

Preparing for the Future - Naval Warfare 2040

Kiel International Seapower Symposium 2022
Conference Report



Imprint

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Special thanks to Dr. Sebastian Bruns, Head of Center for Maritime Strategy and Security at ISPK 2016-2021.

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Preparing for the Future - Naval Warfare 2040

Kiel International Seapower Symposium 2022



PHOTO: HELWIN SCHARN
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Dear colleague,

Throughout history, this world has been a maritime one with a rich fund of traditions. At the same time, societies have always been driven by curiosity and the will to use science and technological progress to its advance. As academics in the field of maritime security, we are driven by that very same spirit. The Kiel International Seapower Symposium 2022 - or KISS22 - embraced that. We highlighted tradition, as it was the first time since 2019 that we were able to come together in Kiel at the beginning of Kiel Week without any COVID restrictions to conduct an in-person conference. Curiosity was reflected by two new aspects: For the first time, we invited a keynote speaker with hardly any maritime expertise at all! We brought in a dedicated futurologist who provided an enthralling speech that laid out the challenges and opportunities our society will face in the coming decades. This set the scene perfectly for KISS22' overarching topic, "Naval Warfare 2040".

Exploring innovation, for the first time the Kiel International Seapower Symposium was turned into a full two-day event. The established academic, military and strategic maritime security policy conference on day one was followed by a more political "special

focus day" that expanded the scope to the broader security policy issues in the Baltic.

While connected under the KISS umbrella, both days were organizationally separated with ISPK's Center for Maritime Strategy & Security signing responsible for the first day and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for the second part. While the KISS format as a one-day event will remain the same in the future, the 2022 iteration offered a possible point of departure for future conferences.

Organizing and conducting KISS as Europe's dedicated maritime security policy conference as a small independent think tank would be impossible without a highly committed team. First and foremost, I want to thank my colleagues Mr. Henrik Schilling and Ms. Anne Runhaar for their hard work, commitment and accuracy! Dr. Alix Valenti, again, provided a report script "ready for the presses". Finally, my sincere gratitude goes to the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation for supporting KISS22 with a substantial grant and for being such a reliable partner.

Enjoy the read!

Johannes Peters, M.A.
Head of Center for Maritime Strategy & Security at ISPK
Chairman of the Kiel Seapower Series



08:00-09:00

Registration & Welcome Coffee

09:00-09:15

Opening Remarks

- Johannes Peters, *Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University (ISPK)*

09:15-10:15

Panel 1 (Keynote): The World We Might Live In In 2040

- Prof. Dr. Jürgen Krahl, *President OWL University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Lemgo, Germany*
- Chair: Johannes Peters, *ISPK*

10:15-10:45

Coffee Break, Snacks & Networking



10:45-12:15

Panel 2: “The Fundamental Shift of 2022 Between Russia and the West and Implications Between Now and 2040”

- VADM (DEU N) Frank Lenski, *Deputy Chief DEU Navy & Commander of the Fleet and Supporting Forces, Rostock, Germany*
- VADM (GBR N) Keith E. Blount, *CB OBE, COM MARCOM, London*
- VADM (USA N) Eugene “Gene” H. Black, *COM U.S. 6th Fleet, Naples*
- Dr. Jeremy Stöhs, *ISPK non-resident fellow, Graz, Austria*
- Chair: Dr. Alix Valenti

12:15-13:30

Lunch (Buffet) & Networking

13:30-15:00

Panel 3: Does Naval Planning Match Future Requirements?

- CAPT (DEU N) Christoph Mecke, *Branch Head Plans & Policy, German Navy Headquarters, Rostock, Germany*
- CDR (DK N) Anders Puck Nielsen, *Military Analyst, Royal Danish Defence College, Copenhagen*
- Bryan Clark, *Senior Fellow Hudson Institute, Washington D.C.*
- Emma Salisbury, *Birkbeck University, London*
- Chair: Dr. Alix Valenti

15:00-15:30

Coffee Break & Networking Opportunity

15:30-17:00

Panel 4: A Nation’s and an Alliance’s Best and Brightest

- RADM (DEU N) Christian Bock, *Director Training Military Academy of the German Armed Forces, Hamburg, Germany*
- RAD; (PER N) Luis Humberto Del Carpio Azálgara, *COM Peruvian Naval College*
- Bruce B. Stubbs, *Director Navy Strategy and Strategic Concepts OPNAV N722, U.S. Department of Defense, Washington D.C.*
- Dr. Sebastian Bruns, *McCain Fulbright Distinguished Visiting Professor (emerit.) USNA, Annapolis*
- Chair: Dr. Alix Valenti

17:00-18:15

Gin & Tonic Reception

Panel 1: The World We Might Live In In 2040



We are in the year 2040. The world population has grown to a little over 9 billion¹ people and pressure on critical resources continues to mount unabated.

