CIS. There is, however, only a slowly growing recognition of the benefits that these states could gain from cooperating to achieve change in EU policies towards Russia. As suggested by Ronald D. Asmus: 'Having succeeded in integrating the new member countries into the West we wonder what next? Belarus, Ukraine? Well, Russia? Now it is time for the Baltic states, Poland and Denmark to come together and push for democracy, for nation building. It is a huge agenda and Denmark is a small country, but small countries matter.'<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> See, e.g., Ellemann-Jensen, U., 'Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region: new roles and challenges for all players in Europe after the EU enlargement', Speech at the Nordic embassies in Berlin, 23 Sep. 2003, URL <<http://www.bdforum.org/sideindhold.asp?sideid=510&sprog=1>>.

<sup>100</sup> Mouritzen, H., 'Initiating a security community: general theory, history and prospects for Baltic–Russian relations', eds S. Guzzini and D. Jung, *Contemporary Security Analysis and Copenhagen Peace Research* (Routledge: London, 2004), pp. 154–66; and Miles, L., 'The north', eds H. Mouritzen and A. Wivel, *The Geopolitics of Euro-Atlantic Integration* (Routledge: London, 2005), pp. 93–95, 107–10.

<sup>101</sup> Riekstins, M., State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, *Yearbook 2003* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia: Riga, 2004), URL <<http://www.am.gov.lv/en/ministry/>>.

<sup>102</sup> For more on this see Buzan and Wæver (note 12).

<sup>103</sup> Asmus (note 96).

Support for democratic reforms must include more than an offer of a 'special relationship' with Russia and it must demand more than promises and 'Potemkin village' reforms. The building of a security community in the region must in the longer run include Russia and it must be a joint project. International cooperation in the region is paramount. The region's problems, huge as they are for the populations around the Baltic Sea—in the Baltic states, the Nordic countries, Poland and Germany—will be in tough competition for attention with other problems that are much more serious in the broader world perspective. It is not to belittle the importance of the USA's presence in this region for the Baltic states' current security agenda to suggest that in the longer run the USA is likely to find bigger fish to fry or that the Baltic states' long-term strategy should be to find a replacement.<sup>104</sup>

The European Security and Defence Policy is the fruit of a recognition that it is time for Europeans to deal with their own problems and with the problems on their doorstep. It is also time for the Baltic states to participate fully in the ESDP. They must do this not just as dutiful EU members carrying out the tasks assigned to them, but as actors using alliances with each other and with the Nordic countries or Poland in order to make their influence felt on the definitions both of the problems that are to be tackled and of where Europe's 'doorstep' lies, in the CIS or in Africa. They must push for a joint strategy that would enable the projection of security beyond their eastern borders. The potential for extending the region's collective influence is not restricted to the EU. The Danish membership of the UN Security Council (in 2005–2006) is another platform for exercising influence on developments in troubled regions, including Belarus, Ukraine and the southern Caucasus. If the effort to influence developments in Russia fails, all of the EU—particularly Russia's neighbours, and not least the Baltic states and the Nordic countries—will face grave consequences for economic, societal, political and environmental stability.

<sup>104</sup> US National Intelligence Council, 'Mapping the global future', Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project, NIC report 2004-13, Dec. 2004, URL <[http://www.cia.gov/nic/NIC\\_globaltrend2020.html](http://www.cia.gov/nic/NIC_globaltrend2020.html)>.

