

Forschung

# Deterrence failure in the Ukraine conflict

Mit einem Exkurs zur Abschreckung im Schweizer Kontext – damals und heute



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## Abstract

Die russische Invasion in die Ukraine 2022 beweist, dass sämtliche militärische Abschreckungsmassnahmen seitens der NATO und der Ukraine, Russland von einer Invasion abzuhalten, vergebens waren. Die NATO hat seit der Annexion der Krim 2014 die konventionelle Abschreckung durch Verstärkung der NATO-Ostflanke erhöht. Die Ukraine hatte nach 2014 Verbesserungen der Streitkräfte vorgenommen. Trotzdem bestanden vor der Invasion noch Mängel, da das ukrainische Militär während Jahrzehnten von der Regierung vernachlässigt wurde. Die Ukraine ist zudem nicht im Besitz von Nuklearwaffen, um strategische Abschre-

ckung zu betreiben oder operative Durchbrüche zu erreichen.

Dieser Aufsatz analysiert die Rolle der nuklearen und konventionellen Abschreckung auf strategischer und operativer Stufe in Bezug auf den Ukraine Konflikt zwischen 2014 und 2022. Zudem wird argumentiert, dass der konventionellen Abschreckung neben der nuklearen Abschreckung eine bedeutende Rolle zukommt, um Kriege zu verhindern. Anhand einer Formel wird aufgezeigt, welche Abschreckungsmassnahmen die Kriegswahrscheinlichkeit im Vorfeld verringern könnten.

**Schlüsselbegriffe** Abschreckung; Strategie; Gelände; NATO; Ukraine Konflikt

**Keywords** deterrence; strategy; terrain; NATO; Ukraine conflict



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## Introduction

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine started along a known fault line in the international system. This was caused by events in both countries as well as the shocks to the system caused by the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the increasing extension of NATO and EU to the east. This conflict is one of many that have been caused by the complicated relationship between sovereign territory and national identity. Separatist demands are often a reflection of this. Russia's takeover of Crimea in 2014 and its invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, were the two most important events in this conflict.<sup>1</sup> From 2014 to 2022, there was a lot of fighting in the Donbas, but it was not as intense as it has been since the Russian invasion started in 2022. The Crimean annexation was a serious violation of international law because it changed the Ukraine's border by force. In the process, Russia's aggressive foreign policy and its desire to change the post-war international order and security architecture came back to the forefront. In light of the Ukraine conflict and in order to figure out how deterrence will work between 2014 and 2022, we cannot just assume that deterrence will work the same way for both Russia and Ukraine. Western countries (NATO) are supporting Ukraine in the conflict against Russia. Historically, in the Russian narrative, NATO is its greatest military threat, which is linked to the West's political orientation. An example is the NATO eastern enlargement. For this reason, the Ukraine conflict cannot be analyzed in isolation and only between Russia and Ukraine. President Putin, for example, said that the formation of a strong military alliance is a direct threat to Russia's safety.<sup>2</sup> Russia sees the war in Ukraine and NATO's indirect involvement in it as a war between the West and Russia.<sup>3</sup> This means that deterrence is important in the Ukraine conflict and that this case study is about both nuclear and conventional deterrence. For the reasons mentioned above, the dissertation analyses deterrence in the NATO-Russia-Ukraine context.

In February 2022, Russia attacked Ukraine from the north, east, and south in a conventional military operation. What at first looked like a blitzkrieg strategy<sup>4</sup> turned into an attrition war<sup>5</sup> over time. The invasion came 8 years after the annexation of Crimea, which was mostly non-violent and caught Ukraine by surprise. Since then, however, the Ukrainian military and Russian «separatists» have been fighting in the Don-

bas. Thus, between 2014 and 2022, NATO and Ukraine took steps to discourage war and deter Russia. These included the NATO enhanced forward presence, the NATO rapid reaction force, and the improvement and strengthening of the Ukrainian armed forces. But the Russian invasion in 2022 obviously showed that deterrence did not work, especially in conventional terms. However, assuming that any deterrence was carried out in a credible manner, it may be stated that Ukraine was unable to directly dissuade the Russian invasion on its own.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, if we look at extended deterrence (indirect deterrence), we can also see that deterrence failed, since NATO was not able to convince Russia not to invade.<sup>7</sup> The dissertation tries to answer the question of to what extent and why deterrence failed in the Ukrainian war between 2014 and 2022. The analysis of deterrence will therefore be limited to its military component.

The results of the research phases will help us learn more about how military deterrence works, especially from the point of view of conventional and nuclear deterrence. In this way, the Ukraine conflict, which has been going on since 2014, can teach us things that could be useful for the military theory of deterrence in both past and future conflicts, especially under which circumstances deterrence can fail or obtain.

The dissertation deliberately refrains from analyzing tactical nuclear weapons and asymmetric warfare, which would be beyond the scope of the research. However, such research could be done as a complement to this dissertation.

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In the first part of the dissertation, I talk about the characteristics of the deterrence theory. It will be explained what deterrence theory is, how it came to be, and what it is meant to do. Also talked about are the purpose of deterrence and its two forms: deterrence by

punishment (nuclear) and deterrence by denial (conventional). Subsequently, the dissertation looks at Russia's and NATO's strategic deterrence concepts to highlight their understanding and pursuing of military deterrence. An analysis of the NATO Rapid Reaction Force and the increased forward presence in the Baltic states is necessary to understand NATO conventional deterrence measures to secure the NATO member states.

In the second phase, the military means of deterrence, such as the military capabilities of Russia, Ukraine, and NATO, will be looked at. These are important for deterrence because they show what each country possesses in military power. The focus of the means of deterrence is on nuclear deterrence at the strategic and conventional deterrence, which why Mearsheimer theory of conventional deterrence is used to analyze the deterrence failure prior February 2022.

In the third phase, the dissertation analyses NATO conventional deterrence measures since the Crimean annexation. A special focus will be placed on the Baltic states and the enhanced forward presence. NATO's conventional deterrence and nuclear deterrence are used as a comparison to deterrence in Ukraine to show the different context. There is also a sidebar on NATO Article 5, which is talked about more in terms of security policy but has to do with defence and the military means of deterrence and is itself a deterrent.