Climate change, food production, water supply, living space, infrastructure and economic development, migration and war, are but a sample of the several challenges that will affect how we see – and live in – the world in 20 years' time.

In a complex and volatile world, what can leadership do to steer humanity toward a more sustainable future?

As evolutions, revolutions and disruptions happen at an exponential rather than linear pace, it will become increasingly difficult to predict their impact on our societies.

While predicting the future is impossible, some present trends provide a rather certain glimpse of the challenges the world will face in a few decades. And there is no denying that, as the world population continues to grow, it will continue to need resources even as their stock is depleting.

In such context, food is likely to become one of the most complex resource to handle. On one hand, it is indispensable for the sustenance of human life. On the other hand, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) found that “31% of human-caused GHG [GreenHouse Gas] emissions originate from the world’s agri-food system.”² Striving to ensure zero hunger while promoting responsible consumption and production – respectively Sustainable Development Goals³ 2 and 12 – to curb climate change will become a significant challenge.

The breadth and depth of technologies and data brought on by the third, perhaps even fourth, industrial revolution might provide some solutions to these challenges. Yet they might also contribute to increasing Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA). As evolutions, revolutions and disruptions happen at an exponential rather than linear pace, it will become increasingly difficult to predict their impact on our societies.

How today and tomorrow’s leaders will make use of exponentially increasing volumes of data to navigate the VUCA world will determine whether the future can be sustainable – and peaceful. To

adapt to faster changes and complex challenges, leadership will need to become agile. It will need to find a way to interconnect arts (creativity), science (education) and craft (experience) to make the most appropriate use of digitalisation, automation and large data volumes. And it will need to rely on interoperability, building strong networks between civil society, universities, industries and the armed forces. Much like tomorrow’s navies in a growingly complex maritime context.



¹ <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/gt2040-home/gt2040-structural-forces/demographics-and-human-development>

² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1105172>

³ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Panel 2: The Fundamental Shift of 2022 Between Russia and the West and Im- plications Between Now and 2040



Source: U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Hannah Kantner

Naval forces, large and small, need to gain a competitive advantage vis-à-vis potential adversaries as well as safeguard and uphold the good order at sea.

In 2021, NATO leadership adopted the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC). Outlining a vision of what the Alliance needs to maintain advantage over its adversaries in the next 20 years, the document is meant to represent a 'North Star' for NATO military forces. In defining an aspirational design for a future functional military instrument, the NWCC demands that it be able to out-think, out-excel, out-fight, out-pace, out-partner and out-last its adversaries.

One year later, as the war in Ukraine unfolds at NATO's doorstep, Panel 2 of KISS22 asked the following question: how have NATO Allies fared in those six guiding principles as they sought to address Russia's invasion of Ukraine? Is the NWCC still relevant in today's world order?

Within the NWCC, out-thinking is seen as the ability to 'anticipate threats and understand the strategic environment.' While the extent to which Allies anticipated Russia's invasion of Ukraine might be up for debate, their ability to understand the strategic environment is not. All panellists agreed that Allied navies showed great flexibility and coordination in adapting to the new threat environment and displaying a united front. Key to this was the well-established communication infrastructure and architecture within NATO, facilitating information sharing and ensuring that everyone could act at the speed of relevance.



Out-excelling is the desire to ‘strive for excellence based on NATO’s unique military ethos and the will to win.’ Panellists expressed no doubt that NATO’s ability to out-excel its adversaries is rooted in the multiple joint exercises carried out every year across the globe. These allow allies to train regularly together, adapting these exercises to each new challenge, technological advance and threat environment. One panellist, however, raised an important caveat: some navies, already overstretched with their deployments, may not have time to regularly exercise. This is the case for Germany, for instance, although the issue is currently being addressed at government level to allow more flexibility.

To out-fight, NATO allies must be able to ‘decisively operate within and across all domains.’ The war in Ukraine has demonstrated that Russia has been struggling to integrate air, maritime and land power; it is still operating too heavily in stovepipes. In contrast, Allies’ ability to out-think and out-excel has greatly facilitated their capacity to out-fight Russia.

