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Britain Tightens NATO's Noose Around Russia

Britain appears to be selling itself to Europe as the EU's "security" guarantor so that when the UK finally leaves the EU, it can retain a pretext for maintaining a close military relationship. This is extremely dangerous because the US-British policy toward Russia is provocative.

"[T]he loss of the UK could leave the EU significantly reduced as a defence and security actor," [says](#) the RAND corporation. At present, British taxpayers foot the bill for Europe's "security," meaning the security of private corporations that rely on militarism to enforce the global economy. Militarism makes the situation less secure, as a joint British-Russian conference [confirmed](#) in 2017. RAND continues:

"Brexit raises questions about the EU's future credibility and ambition in this field, particularly if Europe hopes to be a counterbalance to US influence within NATO, or to Russia and China."

Russia's Concerns

Is Russia really a threat? Elite security experts don't seem to think so. Cambridge University's David Blagden gave [evidence](#) to the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy (2014), writing: "Russia is only a 'rising' or 'resurgent' power taken against its post-Soviet nadir of the 1990s; viewed against the 1980s and previously, Russia is and will remain severely diminished."

In 2015, John Sawers, former head of MI6, was [quoted](#) (in one of the few media exceptions) as saying: "The real problem is how we live with a Russia which feels very

exposed. Putin's actions are ones of a leader who believes his own security is at stake." An unreported House of Commons Defence Committee report (2016-17) [says](#):

"Russia views NATO expansion not as a free choice by sovereign states but as a policy of 'encirclement' by the West ... There is a sense within Russia of ill-treatment by the West following the demise of the Soviet Union ... the Russian perception of the world is one riven by instability and threats, many of which are uncomfortably close to its borders."

A European Parliament report (2017) [says](#):

"All Russian security documents explicitly single out the challenges that the policies of Western states supposedly create for Russian security (with particularly harsh words in the Security strategy). Grievances connected to what Russia sees as 'systemic problems in the Euro-Atlantic region' (Foreign policy concept), the enlargement of NATO, the location of its military infrastructure close to Russian borders, its 'offensive capabilities' and the trend towards the Alliance acquiring 'global functions', the 'symptoms' of the U.S. efforts to retain absolute military supremacy (the global antimissile system, Global Strike capabilities, militarization of space)..."

Are Russian forces in Canada and Mexico conducting joint exercises against the US? No. Are Russian forces in Ireland conducting joint exercises against Britain? No. Is there an obvious Russian presence in Scotland promoting independence from the UK? No. But Britain and the US are mounted on Russia's borders and conducting joint exercises with its neighbors.

In addition, Russia is being literally fenced off from Europe, with NATO members and/or EU member states Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland building border fences. Finland, Norway and Ukraine are members of neither NATO nor the EU but contribute to NATO and are also building fences with Russia.

But what do Russia's neighbours, like the Estonians, rank as their national security priorities? A [survey](#) suggests that for Estonians, the biggest threat to global security is the Islamic State, followed by the refugee crisis in Europe and the war in Syria. Russia came fourth on the list, even after the Ukraine crisis. According to [Gallup](#), a majority 52% of Estonians consider NATO a protective force, but 43% see it as either a threat (17%) or neither (26%). Estonians are behind Kosovars, Albanians, Poles and Lithuanians in their opinions of NATO.

NATO's war games from 2014, following the Ukraine crisis, [predicted](#) that in the event of Russian invasions of Baltic states, NATO could not easily defeat Russia. As a result,

NATO decided to beef up its so-called deterrence, i.e. a mass of troops encircling Russia. But what is to deter? What is the likelihood of Russia invading more countries?

In November 2014, the Telegraph [reported](#) that “Britain is planning more large Cold War-style tank exercises in Poland” in 2015, supposedly in response to Russia’s actions in Ukraine. But remember, Russia’s actions in Ukraine were a response to NATO’s moves and the Anglo-American-sponsored coup. Exercise Black Eagle involved 1,000 British troops, 30 Warrior armoured vehicles and 20 Challenger tanks, to send an “important message ... that the Nato alliance is alive and well” (per Gen. Sir Nick Carter, Chief of the General Staff of the British Army).