### **Deterrence theory – definition and meaning**

This dissertation posits the following definitions. Since the end of the Second World War, there have been several waves of academic research on the idea of deterrence. It started with spreading fear about the use of nuclear weapons and has continued to evolve to

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Lawrence Freedman argued that deterrence during the Cold War was a nuclear arms race between the two superpowers, while threats today come from a wide range of sources, such as small and large states, non-state actors, or even lone actors, like terrorists.<sup>9</sup> But the conflict in Ukraine, especially the Russian invasion, shows that conventional threats between states have not gone away. With the Ukraine conflict in 2014, which led to the annexation of Crimea by Russia, tensions rose and conventional and nuclear deterrence became more important than they had been since the end of the Cold War, when interstate and nuclear conflicts were seen as probable important than intrastate conflicts.<sup>10</sup> It is important to understand what deterrence means in international relations and where it comes from. Alexander George and Richard Smoke gave the following definition of deterrence:

«Deterrence is just convincing your opponent that the costs and/or risks of a certain action he might take are greater than its benefits.»<sup>11</sup>

The most important part of deterrence is that a possible attacker is afraid of the results of pursuing a military action. Deterrence, which is based on the risks and costs of military action, is most likely to work when an attacker thinks his chances of success are low and the costs will be high.<sup>12</sup> In political and military conflicts, the idea of deterrence has been used for a long time.<sup>13</sup>

The goal is to use warnings and threats of bad things to keep people from getting into fights.<sup>14</sup> In any case, this means that the warning must be taken seriously, that the threats can be carried out in the worst-case scenario, and that the person receiving the message understands the warning. It is also important for the

target to understand the risks of ignoring threats.<sup>15</sup> Deterrence doesn't just happen between state A and state B in a direct manner; it can also involve more than two states in the international system, as was the case with blocs and is still the case today. The Metis study calls this kind of situation «strategic ambiguity», which can lead to extended deterrence.<sup>16</sup> This means that, for example, NATO would not be able to fully protect the Baltic states, especially if the Suwalki gap were closed, so NATO could threaten to take action against Russia elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Russia would not know what this kind of retaliation would look like or where it would happen.<sup>18</sup> This is a very important difference to make, because the goal of extended deterrence is to stop attacks on third parties by threatening retaliation somewhere else. The state of strategic stability is when there is mutual deterrence between two actors who are both sure that they can safely destroy the other in a retaliatory strike (mutual assured destruction). Fear does not just happen on its own. Politics and the military must be used to find the «delicate balance». It has a systemic effect, which means it affects how states get along with each other.

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#### **Deterrence by punishment, deterrence by denial**

There are two ways to stop someone from doing something. In this paper, nuclear deterrence is called «deterrence by punishment», and conventional deterrence is called «deterrence by denial». There are two ways to stop someone from doing something: by threatening to punish them (deterrence by punishment) or by taking away their chances of success (deterrence by denial).<sup>19</sup> In the first case, this means that the goal of state A is to send a clear message to state B that if state B does something or attacks state A, state A will retaliate, which will cause state B to lose important assets. It is different, however, in the second case, in which state A resists state B and thus makes it clear, without a threat of retaliation, that the political

and military goals cannot be achieved by means of an attack.<sup>20</sup> Encouraging the opponent to drop or reconsider his plans for attack by threatening to block offensive action (denial) is just as plausible and in many ways more satisfying than threatening severe pain (punishment).<sup>21</sup> If the military and weapons are strong enough, the person who might attack might think the costs and risks are too high and decide not to do so.

#### **NATO and Russia – Deterrence concepts and understanding**

NATO's deterrence and defence posture is based on a good mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defence capabilities, as well as space and cyber capabilities. So, NATO can show that deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment are existing (with nuclear weapons). However, NATO sees itself as a force pursuing defensive deterrence. The strategic concept of NATO says that it is very unlikely that NATO will ever need to use nuclear weapons.<sup>22</sup> If nuclear weapons were used against NATO, the main point of a fight would change fundamentally. The Alliance is strong enough to make an enemy pay costs that would be too much to bear and far outweigh any benefits they might get.<sup>23</sup> The NATO stresses that it is ready to defend its members which why it increased its presence and still will increase the troops in Europe in the future to send a strong deterrence signal.

Russia, on the other hand, has a comparable theory that refers to the «strategic deterrence concept» and which is a larger notion that is a component of Russia's official doctrine and strategy. The goal of a coordinated system of military and non-military actions is to stop an enemy from using force in a way that would cause or risk causing strategic-scale damage.<sup>24</sup> These actions can be done in order or at the same time. The idea includes both traditional ideas of nuclear deterrence and other types of military force.<sup>25</sup> A combination of containment, deterrence, and coercion is used to stop or keep control of conflicts.<sup>26</sup> The term «strategic deterrence» is often used to describe Russia's «hybrid warfare doctrine» in the West. More specifically, it is Russia's ability to play with nuclear weapons and to force other countries to do what Russia wants.<sup>27</sup> The «strategic deterrence» approach, on the other hand, says that a full-scale military force should only be used as a last resort and when deterrence has not worked.<sup>28</sup> While NATO is deterring defensively, Russia is also do-

ing so offensively. The invasion of Ukraine is certainly a clear deterrent signal to the West that it is ready to achieve its goals offensively with force.

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From a strategic deterrence point of view, President Putin is certainly aware that an attack on a NATO country can end in a world war with the use of nuclear weapons, and the costs and risks for Russia are also very high if there is total destruction. In the case of Ukraine, he will certainly have used the momentum to assert his interest militarily before Ukraine becomes a member of the EU and NATO, since in the context of Ukraine there was not yet a credible deterrent, be it denial or punishment. My argument is that it was difficult for NATO and the EU to credibly deter Russia from launching an invasion against Ukraine in the run-up to the invasion, as Ukraine is neither an EU nor NATO member and thus lacks the legal basis, making direct conventional deterrence by NATO impossible. In short, according to Russia's «offensive» strategic deterrence, it has occupied the Crimean peninsula, instigated a separatist conflict in the Donbas region of Ukraine, and deployed a potent land force along the whole Russia-Ukraine border. In addition, Russia followed a nuclear threatening rhetoric. All those Russian actions were clear signs of offensive deterrence measures towards the West and the Ukraine.

Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, there have been repeated exercises on the borders with Russia, raising a military disposition and also, despite its ambiguity, sending a deterrence signal to Ukraine and the West, along with nuclear threat rhetoric from Russia. Last but not least, such a concentration of troops by Russian forces on the Ukrainian border led to an invasion on several fronts. This was clear evidence of Russia's credible conventional deterrence towards Ukraine and the West that it credibly threatened and now intends

to enforce its interests by force. The credibility of deterrence begins to suffer when Russia would mass its troops on the border over and over again to diplomatically negotiate political or economic solutions, then withdraw the troops if the outcome of the negotiations is negative. This can work out a few times, but at some point the modus operandi is seen through by the other actors, which can lead to the fact that solutions can no longer be found so easily diplomatically. For this reason, the danger increases massively with each additional time such a concentration of troops occurs, especially when tensions are present, that it can lead to an act of violence, as is now the case with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. If such conventional deterrence signals are disregarded without mounting a credible counter-deterrence, the conflict by the use of force is inevitable in the long run. Such deterrence signals are strengthened when it is used by rulers like President Putin and his ex-KGB supporters, who see the enemy and a danger to Russia everywhere and advocate fighting and militarisation. President Putin was quoted as telling other nations in August 2014 that «it's best not to mess with us» and to keep in mind that «Russia is one of the top nuclear powers».<sup>29</sup> Such statements are a strong deterrent signal and must be taken seriously, which is why Russia under President Putin must not be cornered aimlessly and without strategy. During the Crimean crisis, Russia also questioned the independence of the Baltic states, committed violations of NATO airspace, sent a submarine into Swedish waters, threatened Denmark and the Baltic states with nuclear weapons and conducted military exercises.<sup>30</sup>

### **Military capabilities**

Since 2014, the Global Fire Power Index has ranked Russia's military as the second strongest in the world. Ukraine, on the other hand, has never ranked higher than 21st. From 2016 to 2020, they weren't even one of the top 25 strongest armies.<sup>31</sup> Several things have slowed down the process of making changes. At first, Ukraine was in a very weak position. When in 2014 the annexation of the Crimea took place, it was clear that Ukraine was not at all ready. The Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) did not have enough people, equipment, or training to stop a Russian attack. Aside from a few weapons and ammunition, most of which were left over from the Soviet era, it had no logistic stockpiles. At first, there was not much of a budget for the war. The command and control sys-

tem was not operational.<sup>32</sup> Even though the military has been given more attention in the last seven years, it has been ignored for decades. So, the UAF still has a number of strategic weak-

nesses that keep coming back. Because of the country's basic economic situation, financial means are tight. Ukraine has had to put off buying a lot of important things, not because they do not want to, but because they do not have enough financial means to do so.<sup>33</sup> Russia, on the other hand, has seen an improvement in its military since the Georgian War of 2008. This is because Russia decided to reform and update its military after that war. The goal was to get it ready for war in the 21st century, especially in areas where it was weakest, such as coordination, command and control, technology and weapons.<sup>34</sup> As a result of the reforms, the Battalion Tactical Battle Groups were created (BTG). It is a combined-arms unit that lets the commander use the capabilities of the combined arms on his own, based on what he needs to do to accomplish the mission (tanks, artillery, airborne and so on). The BTGs can do deep raids, encirclement actions, and flanking manoeuvres, which require them to be a highly agile combat unit that can be sent out quickly and has a clear mission. BTGs that are so quick to move and set up can be dangerous for Russia's neighbours because they have less time to respond to a potential attack by a BTG.<sup>35</sup> At least 125 of the army's 168 BTGs, which are its fighting units, were brought together for the Ukraine operation.<sup>36</sup>

### **Nuclear deterrence**

At the level of nuclear weapons, there is a chance that terrible damage could happen quickly. The paradox of nuclear deterrence is that you have such weapons to prevent anyone from using them. Strategically, nuclear deterrence is not present in the Ukraine conflict because Ukraine does not have nuclear weapons and could not use a nuclear weapon to retaliate or deter. On the Russian side, nuclear weapons could be used as a form of blackmail to achieve political or military victories. This means that the two countries do not directly deter each other in a nuclear way, which leads to strategic instability. Should Russia use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, they would have to expect consequences from NATO. The risks for Rus-

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sia are high. At the moment, nuclear deterrence is the only way to stop the Ukraine war from getting worse, since no other weapons of mass destruction have been used so far. But

since the war is still going on, this can only be seen as a partial victory. After the conflict is over or if there is a cease-fire, a serious look at how plausible the idea of nuclear deterrence seemed can be made. This does not mean, though, that the war will get worse if nuclear weapons are used to «de-escalate» it, as the Russians say. However, Russia might think that it cannot be attacked conventionally by other countries because it has a big nuclear arsenal and can use it both strategically to deter or retaliate, or use nukes during a military operation in an operational or tactical context. This means that, with these weapons as «back-up», Russia could fight conventional wars, like the one in Ukraine, without having to worry about being attacked and losing militarily within its own borders. Since nuclear weapons were invented, no nuclear power has ever been attacked militarily by another state, putting its existence in danger.<sup>37</sup> Since 2014, when Russia took over Crimea, it would have known that the nuclear deterrent in the Ukrainian conflict would only exist on a strategic level between NATO and Russia. This could be seen as bad for Ukraine. So, you could say that there has not been mutual nuclear deterrence between Russia and Ukraine since the start of the Ukrainian conflict. But if it is attacked with a nuclear weapon, Ukraine has no choice but to wait and hope for a NATO response. Also, it should be said that a nuclear attack in Ukraine would not be in Russia's best interest because a whole economy of interest could be destroyed and the radioactivity could become a threat to Russia because Ukraine is their neighbouring country.

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However, the question is what NATO would actually do or what the consequences would be if nuclear weapons were used on its territory. The paradoxical thing about strategic nuclear weapons is that they are used to make nuclear deterrence more stable. But what happens when Russia actually uses nuclear weapons against NATO or Ukraine? No one can say for sure how to answer this question, but it is clear that both the risks and costs would be very high for the nuclear aggressor. This would, of course, hurt their credibility a lot in the international community in addition to the immense damage that such weapons cause. Russia's military planners are not likely to take the risk of a nuclear strike, at least not against a NATO member, if they have not already been attacked by a NATO member. Since nuclear weapons are to be avoided and are not intended for use but for deterrence, conventional deterrence is gaining in importance. Because of this, and this is one of the most important points, conventional warfare under a «nuclear» umbrella is even more important.