The NWCC defines out-pacing as ‘recognising risks, seizing opportunities, deciding and acting faster than any potential adversary.’ An essential part of out-pacing is the ability to procure the latest technologies in order to be able to share critical information, decide and act faster than the adversary. Panellists discussed the fact that while some Allied navies already out-pace adversaries like Russia – e.g. US Navy – others might need a little more time to procure the latest capabilities and systems. There was a general agreement that, as navies worked to speed-up procurement, close coordination and cooperation were key to maintain an out-pacing united front.

Finally, there was no doubt among panellists that NATO significantly out-partners Russia. NATO’s ability to ‘foster and exploit mutually supportive relationships and partnerships’ is already well established: in addition to its 30 members (soon 32), NATO can count on seven partners across the globe¹ and four partnership frameworks.² The strength of such relationships and partnerships is not just the ability to work in concert in different theatres of operations; it is also the ability to count on individual partners to support operations while NATO-wide responses are being set-up.

What transpired quite clearly throughout these conversations on the NWCC is that NATO’s ability to out-think, -excel, -fight, -pace, and -partner its adversaries greatly contributes to its capacity to ‘endure as long as it takes through competition and any conflict situation’ (out-last). While there is, in fact, a need to work on

¹ Afghanistan, Australia, Iraq, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand and Pakistan

² The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Partnership for Peace (PfP), the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)



Allies’ often protracted and convoluted procurement cycles, the culture of partnership, coordination and cooperation that characterises NATO is a strong asset.

Generally speaking, panellists agreed that the NWCC has been holding up well in the face of the Ukraine war. There were, nevertheless, a few concerns regarding the understanding of the NWCC as a ‘North Star’. Navies plan for and request capabilities, but final decisions and budget allocations take place in capital cities and

To out-fight, NATO allies must be able to ‘decisively operate within and across all domains.’

may not always meet the urgency felt at operational level. For instance, the German Zeitenwende – the government’s decision to create a €100 billion defence package – promises to be a great relief for the Germany Navy... but not in the short term. To address the gap between operational needs and government decision-making, one panellist suggested, it might therefore be necessary to shift from a capability-based planning to a threat-based planning approach. Between small and bigger navies, and with some Allied navies out-pacing others, could this be a key element to finding a right balance within NATO?



Panel 3: Does Naval Planning Match Future Requirements?



Source: U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Fyler Wheaton

What would be the best approach to balancing out present constraints, anticipated future requirements and leaving room for the unexpected?

As the first two panels pointed out, planning for the future is a complex feat. It is not just a matter of difficulties in predicting what threats navies will face in the future; it is also about having to content with protracted, complex, and often opaque procurement processes. In such context, what would be the best approach to balancing out present constraints, anticipated future requirements and leaving room for the unexpected?

Delays in procurement processes are nothing new. For hundreds of years navies have been operating ships that were designed years, sometimes decades, prior to their commissioning. These delays are due to political cycles as much as they are the result of complex platforms that can take years to design, refine and outfit. But procurement is not the only challenge navies have to face when seeking to design a force that will stand the test of time – and rapidly shifting threat environments. Panellists highlighted a few initial lessons learnt from the Ukraine conflict that could be leveraged to trigger important transitions in the decision-making processes driving naval planning.

Firstly, after years of planning and designing fleet for overseas deployment, the war in Ukraine has brought the threat environment back, much closer to shore. Not only is the home game back – at least for Europe – but it is also extending across the whole coastal zone as new tactics and weapons reach further afield. Secondly, the conflict has confirmed an important trend that had been emerging in worldwide procurement processes over the past decade: mine warfare is back. The importance of Mine Countermeasures (MCM) capabilities and systems is critical to naval plan-



Source: U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Gray Gibson

ning for the navies of 2040 so as to continue protecting of vital Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) successfully.

To address some of these challenges, a couple of panellists highlighted one practical solution – and one that has been driving naval procurement over the past decades: multimission warships. These platforms are often perceived as an efficient way to channel constrained defence budgets into ships that can (1) address multiple missions across the globe as needed, (2) cost less than the procurement of separate dedicated platforms for each of those missions, and (3) leave room to adapt to future threats.

Yet, for all their strategic and tactical advantages, multimission platforms are only part of the solution to constantly shifting threat environments. As one panellist pointed out, while cheaper than several dedicated platforms, they remain resource intensive – human, financial and time. As multiple hot spots persist or emerge across the globe, it has become evident that seeking to outnumber any adversary despite over-stretched navies is not a sustainable option.

After years of planning and designing fleet for overseas deployment, the war in Ukraine has brought the threat environment back, much closer to shore.