In June 2016, it was [reported](#) that British troops were practicing urban combat operations in Poland, alongside American, Canadian, and Turkish forces (Exercise Anakonda). Until 2017, when Britain took over, Spain led the so-called Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.

In November 2016, Britain [deployed](#) another 150 troops from the Light Dragoons regiment, plus armoured vehicles, “close to the border” with Russia’s Kaliningrad. Also in that month, British newspapers [reported](#) the planned deployment of British GMLRS missiles to Estonia.

In December, PM Theresa may travelled to Warsaw for the annual bilateral summit. “[T]he Prime Minister is expected to announce a new joint UK-Poland Treaty on Defence and Security Co-operation. The only other European Union country we have such a treaty with is France.” (Shortly after the UK and France signed their bilateral security deal, they worked together to smash up Libya, Mali, Iraq and Syria. Russia will surely take this as an ominous development.)

Having reminded us of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2014 (omitting the irrelevant details of US-British involvement in the preceding coup), BBC online [reported](#) in July 2017 of an increased British presence as part of the NATO force in Estonia. Without irony, the reporter notes: “For the British Army it is a question of learning new skills or rather of re-learning them after years spent on counter-insurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan,” both of which made Russia’s Ukraine invasion look miserly by comparison. Had there been any indication up to July 2017 of Russian troop deployment? “So far ... absolutely nothing,” said Gen. Sir Nick Carter, head of the British Army.

In October 2017, the Polish Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski and the Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz met their British counterparts to discuss “security” and “cooperation.” Britain’s then-Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon [said](#): “We want to

further our already strong relationship and today will agree a capability partnership to boost both our defence industries and work towards finalising the Defence and Security Co-operation Treaty.”

The UK’s Bilateral Relations

As homelessness rises in the UK and tens of thousands literally die due to health cuts, the Tory government uses £5m of British taxpayer money to fund propaganda in Poland, aka, “[counter Russian disinformation](#).” Propaganda includes support for Belsat, which targets Russia’s last ally in Europe, Belarus, and is funded by Poland (and now the British taxpayer).

In keeping with the organization’s customary neutrality, BBC online has a headline from February, “The Welsh soldiers keeping the Estonian border safe.” Safe from what? Has Russia threatened to or hinted at invading Estonia, which hosts NATO’s cyber command? No. The article quotes Commanding Officer of the Enhanced Forward Presence, Lt. Col. Owain Luke: “We achieve the deterrent principally by being here, because Russia knows that to invade Estonia would be to come up against Nato troops as well as Estonian forces.”

So, if Russia knows that any invasion of Estonia (which was never on the cards) would result in a NATO counteroffensive, why the need for forward basing, other than to threaten Russia? The [report](#) says that “[t]he British are the Nato lead in Estonia.” The report also exemplifies the BBC’s legendary impartiality, noting how the Welsh are training the Estonian rugby team and integrating with the locals: “if political tensions in the region increase, their presence in Estonia will remain a welcome comfort to the locals of this former Soviet Union country.”

In February, Forces Network [reported](#): “UK personnel are currently deployed on operations supporting NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), with forces in Estonia and Poland.” It also notes that “The Royal Welsh is the lead Battlegroup (BG) element based in Tapa, Estonia, with the training designed to reassure NATO allies and deter adversaries.”

In February [2018], it was [reported](#) that more troops, these from the queen’s Dragoon Guards, were to be deployed in Spring. Estonia’s President Kersti Kaljulaid didn’t seem ever so grateful, [requesting](#) a US force presence and the deployment of Patriot missiles: “We want to be sure that both NATO’s territory and NATO soldiers are well protected ... We need our deterrence to be believable.”

So much for British taxpayers' spending millions of pounds to put troops in Estonia for "deterrence" while impoverished Britons suffer cuts to public services at home.

This article originally appeared on [Axis of Logic](#).