

Committee: Disarmament and International Security (GA1)

Issue: Ensuring regional security and stability in the Baltic Sea

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Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Fani Kantzavelos, and I am in the 10th grade at Arsakeia Schools in Psychiko. I am honored to be serving as one of the Co-Chairs of the Disarmament and International Security Committee in the 4th DSTMUN session.

I would like to welcome you all to this year's DSTMUN. During the conference you will be able to debate, collaborate with your fellow delegates, come up with solutions for global problems, and form friendships.

The first topic of this committee focuses on ensuring regional security and stability in the Baltic Sea. This study guide should equip you with the necessary information to understand the topic and form resolutions with constructive solutions. However, you are highly encouraged to conduct independent research as well, since you will be able to have a better grasp on the topic moving forward. The bibliography at the end of the study guide can be a steppingstone for further examination of the issue at hand.

If you have any questions concerning the topic, the committee, or the conference, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at nikantzavelos@gmail.com.

I am looking forward to meeting you all!

Sincerely,

Fani Kantzavelos

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Baltic Sea has always been a place of interest for the countries neighboring it. Since the War of the Second Coalition¹, where the European monarchies, excluding Prussia and Spain, led a war against revolutionary France from 1798-1802, the Baltic Sea has witnessed countless military attacks, resulting in heightened tensions between the states accessing its waters. Especially during the Cold War, Soviet occupation in the Baltic region created many problems concerning the stability and the security of the area. With only one country, Finland, being able to satisfactorily lead negotiations², the situation remained difficult. Post-Cold War times have eliminated a large part of the military threat once present, but the threshold over the Baltic Sea still faces restrictions. Considering the aftermath of the wars that took place in the region, it has been permanently scarred. The military waste in the area, including chemical warfare agents, consists a breach of the Helsinki Convention³, which strives to protect the area. Unfortunately, the relations between the states that comprise the region are complex. Russia, which is the dominant force in the Baltic Sea, overpowers its counterparts by a large margin. The Russian 2014 Crimea Annexation has been the cause of intense concern for Baltic States, which now have plausible doubts for Russia's intentions. As a result, the Coastal States of the Baltic Sea have looked to NATO for military help. The EU has also attempted to protect its member states, but with a more theoretical and long-term approach. In spite of this unfolding of events, Russia remains influential, through propaganda, disinformation campaigns, cyber-attacks, and military practices. Sadly, initiatives to resolve problems in the Baltic Sea have often been taken by some Baltic countries, and not all of them, to no avail. In general, the Baltic Sea remains a troubled region with smoldering conflicts and no solid policy or solutions.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Annexation

"Annexation, a formal act whereby a state proclaims its sovereignty over territory hitherto outside its domain".⁴

¹"War of the Second Coalition.", *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*, www.britannica.com/topic/War-of-the-Second-Coalition.

² Räsänen, Tuomas, and Simo Laakkonen. "Cold War and the Environment: The Role of Finland in International Environmental Politics in the Baltic Sea Region." *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2007, pp. 229–236., doi:10.1579/0044-7447(2007)36[229:cwatet]2.0.co;2.

³ "The Helsinki Convention." *HELCOM*, <https://helcom.fi/about-us/convention/>

⁴ "Annexation." *Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*, www.britannica.com/topic/annexation.

Baltic States

“The independent republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania”.⁵

Baltic Region

The northeastern region of Europe which encloses the Baltic Sea, and consists of the countries of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden.

Baltic Sea Catchment Area

“The Baltic Sea Catchment Area includes the territory of 14 countries. Nine of them border the Baltic Sea (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden), Norway borders only the Danish straits, while the four others (Belarus, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine) are not situated on the Baltic coast. The largest part of the Catchment Area is located in the countries contiguous to the Baltic Sea”.⁶

Coastal States of the Baltic Sea

“The countries of Denmark, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Finland, Russia, Germany, Sweden, Latvia”.⁷

Sea Dumping

“Any deliberate disposal at sea of wastes or other matter from vessels, aircraft, platforms or other man-made structures at sea, and any deliberate disposal at sea of vessels, aircraft, platforms or other man-made structures at sea”.⁸



Figure 1: Map of the Baltic Sea Catchment Area

⁵ “BALTIC STATES: Definition of BALTIC STATES by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com Also Meaning of BALTIC STATES.” *Lexico Dictionaries | English*, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/definition/baltic_states.