Innovative technologies are often seen as a potential alternative or complement to multimission platforms. Unmanned vehicles for instance – whether aerial (UAV), surface (USV) or underwater (UUV) – are slowly becoming ubiquitous to naval planning. Smaller, more agile, less

Only a full appreciation of all factors affecting decision-making at all levels can lead to better naval planning for 2040.

advances such as fleet wide digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are also gaining traction. Yet their application is currently limited to certain tasks – such as support faster decision-making and more efficient maintenance – due to ethical and cultural barriers. Their integration into naval systems is an important advance, but it should not be done to the detriment of transparency and ethos.

Perhaps one of the most efficient ways to try to find a balance between long-lead times, present threat environments and future requirements is communication. Communication between armed forces and governments, so that the former has a better grasp of

the political stakes at play while the latter develop a more comprehensive understanding of operational needs. Communication also between the governments, defence industry and armed forces to ensure a better understanding of the political dimensions of the industrial base. Only a full appreciation of all the political and operational factors affecting decision-making at all levels can lead to better naval planning for 2040.



Panel 4: A Nation's & an Alliance's Best & Brightest



Source: U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Brandie Nix

As economic, social and political issues challenge the established order more than ever before, what is certain is that Allied navies will need leadership that can foster cooperation, agility and flexibility.

As the first day of KISS22 drew to a close, panellists shared their views on what kind of leadership will be needed to maintain stability and peace in the complex world of 2040. As economic, social and political issues challenge the established order more than ever before, what is certain is that Allied navies will need leadership that can foster cooperation, agility and flexibility. But what is necessary to train tomorrow's leaders?

As the first panellist pointed out, all of warfare is an interaction with an adversary who gets a vote. In practice, this means that, as strategies and tactics shift to the rhythm of political cycles, leaders must be able to adapt in real time to unforeseen events. They must be willing to challenge established norms and methods in order to design the most appropriate responses to emerging threats. Finally, they should also be able to think critically and creatively to solve problems that will potentially fall outside of what they have been taught or have experienced in the past.

History is the ideal starting point to developing such skills. Through an assessment of past strategic leaders' decisions, tomorrow's leaders can learn to read and comprehend the strategic context in which their actions will unfold.

Yet no Allied nation can go it alone, as noted in previous panels. The world's complexity compounded with difficulties in reconcil-



ing strained budgets, long procurement cycles and stretched navies, mean that cooperation and interoperability are critical today more than ever before.

Key to cooperation and interoperability is exchanging. Exchanges among the different branches of the armed forces, so as to move from the depths of specialised knowledge to the breadth of experience and be able to combine the benefits of capabilities across domains. Exchanges between Allied navies as they continue to train together, fostering common practices, as well as spoken and unspoken rules. Exchanges of people between navies, to encourage cultural awareness and understanding through shared languages and experiences. And exchanges across different fields, disseminating knowledge and research through conferences and papers, seeking the feedback necessary to continue developing critical minds.

Finally, leaders of tomorrow should not only know what they need, but they should also be trained in knowing how to ask for it. As one of the panellists pointed out, procurement processes may be long but they are also closely intertwined to political cycles and events, which can bring good surprises – such as the German Zeitenwende. Consequently, as tomorrow’s leaders learn new languages and cultures, they should also learn government language

Leadership is about being able to walk that fine line between military and political strategic thinking.

and culture so as to maximise their chances of getting the capabilities they need.

Ultimately, leadership is about being able to walk that fine line between military and political strategic thinking. It is about knowing

how to build partnerships across cultures, languages and shared experiences. And it is about learning to think outside the box to transcend virtual barriers and achieve efficient and effective cooperation, agility, and interoperability both within and outside the national realm.



Source: U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Benjamin A. Lewis

Strategic Findings



© NATO Photo by Naval Air Crewman (Hans-Joachim) and (Mark) from NATO



The war in Ukraine has revealed that the decades spent training, practicing and strategizing as an Alliance have served their purpose: as NATO jumped into action to form a cohesive and coherent response, individual Allies worked together to provide initial support.

The first day of KISS22 started on the premise that it is difficult – in fact, impossible – to predict what the world of tomorrow will look like. The new war that is currently unfolding in Ukraine, at NATO’s doorstep, is a harsh reminder of this reality. Yet the same war has revealed that the decades spent training, practicing and strategizing as an Alliance have served their purpose: as NATO jumped into action to form a cohesive and coherent response, individual Allies worked together to provide initial support.