### Conventional deterrence

On a conventional battlefield, the cost is based on how many soldiers die, how much equipment is lost or damaged, how much damage is done to civilians, and how much it costs to organize, deploy, and maintain the forces. At the conventional level, cost is a major concern, but it is not as important as it is at the nuclear level because it is not possible to completely destroy a civilization in a matter of days or even hours. Because a conventional battle lasts longer, a country has more time to prepare for the number of casualties to rise. At the end of a fight, a country may agree to take losses that it would have thought were too high at the beginning. A possible attacker should know that using the military to stop an attack require high costs.<sup>38</sup> History proves without a doubt that, in the right situations, decision-makers are willing to accept the costs of conventional war. One argument is that losing your life while doing official duties in the military is a known risk. More importantly, the costs of a traditional war can rise slowly and can be hard to predict.<sup>39</sup> But there are more physical ways to measure how good a denial is. Calculating the amount of military effort needed to hold a part of territory is not an exact science, but it is still easier than trying to figure out how possible retaliation would affect the enemy's decisions.<sup>40</sup> Freedman says that this type of

deterrence gives the opponent a better chance if they keep going anyway.<sup>41</sup> Realizing that nuclear war costs a lot means that conventional deterrence is more important when a country can solve a conflict quickly and successfully to keep costs low. Costs would go up if there was a long war, which is not what the states want. Because of this, we can say that costs and success are connected.<sup>42</sup> So, you could say that deterrence does not work when the aggressor thinks he or she can win quickly with the tools they have. It would not make sense for someone to start a war if they thought they would lose.<sup>43</sup> Since Russia's military reforms in 2008, the Russian military has become more modern and better. The Georgian conflict in 2008, in which the Russian armed forces showed they were not as good as they said they were, sparked the reforms. So, even though Russia's military was weaker after the Soviet Union broke up, it was once again a serious player on the international stage. Due to Russia's large nuclear arsenal, nuclear deterrence was very important and stayed that way even after the end of the Cold War. Conventional deterrence also gained importance through modernization. NATO's expansion to the east and the growing interest of ex-Soviet states in Western policy, or «near abroad» as Russia's foreign policy calls it, made Russia want to keep its influence and send a message to neighbouring countries and NATO/EU that it was ready to defend itself. By modernizing its armed forces and increase its conventional deterrence capability, which was not the case in the 1990s.

John Mearsheimer claimed that it is essential to understand the importance and under which circumstances deterrence may fail or obtain. Mearsheimer thought that conventional deterrence is directly related to military strategy, or how a force plans to fight on the battlefield and reach its goals.<sup>44</sup> The area of operation and the defense also plays a role, as we will see later. Mearsheimer's theory<sup>45</sup> claims that for a credible conventional deterrence to work, the forces of the states involved should be about the same size, which is the reason why Russia and Ukraine's military capabilities were analyzed. If they do not have similar capabilities, a country that is attacked may quickly give up or switch to asymmetric warfare to stop the attack in a different or improvised way. However, to do this, the civilian population needs to be strong and supportive. When it comes to conventional deterrence, the Ukraine conflict can be analyzed by the following two strate-

gies.<sup>46</sup> First, there was the blitzkrieg strategy and second, the attrition strategy. When the aggressor wants to beat the opponent decisively, it may choose one of these two strategies. In the modern battlefield, the blitzkrieg strategy is the best way to win quickly and cheaply. Thus, deterrence is not likely to work if a possible attacker thinks he can do a successful blitzkrieg. For example, during the first phase of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the Russian ground forces advanced quickly, rapidly gained operational depth, and tried to make a decision quickly, before they were stopped by the Ukraine's military. This makes it seem likely that Russia wanted to use the blitzkrieg strategy, for a quick victory. Because Russia decided that it can use successful this strategy, we may assume that deterrence failed in this case, which led to the invasion of Ukraine and multiple fronts. It is likely that Russia did not give Ukraine's military enough credit, and they didn't think Ukraine would be able to stop an aggressive deep thrust in time, which is what the blitzkrieg strategy called for. At the beginning of the invasion, Russia sent out 125 of its 168 Battalion Tactical Groups (BTGs) to make a quick, effective ground offensive.<sup>47</sup> But a possible attacker needs to think not only about his own skills, but also those of the defender and the terrain, as we will see in the next section.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, the attrition strategy might not lead to a clear victory and can only guarantee, at best, a delayed victory that will cost a lot of financial means, equipment and human life loss. When a possible attacker thinks of war as a series of set-piece battles, this makes them much less likely to attack.<sup>49</sup> Deterrence is more likely to work if a possible attacker thinks he can only win decisively with an attrition strategy, rather than if he thinks he can launch a blitzkrieg that will win. Keep in mind that the attacker can use his forces according to the rules of an attrition strategy and still win quickly and decisively if there is a clear imbalance in the number of forces on each side.<sup>50</sup> But, and this is very important, what happens on the battlefield depends on what both the attacker and the defender do. If the blitzkrieg does not go as planned, it could lead to a war of attrition, or that could even be the plan from the start.<sup>51</sup> When the political consequences of not going to war are so bad, a

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country may choose to use a risky or expensive military strategy or plan.<sup>52</sup> My argument is that Russia was willing to take the risk of switching to a war of attrition if a blitzkrieg did not work. Before the invasion, everything pointed toward Russia being able to use the attrition strategy to overpower the enemy with a lot of firepower and push it back step by step. Political risks, like Ukraine joining NATO or the EU, were definitely more important than avoiding a war of attrition in the worst case if a blitzkrieg strategy was not successful. It is generally agreed that in set-piece battles the offence suffers greater losses than the defence. So, the attacker must think that he has enough soldiers and equipment to make up for his heavier losses. This suggests that the size of the opposing forces has a lot to do with who wins in a war of attrition. Even though offence and defence lose people and things at different rates, the side with more people and more resources will win in the end. Due to the huge difference in strength between the two armies, it is likely that Ukraine never had a credible deterrent. Also, unlike Russia, Ukraine did not have the same number of nuclear or conventional nuclear weapons as Russia. The only real chance was an effective defence plan, asymmetric warfare in the first phase of the invasion, and the best use of space and time, which can be done with good leadership and intelligence. It is hard to say for sure if Russia would have ever attacked Ukraine if it had been able to stop it in a credible way, but it would have changed how Russia thought about the costs and risks. But if we assume that any deterrence (by denial) was done in a credible way, we can say that Ukraine was not able to stop Russia from invading in the direct sense.<sup>53</sup> But if we look at extended deterrence, we can also see that deterrence failed, since neither NATO on a military way nor the western states in a political way were able to convince Russia not to invade.<sup>54</sup> However, Russia's cost and risk analysis would have been different if NATO had promised Ukraine this level of military support ahead of time, as it is doing now during the conflict, and if NATO had made this clear in the information domain. However, I focused the military factors that play a role in decisions made during war. Furthermore, and this is an extremely crucial point, conventional deterrence is

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founded on a wider relationship. Military considerations must be taken into account with the anticipated benefits. «A determining aspect of relations with NATO remains the fact that plans to extend the alliance's military infrastructure to Russia's borders, and attempts to endow NATO with global functions that go counter to norms of international law, are unacceptable to Russia.»<sup>55</sup> After all, the idea of deterrence does not really work if the attacker knows what will happen, because military concerns could not stop the attack.<sup>56</sup> But a possible attacker has to think about not only his own skills, but also the skills of the defender and the terrain where the battle will take place.<sup>57</sup> When it comes to conventional deterrence, terrain is just as important as strategy and military power.