⁶ Klemeshev, A. P., et al. “Approaches to the Definition of the Baltic Sea Region.” *Baltic Region*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2017, pp. 4–20., doi:10.5922/2079-8555-2017-4-1.

⁷ “Baltic Sea.” *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/baltic_sea.htm.

⁸ “Sea Dumping.” *European Environment Agency*, 14 Feb. 2017, www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary/eea-glossary/sea-dumping.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cold War: The Baltic Sea and Its Power Structure

Soviet Threat

Soon after the founding of the United Nations (UN), the Cold War broke out, with no direct attacks between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and the United States (US). However, two fronts were formed, the Western and the Eastern front. With the USSR being in charge of the Baltic States and some Coastal States of the Baltic Sea, the Baltic Sea was mostly dominated by the Soviet Union power. Denmark, Sweden, and Finland were not a threat to the USSR, compared to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was. The FRG was the symbol of rivalry between the two powers of the Cold War: the US and the USSR. Consequently, the division of Berlin between the Western and Eastern front was creating a massive problem in Europe. The FRG wouldn't recognize the German Democratic Republic (GDR), resulting in a halt in whatever progress the Baltic Sea was going to see in the years following the end of the war. The US played a major role in keeping its western allies afloat, while Soviet states were suffering economically from sovietization. However, what seemed like just diplomacy between Finland and the two blocs turned out to be a successful convention (the Helsinki Convention). Although it only concerns the environment, it also helps sustain military security and stability in the region, as it prevents the use of chemical munitions in the area in order to protect the local flora and fauna. Unfortunately, there hasn't been major collective progress in the region ever since. From a general scope, Soviet influence deeply affected the puppet states under it and their right to the Baltic Sea.

Baltic Policy/Position

To understand the Baltic "policy" during the Cold War, it is important to reference the Baltic Entente. The Baltic States signed a mutual defense pact in 1934 to fight against Nazi Germany, which threatened them the most at the time. "It also pledged the three countries not only to confer with each other on all foreign-policy matters of mutual concern but also to give each other diplomatic and political aid".⁹ However, once World War II came to an end, they once again found themselves under Soviet rule. Their newfound freedom was gone, and the ten years of validity of the Baltic Entente were never completed. Other countries in the area, such as Poland and the GDR were

⁹ "Baltic Entente." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/event/Baltic-Entente.

countries with different pasts, but not as devastating as those of the Baltic States. After their sovietization, their central governments installed by the USSR controlled the Baltic Sea through central orders. Baltic “policy” was heavily influenced by the USSR, simply meaning that the USSR was through its intense influence on the Baltic states, in control of the activities taking place in the Baltic Sea and the region around it. The Twice Red Banner Baltic Fleet which was part of the Soviet Navy oversaw any possible action in the sea. There were instances where this fleet would ask for ships to raise the Soviet flag, and in case of denial or flee, the ships in question would be captured. The first rupture into this Soviet position in the Baltic Sea was the Helsinki Convention, but the Soviet sphere of influence was still dominating the Baltic Sea after its ratification. The second rupture was the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces (CFE Treaty), which entered into force in 1992, and aimed “to make it more difficult to mount a surprise attack with a large number of mechanised units” (Russia bowed out of the CFE Treaty in 2007).¹⁰ Up until the 1990’s, the USSR was the force on top of the Baltic Sea.