Similarly, while panellists regularly brought up the issue of slow – and sometimes rather opaque – procurement processes, presentations and discussions also focused on the positives. They highlighted that Allies are capable of resilience and, perhaps even more importantly, creativity. It may be a while before the operationalisation of new platforms and systems ordered shortly before and after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but in the meantime innovative technologies may foster innovative thinking. Big data, AI, and unmanned systems, for instance, may help bridge the gap and even contribute to creating uncertainty for NATO’s adversaries.

Ultimately, what transpired throughout this first day of interventions and discussions, was very far removed from a sense of helplessness in the face of unpredictable and fast changing threat environments. Rather, there was a general agreement that NATO strategic thinking, such as the NWCC, held up well in the face of war erupting in Ukraine. In fact, it highlighted one of the Alliance’s critical strengths: its unity based on its Allies’ ability to communicate and interoperate. And while procurement processes and strategies are closely linked to political cycles, at times putting constraints on budgets and deployments, this is hardly news for NATO Allied navies: tomorrow’s world may be unpredictable, but NATO’s strength as an interoperable Alliance is – and will remain – a constant feature to rely on.

Content Day 2

Security Politics in the Baltic in a new Age of Confrontation

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High Level Discussion: Security Politics in the Baltic



The invasion of Ukraine, with all the associated tensions it is creating in Western societies, is but one tenet of Putin's strategy to destabilise the West

The days of negotiating with Russia are over. At least as long as Vladimir Putin is in power. His vision, reminiscent of Cold War rhetoric, is simple: us versus them. A strong, united Russia versus a disunited, decadent West. The invasion of Ukraine, with all the associated tensions it is creating in Western societies, is but one tenet of Putin's strategy to destabilise the West. Further North, in the Baltic Sea, issues around gas pipelines and Russian Navy manoeuvres – both overt and covert – seek to further heighten uncertainty and divide Western minds.



As the second day of KISS22 opened on these remarks, one thing was clear: whether in the Baltic region or elsewhere in the world, it is no longer time for NATO Allies and partners to negotiate with Putin. His strongest desire is to stay in power, and he will use all available means to do so, including fostering extreme Russian nationalism while wreaking havoc in Western societies. By bringing war at NATO's doorstep, significantly disrupting supply chains, and by putting pressure on energy prices, his aim is to promote Western discontent to the point of disunity.

Already in this first high-level panel there was a sense that, inadvertently, Putin is playing to NATO's strength: unity is what the Alliance was built on – and for. It has always been clear that, with 90% of world trade transiting through Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), global economic prosperity also depends on navies' ability to protect those routes. Through shared values and a collective approach to maritime security, NATO navies have been contributing to building strong relationships within the Alliance.

By bringing war at NATO's doorstep, Putin's aim is to promote Western discontent to the point of disunity. Just as importantly, over the past decade, the numerous yearly exercises NATO Allies have been participating in have greatly enhanced their interoperability and interchangeability. Mutual capabilities but also common training have fostered a readiness that translates into presence and, consequently, visible deterrence – both in the Baltic Sea and around the globe.

Panellists agreed, in this high-level panel, that NATO navies are ready to prove Putin that disunity is not an option. If the freedom the West has been enjoying thus far comes with a price – tensions around energy prices and supply chains – NATO Allies are ready to leverage shared values, history and vision to protect it.

Panel 1: The Broader Context. Strategic Confrontation in the Baltic Region



Source: U.S. Navy photo by Mass COmmunication Specialist 2nd Class Daniel Baker

Picking up where the high-level panel left off, the key theme throughout the second panel of the day was unity.

It emerged clearly that Putin's actions in Ukraine have successfully rallied initially sceptical Finns and Swedes behind the cause for joining NATO. As these two countries' accession process continues apace, this panel sought to explore what they will bring to the Alliance and how this will contribute to (re)shaping Baltic Sea security.

Finland's journey toward requesting NATO membership actually started at the end of 2021, when Putin openly challenged the Alliance's open-door policy. Though not directly targeted by these remarks – initially aimed at Ukraine – the Finnish government saw in the Russian President's rhetoric a desire to contain NATO's strength and expansion. An immediate neighbour of Russia's, with significant stakes in the Baltic Sea, Finland felt the imminent threat to regional security and stability. So did Sweden.

As such, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the imperative to join the Alliance became evident. Rapidly and unequivocally, popular support for Finland's application grew; shortly after, so did support across the border in Sweden. In May 2022 both countries handed their official letter of application and in June both countries were officially invited to join.