#### **Defence and terrain – Relevance for conventional deterrence**

As we have stated before, success depends on more than just how effective the attacker is (independently if he uses an attrition or rather a blitzkrieg strategy). The terrain and the abilities of the defence are two things that the attacker has no control over but that are very important to the success of a blitzkrieg and less for an attrition strategy. Even though the attacker might have a big advantage in the number of forces available for the key breakthrough battles, he will not be able to line up all of his forces along the front because there will not be enough room. One part will have to be placed in rear echelons, behind the forces that directly engage the defender. If they are behind the front lines, they will not have much of an effect on the battle directly, so the defender will be in the advantageous position of being able to fight the attacker's forces one by one.<sup>58</sup> The defence also needs to think about the force-to-space ratio. That means both the size of the defender and the size of the front they have to defend must be taken into account. The two things affect both the de-

fender's ability to stop any breakthroughs and the attacker's chance of doing so.<sup>59</sup> Part of the reason, why an invasion of Ukraine wasn't stopped, was because Ukraine's military was not as strong as Russia's, and the country's terrain was not deterrent enough, like it would be in the mountains, where the enemy is not able to unfold in order to execute an operation. The goal of the defender should always be to turn the enemy's blitzkrieg strategy into a war of attrition, so that his costs keep going up and, at some point, he gives up and goes back to where he was before to achieve the status quo ante. But this is only true if the two sides are about equally strong in military or if the terrain and strategy are set up to stop the attrition strategy. If the attacker can also use attrition and sheer numbers to slowly push back the defender, it would not be smart to force the attacker into an attrition war.

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Ukraine, with a border length of 1,944 km, shares the largest western border with Russia. Belarus, with a border length of 1,312 km, is considered friendly to Russia, and Finland, with a border length of 1,309 km, has been considered neutral before the Russian invasion of 2022, but is now trying to join NATO.<sup>60</sup> In Ukraine, the land is mostly flat and partly forested, especially in the north, east, and south. The rivers, which must be crossed, are by far the biggest challenges. Size is also a decisive factor, especially when it comes to logistics. In terms of deterrence, this terrain does not play an essential part, because its size means that the military can operate over a large area with the same amount of force. A natural channel would definitely help Ukraine become a more temporary heavyweight with a smaller army and fewer soldiers than the attacking army, which in this case is Russia. Russia was

convinced before the invasion that the war could be won by a blitzkrieg strategy or, at the very least, by the steamroller of artillery through attrition strategy. This was because Russia had a lot of military equipment like tanks or artillery and could fight war on the move. In the Baltic, things look different than in Ukraine. When we look at the Baltic's landscape, we see the following. The Estonian capital, Tallinn, is on the coast and only 200 km from the Russian border. This would be much easier for mechanized units, since attacks can come from different directions and push the defenders back to the coast, where the attacker can surround them. The same is true for Riga, which is the capital of Latvia and is only 320 km from the Russian border. In both cases, there is no operational depth, which is an advantage for the attacker, but bad for the defender because the force-to-space ratio is his main geographical disadvantage.

#### **NATO deterrence measures since 2014**

The aim of this section is to explain what NATO has done since the Ukraine conflict and the Crimean annexation in 2014 to deter or counter Russia's aggressive behaviour, especially toward NATO members and especially the Baltic States, which are on Russia's border and are especially vulnerable because of the geostrategic situation. NATO has developed the enhanced forward presence, which was founded by NATO member states after the Crimean annexation and the steadily growing instability in Ukraine. This purpose was to deter Russia in a conventional way.<sup>61</sup> At the Wales Summit in 2014, NATO member states decided to set up the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) to respond quickly to changes in the security environment and threats on NATO's borders.<sup>62</sup> It was also made clear that NATO is not directly taking part in the conflict in Ukraine. At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, allies made more decisions based on the RAP to improve NATO's ability to defend itself and deter attacks, as well as to help project stability and improve security outside of Alliance territory.<sup>63</sup> At a meeting on October 26, 2016, Allied defence ministers confirmed that troops from Albania, Italy, Poland, and Slovenia will join the Canadian-led battlegroup in Latvia. Troops from Belgium, Croatia, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway will join the German-led battlegroup in Lithuania. Troops from Denmark and France will join the UK-led battlegroup in Estonia. Troops from the US will join the US-led battalion. Later, Spain made

it clear that it would be part of the Latvian battlegroup. Donations will be made voluntarily, in a way that will last, and on a regular basis.<sup>64</sup> Since 2014, when it strengthened and spread its forces on the eastern flank, NATO has sent Russia a much stronger message that it is a threat. On February 10, 2022, which was before Russia invaded Ukraine (although Russia already had troops in the north, south, and east of Ukraine), NATO released fact sheets and maps about the NATO enhanced forward presence. Each member state had clear rules about how the battlegroups were put together and how many soldiers were in each one.<sup>65</sup> The mixing of such formations sends a clear political deterrent signal, namely that an attack is not only against a member of NATO, but directly against the Alliance. When Russia attacks a NATO member state, its troops are not only fighting against soldiers of that country, but directly against soldiers of other NATO countries as well. The exact military force information sends a clear signal of conventional deterrence by letting adversaries know, how the military force is composed and what the capabilities are. But it provides also precise number that an adversary can use to plan an attack on a NATO state and calculating its costs and risks. Because of this, giving out such detailed information about the composition and number of formations is both a deterrent and a way for the other side to plan an attack by making an exact calculation of the number of formations based on factors like the chosen military strategy and the terrain. Russia is aware that there is always a chance that NATO could send more troops to the eastern flank. NATO's quick reinforcement strategy makes sure that, if needed, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), the larger NATO Response Force, more high-readiness forces from the Allies, and NATO's heavier follow-on forces will all help out the forward presence forces.<sup>66</sup> Secretary General Stoltenberg told the press that the number of soldiers in the Rapid Reaction Force will go from 40,000 to more than 300,000 by 2023.<sup>67</sup> A new NATO Force Model was put in place in June 2022. This was decided at the NATO Summit. Compared to the current NATO Response Force, which the NATO Force Model would replace, an Allied response will be much bigger and more ready with the NATO Force Model. As a result, NATO will be better prepared to respond quickly to any emergency situation, and allies will be able to guarantee that more force will be made available to NATO. The goal is to bring troops to a high level of readiness in three levels by 2023. At the