Post-Cold War Ambiance

NATO accession of Baltic Sea Countries

After the USSR split, former Soviet states joined NATO. Poland became a member in 1999, and the Baltic States became members in 2004. The countries under NATO have been able to protect themselves through NATO support and plans. The Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) initiative has seen the most success in the region, seeing as it protects the Eastern European members to a large extent. “Each battle group has a lead nation – the United Kingdom in Estonia, Canada in Latvia, Germany in Lithuania, and the United States in Poland – and there are currently a little under 5,000 combat-ready NATO soldiers in the Baltic Sea region, in addition to the member states’ own troops”.¹¹ NATO presence in the Baltic region has been helpful, but the removal of NATO nuclear weapons has been condemned. NATO memberships pose a huge threat to Russia, which “regards itself as being inferior to NATO as regards conventional weapons”.¹² This is why Russia has focused on expanding and ameliorating its nuclear power force, especially since it left the CFE Treaty because of the sense of inferiority of weapons. NATO, however, has removed its nuclear weapons from the Baltic

¹⁰ Kaljurand, Riina Kaljurand, et al. “Developments in the Security Environment of The Baltic Sea Region up to 2020.” ICDS, International Centre for Defence Studies, Sept. 2012.

¹¹ Pesu, Matti. “Hard Security Dynamics In The Baltic Sea Region From Turbulence To Tense Stability.” Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Jan. 2020, p. 5

¹² Kaljurand, Riina Kaljurand, et al. “Developments in the Security Environment of The Baltic Sea Region up to 2020.” ICDS, International Centre for Defence Studies, Sept. 2012.

region, seeing as its Eastern members have adopted stances against nuclear weapons. This action has been looked down upon but has surprisingly not sparked any incidents between Russia and these NATO members.

Russian policy-Kaliningrad

Ever since the dissolution of the USSR, Russia, the successor state of the union, has been more reserved than its predecessor. This, however, does not mean that Russia has not been provocative in the Baltic region. “Moscow’s means of applying pressure has greatly diversified in recent years and includes a mix of tactics, disinformation and fake news, propaganda, messianic prophecies, Russian capital, organized crime and money hidden deep in certain offshore fiscal paradises that are at the core of Russia’s power that it uses against the Baltics and other countries in Europe”.¹³ Russia has a Baltic fleet, which despite being the weakest fleet in the Russian Navy, it is more than capable of launching a surprise attack on its neighbors. Russia also uses Kaliningrad in its favor, which was not claimed for when the USSR split. Kaliningrad is right between some Coastal States of the Baltic Sea, giving Russia a “second access point” to the Baltic Sea, which is more central. Kaliningrad’s position has been a serious problem for the EU. It divides the EU frontiers, but it also endangers European security. “Several official documents specifically dedicated to Kaliningrad such as the communication of the Commission released in 2001 put the stress on security and on the terrible social and economic situation of the region”.¹⁴ Russia has maintained an assertive stance over the Baltic Sea, but its annexation of Crimea has been the least reserved part of modern Russian policy.



Figure 2: Map of Kaliningrad in Europe

The annexation of Crimea

In February 2014, the crisis of Crimea began. The former president of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich was ousted, and Crimean parliament members were conveying a pro-Russian stance. On February 27th of the same year, Russia annexed Crimea, and by March 18th, Crimea had officially become part of Russia. International opinion was unanimous; this was an invasion of Ukrainian territory. However, what was overlooked was the majority vote of the Crimean people to “unite with Russia”. In the

¹³ Rosu, Cristian. “How Real Is the Russian Threat to the Baltic States?” *New Europe*, 8 Apr. 2021, www.neweurope.eu/article/how-real-is-the-russian-threat-to-the-baltic-states/.

¹⁴ Richard, Yann, et al. “The Russian Exclave of Kaliningrad. Challenges and Limits of Its integration in the Baltic region” *Cybergeo : European Journal of Geography*, CNRS-UMR Géographie-Cités 8504, 8 Apr. 2015, journals.openedition.org/cybergeo/26945?lang=en#tocto2n2.

end, Crimeans were content with the new change, but the Eastern European and international front were not. Instead, NATO took immediate action according to the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), in order to protect its members in the region. Even countries which retain a neutral stance, such as Finland and Sweden, sought after assistance from NATO, in fear of their security. The annexation of Crimea may not involve the Coastal states of the Baltic Sea, but it's an example of an abrupt takeover of land and sea (the Black Sea region), with military force. Sanctions were imposed on Russian and Ukrainian officials, but that did not stop Crimea from remaining a part of the "Fatherland", as many Crimeans have stated in news reports. The problem which arose from the annexation did not concern civilians, but rather the sturdiness of Ukraine's sovereignty. If this happened in a matter of days in the Black Sea, it seems plausible that it can occur in any Coastal state of the Baltic Sea in the same time frame, and the same swiftness. The annexation of Crimea has created uproar in public opinion regarding Russia in the Baltic region, causing the sense of stability there once was to falter.