During the panel it became evident that Finland and Sweden have much to contribute to the Alliance. Both countries are strongly



During the panel it became evident that Finland and Sweden have much to contribute to the Alliance.

committed to dedicating nearly 2% of its GDP to defence spending – a milestone that Finland could reach as early as 2023¹. On the capability side, Finland features one of the largest artilleries in Europe and will receive its first F35 fighter jets in 2026, two important elements for interoperability and interchangeability. As for Sweden, its highly advanced submarine force will be an asset for sub-surface Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in the Baltic Sea. Finally, Finland can contribute strongly committed personnel and citizens, a critical asset when seeking to maintain unity in the event of a conflict.

Within the more specific Baltic Sea regional context, these two countries' accession to NATO will be critical for reinforcing the Alliance's Eastern flank. Poland, an important defence player in the region, has already been working hard to that effect, strengthening its capabilities over the past decade. On the maritime front more specifically, in the next few years it will receive new multipurpose frigates, Mine Countermeasure (MCM) vessels and coast defence systems. While these capabilities will greatly contribute to supporting NATO's deterrence policy in the region they will not, however, be sufficient, so the additional support

¹ <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/07/20/how-european-countries-stand-on-2-of-gdp-defence-spending>

from Finland and Sweden is welcome.

Ultimately, Putin inadvertently managed to consolidate NATO's Eastern flank's defence. Throughout the panel participants highlighted once more the fact that freedom does not come for free, there will be a price to pay for defending it. Yet witnessing war's damaging impact at NATO's doorstep has successfully rallied hearts, minds, and capabilities across NATO to push back against Russia. Allowing Russia to claim victory in Ukraine would mean legitimising its aggression, and this is simply not an option.



Source: U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Standing NATO Maritime Group 1

Panel 2: The Northern Dimension of Euro-Atlantic Security



On 3 March 2022, to protest against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, seven permanent members of the Arctic Council announced that they would temporarily “[pause] participation in all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies.”¹

¹ <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-arctic-council-cooperation-following-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/>

With this joint statement, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the US effectively froze all cooperation and discussions with Russia on Arctic governance. Yet as a result of climate change the region is attracting more attention than ever before, including from China. With so many competing strategic interests in the region, does a change in Arctic governance risk resulting in the end of Arctic exceptionalism?

One thing this panel’s participants were all in agreement on is that the Arctic’s importance is going to continue growing significantly in the coming years. This is not just driven by potential tensions around the increasing accessibility of Arctic energy resources, a result of the continuously decreasing ice season. It is also the result of complex regional political trends: around the Arctic, several nations are striving for independence – such as Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Scotland – while post-Brexit negotiations have reignited the potential for instability in Northern Ireland.

The Arctic is also strategic for Russia’s defence strategy. The importance of Russia’s Northern fleet, based in the Arctic, has continued to grow over the past few years, and in January 2021 it became its own military district – now one of four. Just as importantly, the Murmansk base is home to Russia’s submarine-based strategic nuclear second-strike capability. As such, it has developed a layered defence system that enables it to maintain area surveillance and deploy Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities.



Finally, while China is not an Arctic country per se – in fact, far from it – it was nevertheless admitted as an observer to the Council in 2013. Its interests in the region are very clear: it stands to gain considerably from the opening of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) by saving time money when trading with European partners. To this end, China has been planning to develop a Polar Silk Road – a Polar counterpart to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It has also been expanding its space activities in the Arctic. Beyond the launch, in 2020, of a satellite dedicated to monitoring Arctic routes, it has also been partnering with several key Arctic countries – such as Sweden, Iceland, Norway and Finland – to develop space observatories.

The Arctic's importance is going to continue growing significantly in the coming years.

As these tensions and potentially competing interests continue to develop, panellists noted that the world is likely to witness soon the end of 'Arctic exceptionalism'. What was once a stable, peaceful region might well become a new hotspot in the coming years, begging the question of NATO's role in the Arctic.



Thus far, the Alliance has had very little interest in a region it considered peaceful, but the latest developments, including the freezing of relations within the Arctic Council, may well change this. There is no clear definition yet of what NATO's role in the region should be. In fact, during the panel this subject raised more questions from panellists themselves than it offered any one specific answer. Should NATO work on attempting to jeopardise Sino-Russian relations, so as to isolate and weaken Russia in the region? Will Finland and Sweden joining NATO create a Northern flank for the protection of the Alliance against potential Russian actions in the region?

There is no clear definition yet of what NATO's role in the Arctic should be.