first level, 100,000 soldiers are to be on high readiness within 10 days. At the second level, 200,000 soldiers should be in high readiness for 10 to 30 days. At the third level, 500,000 soldiers should be on standby between 30 and 180 days.<sup>68</sup> Together, this readiness and the statement in NATO's strategic concept that every inch of NATO territory will be defended make a credible deterrent to all of NATO's enemies.<sup>69</sup> With Finland and Sweden joining NATO, two countries with strong armed forces, NATO will be able to strengthen its conventional deterrence and make its eastern flank larger but also harder to defend. Secretary general Stoltenberg also said that the number of enhanced forward presence missions will double from four to eight, with new battlegroups going to Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.<sup>70</sup> This is to «reinforce Allied deterrence and defence» in the area. Other than forward presence deployments, NATO has other ways to reassure its allies and deter Russia. Multinational exercises, like the large «Cold Response» exercise that took place in March and April 2022 can be seen as a deterrent measure to show capabilities and solidarity while reassuring NATO partners.<sup>71</sup>

In its study, RAND says that analysts and people who work for the government think that a stronger forward presence won't lead to an attack on a NATO state. However, deputy foreign minister Alexey Meshkov sees a stronger forward presence as a threat to Russia that could cause problems.<sup>72</sup> But there is no conclusive evidence that forward deploying or forward stationing forces causes high-order war. This is why it is a logical fallacy to think that past actions can predict future actions.<sup>73</sup> The fact that NATO's eastern flank is getting larger makes it more likely that both sides would have more space to launch an operation. In another RAND paper, the idea that Russia might overreact to an advanced NATO presence in Europe is talked about in depth. According to this study, a minor forward presence in Eastern Europe under the current circumstances is unlikely to spark a Russian invasion and may even strengthen the al-

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**«But there is no conclusive evidence that forward deploying or forward stationing forces causes high-order war.»**

ready potent NATO deterrence.<sup>74</sup> According to a recent empirical study by RAND, having American troops present generally reduces the likelihood of interstate conflict.<sup>75</sup> Should Russia decide that its offensive weapons and ability to wage a blitzkrieg war as well as a war of attrition in the Baltic outweigh the enhanced forward presence, conventional deterrence in the Baltic is likely to fail. If the opposite is true, that is, if defensive weapons are better than offensive ones, then deterrence is likely to work.<sup>76</sup> But there is still the strong strategic NATO Article 5, which states that an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all NATO countries, so member states support each other.<sup>77</sup> What

is clear, though, is that a NATO state has never been attacked militarily (either conventionally or with nuclear weapons). Because of this, it also seems important to see Russia's actions as a response to how NATO

acts. In the area of NATO's military forward presence, there is a heated debate about moving troops to NATO's eastern flank to deter and, in the worst case, to stop a conventional Russian attack on the eastern allies. It is not clear if putting these troops in place will really deter Russia and there probably is not a simple answer.<sup>78</sup> From a security policy point of view, the alliance Article 5 has a deterrent effect because Russia knows that if it attacks, it will feel the force of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. This is because President Macron once called NATO «brain dead», and President Putin probably thought the same thing because he did not think NATO would be united after the Ukrainian invasion of 2022. President Joe Biden also said that the United States, which is NATO's most powerful and strongest ally, would defend «every inch» of NATO territory, which is a clear and strong message to keep people from attacking.<sup>79</sup> This is due, in part, to the fact that Article 5 and the full military power of NATO act as a strong deterrent. Thus, the security situation

and how the theory of deterrence is used are related in a way that must be implicitly taken into account when analyzing case studies, like the Ukraine conflict, along with things like political goals.

From a strategic point of view, there is a balance of nuclear weapons (deterrence by punishment), which means that the NATO and Russia are in a stable geo-strategic position. Because nuclear and conventional deterrence is, more or less, balanced. NATO and Russia would be less likely to go to war with each other because it would be too expensive for both sides. With Finland and Sweden's applications to join NATO, the alliance is gaining strength and space again, especially through deterrence by denial (Finland and Sweden do not possess nuclear weapons for a retaliatory strike). In exchange, this space needs to be able to be protected by NATO. The larger NATO eastern flank gives the military more space to act, which changes the space-to-force ratio. Thus, both Russia and NATO are at risk of being invaded on a larger border. This is likely to increase the chances of a war, especially if Russia cannot protect its whole eastern flank and feels directly threatened by NATO. Some analysts support deliberate ambiguity, according to RAND.<sup>80</sup> If a potential enemy is faced with dangerous uncertainty that might deter them from doing something, they are faced with a violent response to their behaviour that they do not know about and cannot properly plan for, such as a traditional attack or ostensibly hostile means. The actual physical deployment of NATO's military forces seems to be clear and certain, especially in this age of instant and almost complete access to information. This makes it less likely that a mistake will be made and gives Russia more confidence in its own cost-benefit and risk analyses in the area between high-order war and the grey zone.<sup>81</sup> Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is a strong clause, but even with a strong advance ground force, the barrier to a high-level conflict in Europe is still not clear.<sup>82</sup> Forward placement is needed to deter all kinds of hostilities in a right manner.