Conclusion

After having explored the history of the Baltic Sea and the surrounding region, it is safe to say that turmoil seems to be a common threat it faces. However, the precedent, the ruthless action, the aggressive policies, and the heavy military presence all but reenforce stability. The notions of a security dilemma and western countries backing their allies is not foreign to the countries in the region. The dynamics in the area have changed after the Cold War, but that still does not stop Russia from reclaiming its former position in the area. Cyber-attacks carried out just to instill fear are involving other powers, namely China, who is also looking after its interests in the Baltic Sea region. The main goal which needs to be met is an equilibrium between dominance in the Baltic Sea, and rights in the Baltic Sea. It has become clear that the Baltic States are "the states through which both Russia and the United States could extend their influence in the region".¹⁵ What is important, is that the Coastal States of the Baltic Sea and Russia find a sense of actual security and stability, where military and diplomatic tensions are not predominant.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Canada

Canada has shown continuous support to the countries in the Baltic region. Since World War I, Canada has always protected European interests against the

¹⁵ Javed, Muhammad, et al. "Russia's Annexation of Crimea and Security Implications for the Baltic States." *Global Social Sciences Review*, IV, no. III, p. 385., doi:10.31703/gssr.2019(IV-III).48.

common threat of the time, whether it being Germany or later Russia. Canada was the link between NATO and Europe and played a leading role in establishing a Northern-Atlantic foreign policy. Canada currently protects Latvia with military support through the RAP (2014) established by NATO and EFP.¹⁶ Canada “will always prefer to undertake less of an effort than its great-power partners want it to, but not so little as to be eliminated altogether from their strategic decision making”.¹⁷

Estonia

Estonia is a country solely threatened by Russia, as mentioned by the Estonian Information Board: “Our eastern neighbor is the only country that could potentially pose a risk to the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Estonia”¹⁸. Especially during the Cold War, Estonia suffered the consequences of belonging in the Soviet/Russian sphere of influence. Estonia’s national security was compromised for a great period of time, until 1994, when all Russian military forces removed themselves from the country. Nevertheless, they are still threatened by their neighbor, and even more so since the Crimea conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Since Estonia has immediate access to the Baltic Sea, there are national security policies in place. However, Estonia also receives support from NATO with the RAP (2014) and Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP). In general, Estonia is protected, but is highly threatened in its

land area as much as in its sea area.



Figure 3: A Finnish Coastal Defence Ship in the Baltic Sea

Finland

Finland has been involved tremendously in the Baltic Sea area. During the Cold War, Finland successfully managed to tackle an important problem concerning the Baltic Sea: the pollution of environment. Finland having adequate relations with the USSR in the Cold War period was contributory to negotiations that suited both sides. With the Helsinki Convention, the two fronts, Western and Eastern, came to some form of agreement. Despite the fact

¹⁶ Pesu, Matti. “Hard Security Dynamics In The Baltic Sea Region From Turbulence To Tense Stability.” *Finnish Institute of International Affairs*, Jan. 2020, p. 5.

¹⁷ David Haglund and Stéphane Roussel. “Is the Democratic Alliance a Ticket to (Free) Ride? Canada’s ‘Imperial Commitments,’ from the Interwar Period to The Present,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007), p. 1-24.