Answering these questions is difficult at this point in time. An unstable Arctic region is uncharted territory, and too many interests – security, economic, social – are at stake for a simple solution to address all concerns. What is certain, nevertheless, is that with Sweden and Finland soon part of NATO Russia has never been so lonely – and isolated – in the Arctic.

Panel 3: What Role for Germany in the Broader Baltic Region?



Source: U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Erin Babis

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a wake-up call, not only for the Western world, but for the Baltic region in particular.

Lulled into a false sense of long-lasting security, the invasion of a neighbouring allied country by a former foe jolted Baltic countries back to reality. Germany's Zeitenwende is the most prominent example of such jolt, but it is not the only one; Estonia, for instance, is also looking to step up capability investment and support. As the war in Ukraine gives no sign of waning, what role does Germany envisage for itself within the Baltic Sea region security context?

Since the 1980s, German defence spending had been decreasing steadily and significantly. An important NATO Ally at regional - Baltic region - and international level, it has nevertheless consistently spent since the 1990s far less than 2% of its GDP in defence. Then came Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Only three days after the beginning of the war, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz gave a speech announcing a €100 billion special fund to address the critical capability gaps that had emerged over decades. The speech came to be known as the 'Zeitenwende' - the turn of the century.

With the Zeitenwende, Germany sets a very important ambition for itself: to become NATO's 4th strongest pillar. As noted by panelists, the country's size and economic strength must serve as a strong support base for its partners in north-eastern and central-eastern Europe. The €100 billion fund seeks to elevate Germany's support role beyond that of providing troops to neighbouring Allies; it seeks to close the capability gap so that Germa-



Source: U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Tyler Woodward

ny can also provide air defence and high-tech innovations.

Yet it will take time for the *Zeitenwende* to come to fruition. Committing money is an important step of the process but closing the capability gap will need to account for slow procurement processes and production timeframes. In the shorter term, Germany can already support its neighbours with its Air Force. Capable of delivering range and speed, air power can be deployed rapidly as first respondent. In fact, it already has: only a few hours after Russia's initial attack against Ukraine, Germany responded by deploying its Typhoons to Romania. As such, while it works on implementing its *Zeitenwende*, Germany continues to cooperate with its neighbours' air forces to maintain training, develop skills and continue to show presence. It will not only do so in Europe

– for instance with Slovakia, Lithuania, Estonia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom – but also in the Indo-Pacific region to send the strong signal that it can be active across the world.

With the *Zeitenwende*, Germany sets a very important ambition for itself: to become NATO's 4th strongest pillar.

Germany, of course, is not the only country to have been jolted back to reality with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. For instance, while Estonia may have maintained a certain degree of suspicion with regard to its direct neighbour, Estonians were equally as shocked when the war in Ukraine began to unfold in February. More directly concerned by Russia's action due to the border they share, the Estonian government has also decided to increase its defence spend-

ing by €400 million this year alone. As the government reshuffles and internal security concerns complement international tensions, it is likely that more funds will be allocated shortly to defence and security to address air and naval capability gaps.

There was strong agreement among panellists that NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine was fast and, given the intricacies it can involve, efficient. NATO Allies' reaction to the war is also seen as a sign that, despite having been lulled into a false sense of security for decades, the Alliance is ready to break the status quo. When push comes to shove, Allies are ready to put their money where their mouth is. And while it will be necessary to wait for these new plans to come to fruition, strong partnerships built on regular exercises prove that when emergency strikes, NATO can act quickly.



Strategic Findings

Throughout the second day of KISS22, two key themes emerged very clearly. First, despite Putin's desire to create disunity within NATO, his decision to invade Ukraine inadvertently succeeded in fostering a stronger bond within the Alliance. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Baltic Region. Second, if freedom comes with a price, NATO Allies are ready to defend it leveraging decades of common training and interventions.

As the war in Ukraine continues to unfold at NATO's doorstep, the security context in the Baltic region continues to shift. It is not just a matter of Russia becoming more assertive and building strong regional bastions - such as the strengthening of its Arctic base. It is also about Finland and Sweden swiftly and unequivocally moving past years of reservations to join NATO. As panellists noted throughout the conference, NATO's strength is its unity and with these two new countries joining the Alliance, such unity will grow stronger at NATO's Eastern and Northern flanks.