### Conclusion

The deterrence theory, and especially the military aspect of deterrence, has not lost its importance. The invasion of Ukraine, which started as a classic terrestrial advance with conventional means, was not expected in this nature before. The invasion has led to a wake-up call in the West concerning the Russian military threat. In the end, the military, let us call it the means of force, are the ones that can do the most damage and directly threaten a state in its existence. The military aspect, the means of deterrence with which force is used, was examined more closely in this

**«In the end, the military, let us call it the means of force, are the ones that can do the most damage and directly threaten a state in its existence.»**

dissertation. Nuclear deterrence and conventional deterrence in particular were the focus of this dissertation. Concerning conventional deterrence, factors such as military capability, military strategy and operational terrain play an important role. The critical factors of whether deterrence works or not have been analyzed in more detail using the example of the Ukraine conflict since 2014. The central argument of this dissertation is that in the theory of deterrence, context determines whether deterrence fails or not. Security policy factors, such as NATO as a military alliance with its powerful Article 5, as well as nuclear and conventional military factors play an important role. NATO has also strengthened its conventional deterrence since the annexation of Crimea, sending more troops to the Baltics and establishing even more enhanced forward presence forces in the future. Fundamentally, deterrence depends on the actors. In concrete terms, this means that mutual deterrence between NATO and Russia is pursued by different means than, for example, deterrence between Russia and Ukraine, which is not a member of NATO or any other military alliance. NATO has failed to dissuade Russia from attacking Ukraine, but legally and politically they had no opportunity. The neutrality and the weak Ukrainian military are certainly two important reasons why it was attacked by Russia in February 2022 and was not able to deter this attack in advance in security, nuclear or conventional terms. In addition, the Ukrainian terrain was not deterrent enough, as its large, relatively flat geography makes it easier for mechanized formations to deploy. Against NATO, which is militarily a strong alliance, the deterrence would certainly be more stable and likely to be successful. The findings of this dissertation are that a deterrent means, inform of a strong army with nuclear weapons, is necessary if a country is not part of a powerful military alliance. At best, one runs the risk of being attacked and defeated by a stronger opponent, and this risk is latent because a political security architecture might change. The way the international system is structured (nation states) without a superior

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«government» to punish a country for wrongdoing, as well as building up one's own power to survive in the international system, means that the latent danger of a military attack, for whatever motives, is always there. This characteristic is inherent in the international system, which is why it is inevitable that states must «play the game». Strong military capabilities are essential, as well as an ideal military defence strategy with optimal use of terrain would be the ideal conditions for deterrence to work. The basis for conventional deterrence to be successful means that the conventional military capabilities of the actors involved should be on a par. NATO as a military alliance fulfils these conditions, but it must be relied upon that when the alliance's case arises, the military alliance will also come to the support the attacked member state. A strong military as well as the ability to forcefully deter a potential adversary (even if it is paradoxical) makes the international system more stable and peace would be more likely to be achieved. Military alliances or communities of states working together also offer an alternative. This certainly leads to the fact that even a militarily weak country, which is represented in a strong military bloc, can benefit from the deterrence of stronger partners and does not have to fear being attacked by the partner itself. If one follows the following formula, which is conditional, one can assume that deterrence should work.

- First, a state must upgrade its military capabilities in the nuclear and conventional fields to the maximum that is politically feasible.
- Second, a state must have a clear defence strategy and confront an attacker with high costs in the event of an invasion, which should prevent an attack.
- Third, the defender must make the best possible use of the terrain to achieve a deterrent effect.

Nonetheless, deterrence can fail even with such a formula. This is especially the case if an attacker has a political situation that is unacceptable to him, that he

can launch a war of aggression despite high risks and high costs.

### **Exkurs: Abschreckung im Schweizer Kontext – damals und heute**

Während des Kalten Krieges war die Bedrohung durch den Warschauer Pakt unbestritten. Die nukleare Abschreckung, auch genannt das Gleichgewicht des Schreckens, führte zur strategischen Stabilität im internationalen, bipolaren System, angeführt von den USA und der Sowjetunion. Die Armee 61 richtete sich bei der Landesverteidigung auf eine Bedrohung von aussen aus, genauer gesagt auf einen konventionellen Angriff aus dem Osten. Die Schweiz war nie im Besitz von Nuklearwaffen, weshalb die nukleare Abschreckung im Schweizer Kontext nie praktiziert werden konnte. Aus diesem Grund war es der Schweiz nicht möglich, Abschreckung durch Bestrafung (deterrence by punishment) anzudrohen, wie dies zwischen den USA und der Sowjetunion der Fall war.

**«Die Schweiz als Kleinstaat konzentrierte sich jedenfalls darauf, Abschreckung durch Verweigerung der Erfolgsaussichten (deterrence by denial) anzuwenden.»**

Jedoch profitierte die Schweiz – zumindest in der Theorie – von der «erweiterten Abschreckung», welche das Verhindern von Angriffen auf Dritte zum Ziel hat. Im konkreten Fall für die Schweiz – damals wie heute – war dies der US-Nuklearschirm über Europa, wo sich die meisten NATO-Bündnispartner befinden. Ob die USA tatsächlich einen Erst- oder Zweitschlag für die Schweiz ausgeführt hätten, ist fraglich, da die USA in diesem Falle ebenfalls mit einer Reaktion rechnen mussten. Die Schweiz als Kleinstaat konzentrierte sich jedenfalls darauf, Abschreckung durch Verweigerung der Erfolgsaussichten (deterrence by denial) anzuwenden. Belege dafür sind bereits im Sicherheitspolitischen Bericht von 1973 zu finden, wo unter anderem Kriegsverhinderung durch Dissuasion im konventionellen Bereich erreicht werden sollte. Der Preis einer Invasion in die Schweiz sollte für einen Gegner so hoch als möglich sein.

Bei der «Konzeption 66» ging es vor allem darum, ein Abwehrverfahren aus Verteidigung und Gegenangriffen zu etablieren, welches vom Regiment bis zum Armeekorps auf operativer Stufe angewandt werden sollte.<sup>83</sup> Die Abwehr wurde als Hauptkampfform definiert, was dazu führte, dass mobile und statische Elemente verbunden wurden.<sup>84</sup> Dazu kam, dass die Schweizer Armee seit dem 1. Weltkrieg enorme Anstrengungen unternommen hatte, um das starke Gelände zu ihren Gunsten auszunützen, wobei der Bewegungs- und Hindernisführung eine zentrale Rolle zukam. Aufgrund der damaligen Masseneheere und in Anbetracht der Grösse der Schweiz wollte die Armee bewusst das Kraft-Raum-Zeit Verhältnis bestmöglich zu ihren Gunsten beeinflussen. Die militärischen Fähigkeiten bzw. die Schlagkraft waren in der Armee 61 vorhanden, um einen Gegner glaubhaft konventionell abzuschrecken. Seit der Armee 95 – und spätestens mit der Armee XXI – wurden diese Fähigkeiten schrittweise reduziert. Div Gustav Däniker, damals noch Maj i Gst, kritisierte die «Konzeption 66», indem er argumentierte, dass diese lediglich eine operative Doktrin für die Verwendung und die nachholende Ausrüstung der Schweizer Armee ist. Aus diesem Grund soll die Konzeption keine Antwort auf strategische Fragen gegeben haben, wie z. B. das Verhalten der Schweiz bei einer atomaren Erpressung wäre, oder die Reaktion, wenn Atomwaffen in einem Krieg gegen die Schweiz eingesetzt werden sollten, so Däniker.<sup>85</sup>