¹⁸ “International Security and Estonia 2017.” *Estonian Information Board*, February 2017, https://www.valisluureamet.ee/pdf/EIB_public_report_Feb_2017.pdf

that Finland always has a neutral stance, after the increased Russian action in Ukraine in 2014, it sought after external help from NATO, with which it has a Host Nation Agreement. The Baltic Sea waters in reach of Finland are not in danger like other countries, but the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has increased insecurity in the region overall.

Germany

Germany being a country in the Baltic region does not change the fact that its policy doesn't always align in favor of the Baltic States. According to the Rīga Conference Papers of 2017, "Germany's initial reluctance to support a permanent NATO presence in the Baltic States in 2014, following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, continued support for armed separatists in Eastern Ukraine and the generally increasingly aggressive Russian foreign policy, was an echo of this basic tension in German foreign policy". Germany has a defense policy that is present in the Baltic, and it has recently been reaching a stable equilibrium.¹⁹

Latvia

Latvia is a Baltic State which has also faced threats from Russia in the Baltic Sea. Latvia receives military aid from Canada and NATO through the RAP (2014) and EFP respectively. Since tensions rose in Crimea, Latvia has been safer with the help of NATO initiatives. However, Latvia faces economic restraints. Russian action in the Baltic Sea is quite unpredictable, leading to concerns by certain politicians. The EU has been helpful in "being "leverage" in relations with Russia".²⁰ Latvia has a domestic struggle when it comes to the Baltic threat, which underlines the need for a cohesive policy from the Baltic front.

Lithuania

Lithuania, like its fellow Baltic States, has been through a cycle of fighting for, obtaining, losing, and regaining security. Through this cycle, Lithuania has not only faced military threats, but also cyber threats in the forms of attacks and disinformation.



Figure 4: Plan of Deportation of Lithuanian Peoples throughout the Baltic Region by the USSR

¹⁹ S Aaltola, Mika, et al. *Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Realities and Prospects: the Rīga Conference Papers 2017*. Edited by Andris Sprūds and Māris Andžāns, LIIA, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2017.

²⁰ S Aaltola, Mika, et al. *Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Realities and Prospects: the Rīga Conference Papers 2017*. Edited by Andris Sprūds and Māris Andžāns, LIIA, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2017.

Lithuania was active internationally through the League of Nations, but not adequately active regionally. Even countries far from the region have attacked this nation's sovereignty through technological means.²¹ However, Lithuania has adopted an attentive role, with Cyber Security Response Teams²², and cooperation through NATO, with Germany as its lead nation in the RAP (2014) through EFP.

Poland

Poland has undergone sovietization, and since its transition to democracy in 1989, it perceives Russia as its biggest threat to national security. When Poland became a member of NATO, Russian presence in the Baltic Sea region was slightly weakened, but today that isn't the case. Poland has been on its toes ever since its independence, now more than ever with the annexation of Crimea. Poland has added a fifth branch in its military, the Territorial Defense Forces, which has seen promising results in solely enforcing national and collective efforts against threats in the Baltic area. "The Polish Minister of Defense has reviewed all of the major procurement programs, carried out a strategic defense review and plans to change the long-term technical modernization plan of the armed forces according to its results".²³

Russia

Russia is a major force to be reckoned with in the Baltic Sea. Almost all countries with access to the Baltic waters find Russia to be the number one security threat. Through provocative action in its neighboring countries, like violating national airspace and territorial waters, Russia instills the very effect it seeks for: dominance. The Baltic Sea is a grey zone between the Western front and Russia. Therefore, Russia can move swiftly in search of power. As it has already been established, the annexation of Crimea has caused turbulence in the Baltic region, but that has not stopped Russia. Instead, Russia continues its disinformation campaigns in the Baltic States and its exhibitionist military practices in the Baltic region. Russia's goal of creating spheres of influence in Europe depends heavily on its control over the Baltic Sea. This provocative policy is making waves in the upholding of diplomacy, but it has not affected NATO efforts in the region to protect its allies.

²¹ S Aaltola, Mika, et al. *Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Realities and Prospects: the Rīga Conference Papers 2017*. Edited by Andris Sprūds and Māris Andžāns, LIIA, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2017. p. 266.