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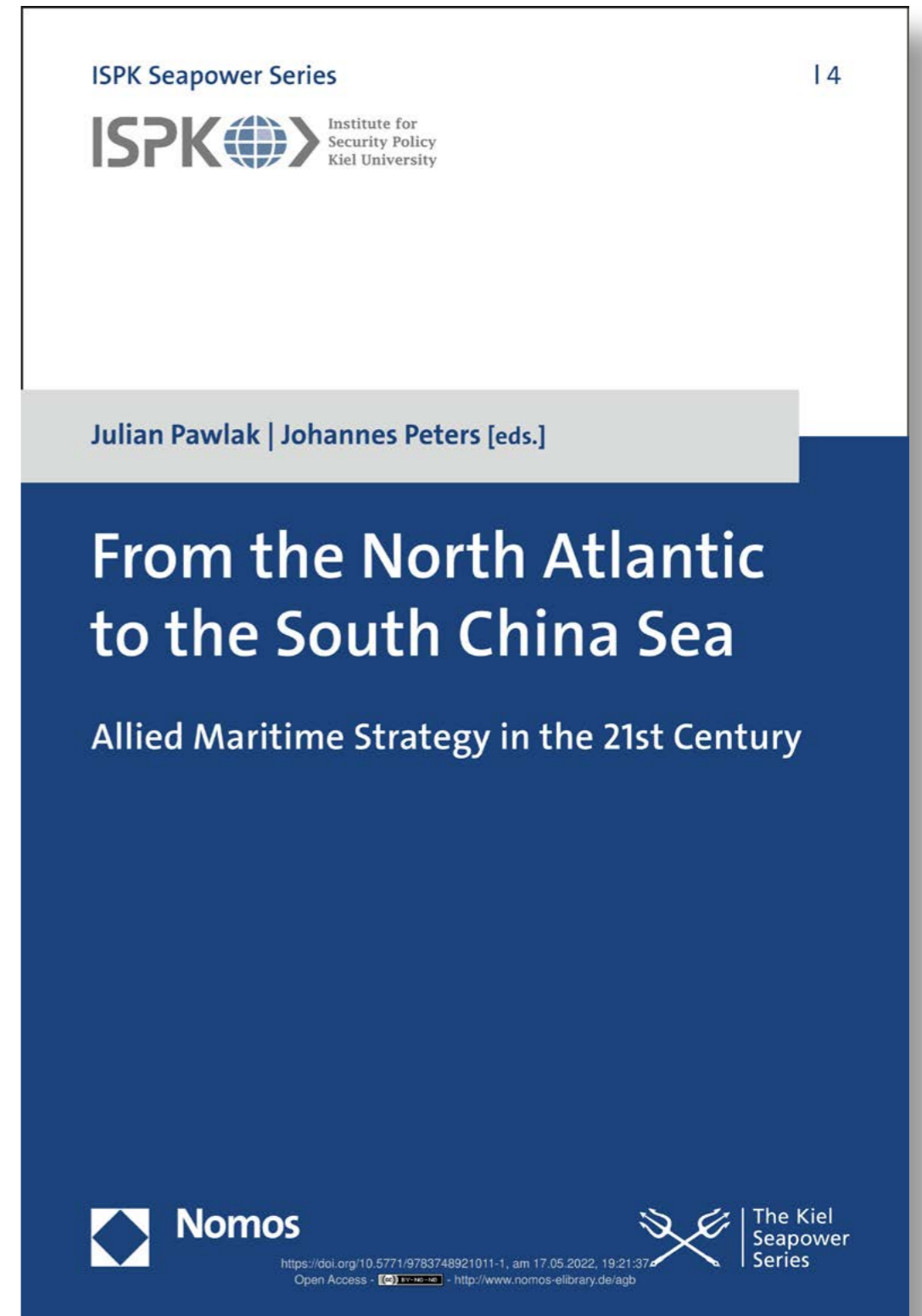


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Building on a series of successful maritime security conferences since 2013, the ISPK has decided to establish a designated international forum to discuss maritime security challenges and the roles and missions of naval forces in the 21st century: The Kiel Seapower Series. All events under this series will offer a forum where experts can openly discuss pressing maritime security issues and thus raise awareness to the opportunities and challenges of seapower in a comprehensive fashion. Sensing that the maritime domain remains an opaque area for policy-makers, scientists, and naval officers alike, the series aims to foster dialogue among maritime professionals from diverse, but strategic backgrounds. Ultimately, the series also seeks to create momentum within the community of interest to reach out to a broader audience and make the case for the importance of seapower and the need for further research and discussion on these matters. The series' logo, a trident and a pen, demonstrates our ambitions. Each event marries academic excellence to carefully articulated naval thought anchored in intellectual excellence. It is driven by the conviction that shared knowledge is empowerment.



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