Das Einzige, was die Abschreckung auf strategischer Ebene nach 1945 hätte garantieren können, wären strategische Nuklearwaffen gewesen. In diesem Zusammenhang gab es auch ein schweizerisches Kernwaffenprogramm zwischen 1945 und 1988, welches mit der Angst vor der Sowjetunion begründet wurde. 1958 bejahte der Bundesrat die atomare Bewaffnung der Schweiz, worauf sich aus diversen Kreisen der Gesellschaft Widerstand formierte; es kam auch zu zwei Volksabstimmungen. Der Bundesrat argumentierte damals, dass der Armee zur Bewahrung der Unabhängigkeit und zum Schutze der Neutralität die stärksten Waffen zur Verfügung stehen sollten.

**«Zudem wäre es sinnvoll, Gustav Dänikers Überlegungen seines bekannten Buches *«Strategie des Kleinstaates»* intellektuell weiterzuführen und für den kontemporären Kontext neu zu konzipieren.»**

In diesen Zusammenhang wäre es interessant zu erforschen, wie die Schweiz heutzutage mit einer nuklearen Erpressung, Drohung oder einem atomaren Angriff umgehen würde und was für alternative Mittel für eine strategische Abschreckung vorhanden sind – wenn überhaupt. Zudem wäre es sinnvoll, Gustav Dänikers Überlegungen seines bekannten Buches «Strategie des Kleinstaates» intellektuell weiterzuführen und für den kontemporären Kontext neu zu konzipieren.

Seit 2021 ist der Kernwaffenverbotsvertrag (TPNW) der Vereinten Nationen in Kraft, welcher das Verbot der Entwicklung, von Tests, der Produktion, des Transfers, des Besitzes, des Einsatzes sowie der Androhung des Einsatzes von Nu-

klearwaffen beinhaltet. Die Schweiz nahm seit 2017 an den Vertragsverhandlungen teil, jedoch beschloss der Bundesrat in den Jahren 2018 und 2019, auf eine Unterzeichnung des Vertrages zu verzichten. Bei den Vertragsverhandlungen blieben sämtliche Staaten mit Nuklearwaffen fern. Es erscheint nicht sinnvoll, mit diesem Vertrag ein Präjudiz zu schaffen, bevor nicht alle Mittel der strategischen Abschreckung in Betracht gezogen worden sind. Langfristig könnte ein solcher Vertrag das Überleben eines Kleinstaates gefährden, insbesondere dann, wenn es Spannungen oder Konflikte mit Atommächten geben könnte. Aus diesem Grund erscheint es wichtig, über eine langfristige Strategie im Bereich der Abschreckung nachzudenken. Zumindest seit der Wiedergeburt des West-Ost-Konflikts, ohne dabei die «Schurkenstaaten» mit Nuklearwaffen zu erwähnen, sind tiefgründigere Überlegungen in diesem Bereich nicht fehl am Platz.

Auch heute noch ist die Kriegsverhinderung eine Aufgabe der Armee und im Militärgesetz verankert, wobei jedoch die Herangehensweise geändert wurde – weg von der Dissuasion, hin in Richtung Kooperation.<sup>86</sup> Der Fokus der sicherheitspolitischen Berichte nach dem Kalten Krieg war, die Armee auf die wahrscheinlichste statt auf die gefährlichste Bedrohung auszurichten, was dazu führte, dass die Armee sich primär auf Einsätze im Inland, wie z. B. subsidiäre Sicherheitseinsätze zugunsten der zivilen Behörden oder auf die Katastrophenhilfe ausrichtete. Auch die Friedensförde-

rung und die Cyberabwehr gewannen zunehmend an Bedeutung. Die geänderten sicherheitspolitischen Bedrohungen führten in letzter Konsequenz dazu, dass die Schlagkraft der heutigen Schweizer Armee auf den Kompetenzerhalt reduziert wurde. Ein Grund für den Abbau lag insbesondere auch in einem Kosten-Nutzen-Verhältnis, das nicht mehr mit der Bedrohungslage übereinstimmte. Weiter gibt es kein konkretes Konzept der Gesamtverteidigung mehr, um das «Gesamtsystem Schweiz» resilient gegen einen konventionellen Angriff zu verteidigen, da in den letzten Jahrzehnten die Verteidigung als unwahrscheinliche Lageentwicklung betrachtet wurde.

**«Militärisch gesehen wirkt die Schweiz mässig abschreckend. Erstens, weil die militärischen Fähigkeiten für eine Abwehr eines bewaffneten Konfliktes über Jahrzehnte auf den Kompetenzerhalt reduziert wurden. Zweitens, weil das gehärtete Gelände für eine Verzögerung, Kanalisierung und Abnützung eines Gegners aufgegeben wurde. Drittens, weil die Schweiz über kein Konzept der Gesamtverteidigung verfügt, um das «Gesamtsystem Schweiz» resilient zu schützen.»**

Das Fazit für die Schweiz in Bezug auf die militärische Abschreckung sieht gemäss meinem Argument der Dissertation und der aufgestellten Abschreckungsformel nüchtern aus. Militärisch gesehen wirkt die Schweiz mässig abschreckend. Erstens, weil die militärischen Fähigkeiten für eine Abwehr eines bewaffneten Konfliktes über Jahrzehnte auf den Kompetenzerhalt reduziert wurden. Zweitens, weil das gehärtete Gelände für eine Verzögerung, Kanalisierung und Abnützung eines Gegners aufgegeben wurde. Drittens, weil die Schweiz über kein Konzept der Gesamtverteidigung verfügt, um das «Gesamtsystem Schweiz» resilient zu schützen. Sollte die Schweizer Armee wieder eine glaubhafte konventionelle Abschreckung anstreben wollen, müsste sie einen Kurswechsel einschlagen. Dabei müsste die militärische Schlagkraft erhöht und in ein Gesamtverteidigungskonzept eingebettet werden. ♦

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