²² Nikers, Olevs, and Otto Tabuns. "Baltic Security Strategy Report." *Jamestown*, The Jamestown Foundation, 2019, [jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Baltic-Security-Strategy-Report-2019.pdf?x46659](https://www.jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Baltic-Security-Strategy-Report-2019.pdf?x46659).

²³ Aaltola, Mika, et al. *Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Realities and Prospects: the Rīga Conference Papers 2017*. Edited by Andris Sprūds and Māris Andžāns, LIIA, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2017. p. 60.

Sweden

Sweden is a country which has played a definitive role in Baltic diplomacy. In the duration of the Cold War, Sweden worked on negotiations between the USSR and the Western bloc. Although Sweden did not follow the same path as Finland concerning their shared neutralism, Sweden has achieved a lot as a Host Nation in NATO. Sweden and Finland together have been able to become a key factor in Western deterrence. "Finland's and Sweden's role in the area boils down to geography. Neither country can be factored out in a potential collective defense scenario in the region".²⁴ Sweden's diplomatic presence reduces the vague context that the Baltic Sea is always discussed in.

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM)

HELCOM is an organization, established in 1974, in order to protect environmental interests in the Baltic Sea. Although many are inclined to believe that the environment is not tied to security, it is quite the opposite when it comes to the Baltic Sea. The environment of the Baltic Sea has been harmed by military waste, specifically chemical munitions,²⁵ as a result of a former lack of security in the region. Throughout the Cold War, negotiations between the Soviet bloc and the Western bloc were extremely difficult, but HELCOM managed to make a breakthrough. Since 1974, the environment of the Baltic Sea is being taken care of all the member-states (Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden) of HELCOM.

European Union (EU)

The EU has marked steady progress in its efforts to maintain stability in the Baltic Sea and the surrounding area. It has launched the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which has been in effect since 2009. However, the EU and the countries in the Baltic Region still rely heavily on NATO support. NATO is the main non-state actor providing military protection to the countries threatened by Russian tactics. The EU follows a calmer approach when it comes to Baltic tensions, since it tries to maintain relations with Russia. In the future, it is possible that the EU will be able to take Baltic security in its hands completely.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO is the non-state actor which has managed to reduce tensions in the Baltic Region the most. In its beginnings, NATO's only branch to establishing relations

²⁴ Pesu, Matti. "Hard Security Dynamics In The Baltic Sea Region From Turbulence To Tense Stability." *Finnish Institute of International Affairs*, Jan. 2020, p. 6.

²⁵ "Sea-Dumped Chemical Munitions." *HELCOM*, helcom.fi/baltic-sea-trends/hazardous-substances/sea-dumped-chemical-munitions/.

in the Baltic area was through Canada. After the end of World War II and the start of the Cold War, NATO's presence was undeniably evident. NATO had managed to stand on its own two feet, without relying on a state to protect Baltic interests. NATO has diverted a few catastrophic situations, especially after the annexation of Crimea. Its EFP plan has become the backbone of the Baltic military force. However, its success in military force has been overshadowed by the removal of nuclear forces in the countries under the NATO "shield". The Baltic States specifically, have signed and ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and recognised the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Baltic States have taken many measures possible against nuclear weapons, and this has led to NATO removing its nuclear force from the region and the neighboring states. Many have frowned upon this new stance, since it has been evident that Russia holds immense power when it comes to nuclear weapons. However, the only main threat that NATO has been fending off in recent years has been Russia's increased action in the Baltic Sea, and the attacks in Crimea. Overall, NATO is the main organization helping the Baltic Sea remain intact, but tensions between states still exist.

BLOCS EXPECTED

The bloc supporting a joint Baltic policy and cooperation between Baltic states

One of the two possible blocs regarding stability and security in the Baltic Sea is the bloc promoting collaborative efforts between nations accessing the Baltic waters. This bloc endorses joint military training and programs, shared research of military waste in the Baltic Sea, while also keeping confrontations and aggressions in the area at bay. Some countries in this bloc would be the Baltic States, Finland, and/or NATO allies wishing for progress in the Baltic policy.

The bloc supporting military autonomy in the Baltic Sea area/region

This bloc supports the autonomous initiatives of countries in the area protecting their nations' interests. This would mean independent national searches of the waters in their proximity, surveillance of the region, and confrontations in case of any threat. Such policies could be head-to-head with NATO efforts to advocate for diplomacy between countries. Some member states in this bloc would be Russia, China, and their allies.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
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April 2 nd , 1801	A British fleet defeated a Dano-Norwegian fleet near Copenhagen, exhibiting one of the first major naval battles in the Baltic Sea.
February 22 nd , 1918	The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between the Bolshevik government of Russia and Germany, handing over the Baltic States to Germany.
1918-1920	The Baltic War of Liberation which exhibited attacks between the Baltic States and the USSR for the Baltic States' freedom.
1922-1975	The Red-Banner Baltic carried out many military attacks in the Baltic Sea during this span of time causing diplomatic incidents.
September 12 th , 1934	The Baltic Entente was signed by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania against Soviet and Nazi attacks.
April 13 th , 1945	The German steamer Karlsruhe was bombed by Soviet planes and sunk in the Baltic Sea with the loss of hundreds of civilian and military lives. In 2020 Polish divers found the wreckage north of the coastal resort of Ustka. ²⁶
September 6 th , 1991	The USSR recognized the independence of the Baltic States. They became UN member states the same month.
March 29 th , 2004	Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined NATO.
March 15 th , 2016	The EU managed to create a concrete policy concerning fishery in the Baltic Sea. This depicts progress in a

²⁶ "Events related to Baltic Sea." *Timelines*, <http://www.timelinesdb.com/listevents.php>

	strengthened and unified European policy in the Baltic Sea.
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RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (HELCOM)

Otherwise known as the Helsinki Convention, this framework was created to combat the emerging environmental problems caused by industrialization in 1974. It focuses on defining terms, such as dumping, while also preventing actions that lead to the pollution of the Baltic Sea. The original contracting parties of the 1974 Helsinki Convention are Denmark, Finland, the GDR, the FRG, Poland, Sweden, and the USSR. In 1992, the convention was extended to Estonia, the EU, Latvia, and Lithuania. Its terms were also brought up to date with the changes of the time. It entered into force on January 17th, 2000, when all parties had ratified and deposited their ratification to HELCOM. The latest amendment the convention has undergone was on July 1st, 2014.²⁷ Its content remains the same, but more tailored to the times and the problems the Baltic Sea is facing. Although this convention does concern the environment, it prevents its signatories from polluting the Baltic Sea with military waste, especially chemical munitions. It has played an essential role in maintaining some sort of tranquility concerning military force in the Baltic waters.

Enhanced Forward Presence (NATO)

According to NATO, their EFP “is part of the biggest reinforcement of Alliance collective defence in a generation”.²⁸ NATO’s EFP is led by four allies, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and the United States, in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland respectively. It was established at the Warsaw summit of 2016. Other members of the alliance, including Albania and Belgium, contribute to the leading forces present in the Eastern members’ territory. In October 2020, NATO activated a complementary Multinational Division North Headquarters which will become fully operational. NATO has managed to protect its allies in the Baltic Region through this military plan, which clearly conveys NATO’s message, that an attack on an ally is an attack on the whole alliance.

²⁷ “The Helsinki Convention.” *HELCOM*, helcom.fi/about-us/convention/.

²⁸ “Boosting NATO’s Presence in the East and Southeast.” *NATO*, 26 Apr. 2021, 16:46, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

The EUSBSR was approved by the European Commission in 2009. Since then, it has been working towards reaching its three goals, “saving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity”. It involves Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden. But the strategy also welcomes and involves EU neighboring countries, including Russia and Norway. It was the first ever effort to protect the interests of all Coastal States of the Baltic Sea within Europe without external assistance. However, it has not seen much success in the Baltic Region. Its establishment was before the annexation of Crimea; therefore, it would have expectantly protected the prosperity of the region. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and the states involved in the EUSBSR felt unsafe, and sought for non-EU help. The EUSBSR is contributory towards creating an independent European security front, but not yet ready to overtake such responsibility.

Readiness Action Plan (NATO)

The RAP started at the Wales Summit in 2014, and since then has been reassuring the safety of the Eastern European members of NATO. This plan was a result of Russia’s aggression in the East.²⁹ It has implemented assurance and adaptation measures as part of the plan, which protect the members’ interests. The assurance measures include increased military support and evolve under annual review. The adaptation measures fall under the categories of an Enhanced NATO Response Force, a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, NATO force Integration Units, and High-readiness multinational headquarters. Although this plan is very detailed and remains active today, it needed the supplementation of the EFP. RAP acted and acts as a steppingstone for the EFP. Its measures are seen as complementary to those of the EFP, which have more success today.

Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region (UN)

This Agenda was established in 1998, with long-term goals in hopes of sustainability. It covers many aspects that the Baltic region faced and faces, while also pointing out occurrences which could have been preventative towards achieving sustainability in the region. However, many goals that were set for 2030 at the time have become unattainable, notably point 6.3.4 which states “The regional greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 have almost been halved”.³⁰ Obviously, greenhouse gas

²⁹ “Readiness Action Plan.” *NATO*, 23 Mar. 2020, 10:51, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm.

³⁰ “Agenda 21 - Baltic Sea Region.” *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natinfo/action/baltic.htm.

emissions have increased dramatically, which makes this point unrealistic. The Agenda has a Policy Implications section as well, but today there still isn't a form of prosperous sustainability in the region. The main disadvantage of this Agenda is that it sates points which are beneficial towards sustainable development, but they were not iterated in a representative way for the time frame set.

Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT)

BALTBAT was a trilateral cooperation project between the Baltic States which was established in 1995 and was closed in 2003. "The Baltic battalion was a multinational unit trained for UN peacekeeping purposes and established in the former Eastern Bloc".³¹ It was especially successful in the beginning, since it also was tied to NATO. It received praise for paving the way for Baltic efforts, specifically during the first years of its activity. It was the first important project after the Cold War, but due to economic restraints and other national priorities, it was closed.³²

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Joint Military Priority

Each Coastal Baltic State has different concerns concerning their national interests. That is also conveyed through military efforts to combat dangers in the Baltic Sea region. Instead of having differentiated priorities in expanding and perfecting military aspects, there should be a joint military priority. Since the nations in the Baltic region face common threats, a joint military priority can help them prioritize territorial, sea, aerial, and hybrid military defenses and strategies in similar patterns. This initiative would entail training military forces of the Coastal Baltic States to be able to perform certain exercises in all the aforementioned spaces. This joint military priority would help all nations in the region have a certain military standard of a similar caliber, which could be helpful in providing military aid to allies in times of difficulty.

National and Regional Intelligence Fusion Centers

National and regional intelligence fusion centers would support the integration of civil, police, and military analysis capabilities.³³ This would entail interstate

³¹ Saponas, Robertas. "BALTBAT and Development of Baltic Defence Forces." *Baltic Defence Review*, 1999, pp. 56–57.

³² Aaltola, Mika, et al. *Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Realities and Prospects: the Rīga Conference Papers 2017*. Edited by Andris Sprūds and Māris Andžāns, LIIA, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2017. p. 17.

³³ Flanagan, Stephen J., et al. "Deterring Russian Aggression in the Baltic States." *RAND Corporation*, RAND Corporation, 14 Apr. 2019, www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2779.html.

cooperation, to prevent possible attacks from neighboring countries. These national and regional intelligence centers would be placed in areas of interest to each country in question, ensuring fast and efficient responses between the nation and its neighbors. These intelligence centers can also be centralised, through the EU and NATO, to keep track of certain traits of the attacks.

Increased Specialised Training

Increasing specialised training would help the states in the Baltic region fight against hybrid threats and “grey zone” attacks. This training would be able to tackle the problem of on-the-spot management during crises. This training would not only involve military defense, but civilian defense, in order to cover both fronts adequately in unprecedented times.

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