

Estonia's Military Capability 2020

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Estonian defence policy and planning is still heavily influenced by the Second World War and the decades of Soviet occupation that followed. Having successfully escaped the post-Soviet sphere and established itself as a Western liberal democracy, Estonian security relies on its EU membership and NATO's collective defence. Its historical experiences are evident in two fundamentals of Estonian security and defence policy. Firstly, Estonia will fight back, no matter the odds. Secondly, Estonia seeks to avoid facing a threat alone, and is thus eager to uphold NATO cohesion and close bilateral ties to in particular the US and the United Kingdom.¹ As is the case for all the Baltic States, Estonia's threat perception is dominated by concerns regarding Russia's increased assertiveness and military modernisation.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Despite contributing forces to out-of-area operations after its 2004 accession to NATO, Estonia never abandoned its Finland-inspired defence model of a mobilising conscription-based army. Equally, Estonia did not cut its defence spending as drastically as Lithuania and Latvia in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Thus, the adaptation towards deterrence and defence at home following Russia's annexation of Crimea, while challenging, was not as dramatic as for other Allies.

Successive Estonian governments have given priority to strengthening national defence. Generally, there is consensus between the political class and the rest of society on the importance of a capable defence, including spending at least two per cent of GDP on it. Issues related to the Russian-speaking minority's rights and citizenship status are contentious, and affect the Russo-Estonian relationship, as Russia seeks to exploit existing divides and portray itself as the defender of the minority.²

As a military conflict – deemed possible, albeit improbable – would affect all parts of society, Estonia's defence revolves around a concept of comprehensive defence, which includes military and non-military capabilities alike.³ While still relying on a conscript army in order to ensure the necessary volume with a population of only 1.3 million, Estonia has given priority to rapidly usable

capabilities, including intelligence and early warning, since 2014. To ensure both readiness and volume, Estonia seeks to complement its sole professional battalion with rapid mobilisation of its sizable army and territorial defence reserves.

Ultimately dependent on NATO's collective defence for its security, Estonia works to deepen NATO and EU solidarity, strengthen NATO's collective defence and deterrence and promote its presence in Estonia's vicinity. To accommodate this, the country seeks, for example, to upgrade its capabilities for reception of and support to foreign forces, including the relevant infrastructure. Relatedly, Estonia sees its bilateral relationship with the US as vital to its security. However, Estonia is very clear on the need to be able to defend itself – or at least hold out – while awaiting reinforcements.

Apart from NATO and the US, the 2017 deployment of a UK-led eFP battlegroup has facilitated close cooperation with the UK – founded already in joint operations in Afghanistan - which Estonia seeks to deepen further. While the US and UK remain the most important partners, concerns about their future European presence has led Estonia to broaden its military cooperation. As the sole participating Baltic country, Estonia is part of the French-led European Intervention Initiative (EI2), and at present Estonian special forces and a mechanised infantry platoon

1 Praks, Henrik, 'Estonia's approach to deterrence: Combining central and extended deterrence', in Vanaga, Nora and Rostoks, Toms (eds.), *Deterring Russia in Europe: Defence Strategies for Neighbouring States* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), p. 147.

2 The Russian-speaking minority makes up about 25 per cent of Estonia's population. See Praks, 'Estonia's approach,' p. 153; and Chivvis, Christopher S. et al., *NATO's northeastern flank: Emerging opportunities for engagement*, RAND, 2017, p. 120–22, 128.

3 The concept revolves around six pillars: military defence, civilian support, international action, domestic security, guaranteeing the continued operation of state functions, and psychological defence.

are participating in French operations in Mali.⁴ Equally, Estonia supports closer defence cooperation and capability development within the EU, and seeks closer security cooperation with the Baltic and Nordic states, especially Finland.⁵ On several occasions, the Estonian Chief of Defence has spoken of the need for greater Baltic operational cooperation by giving greater priority to regional defence planning, as compared to today's mostly national focus.⁶

Some words are due – and apply equally to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – on Baltic cooperation. The three states excel at synchronising their positions towards outside actors, such as NATO, and the general Baltic attitude is that deeper cooperation has operational and economic benefits. They have also launched a number of joint projects over the years but with mixed results. The most successful initiatives, such as the Baltic Defence College, the Baltic Air Surveillance Network, the Baltic Naval Squadron and the Baltic Battalion, stem from the 1990s, when external actors encouraged cooperation and contributed financially.⁷

Since then, national differences have often hindered closer cooperation. The notion that small states with similar threat perceptions and modernisation plans should cooperate closely notwithstanding, the reality of legal obstacles, unsynchronised budget cycles, disparate procurement processes and complicated logistics remains. The increased attention to the need for regional defence planning might serve as a stepping-stone.⁸

Such regional planning may be facilitated by the regional NATO commands created in recent years. Latvia hosts the still-forming forward element of the joint Danish-Latvian-Estonian NATO Multinational Division North Headquarters (HQ), to which Latvia's and Estonia's eFP battlegroups and national forces can be subordinated. Lithuania and Poland, and their respective eFP forces, are tied to Multinational Division Northeast HQ in Elblag, Poland. These HQs, in turn, are subordinate to NATO Multinational Corps Northeast HQ in Szczecin, Poland, creating a clear NATO command.⁹ It is unclear how far towards operational capability the Latvian HQ is, and what impact Lithuania's being subordinated to the Polish, not Latvian-Estonian, HQ has on regional defence planning. As the HQs become fully operational, the eFP battalions may be more closely integrated, which NATO officials have called for.¹⁰

Furthermore, all Baltic states lack satisfactory air defences. The Baltic Air Surveillance Network and Control System (BALNET), which, as part of NATO's air and missile defence, gathers radar data from all Baltic states to produce a Recognized Air Picture, will be upgraded with separate national control centres in 2020. Currently, the centre in Lithuania, in Karmelava, is the only one.¹¹ As all Baltic states are in need of longer-range air defences, but lack the budgetary means to procure such systems, a possible solution could lie in using BALNET to ensure adequate airspace surveillance and interoperability for Allied air

4 Furthermore, France is part of the Estonian eFP battlegroup. Embassy of Estonia in London, The Prime Ministers of Estonia and the UK discussed defence cooperation and digitalisation, 7 August 2019; and Szymański, Piotr, *Seeking an additional reassurance: The EU and France in Estonia's security policy*. (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2020).

5 Riigikogu, *National Security Concept of Estonia*, 2017, p. 3–12.

6 Herem, Martin, 'Estonian chief of Defence Forces: Regional cooperation as the main enabler', *Defense News*, 2 December 2019.

7 The Baltic navies cooperate within the Baltic Naval Squadron, (initiated in 1998, aiming to develop mine countermeasures capabilities, interoperability and upholding readiness. Since 2015, Estonia has not contributed national capabilities to the squadron, but the format is utilised as a Baltic contribution to the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One. See 'JFC Brunssum Public Affairs Office, Week 18 Northern Europe Operational Update', 1 May 2020; and LETA/BNS/TBT Staff, 'BALTRON command changeover ceremony to take place in Lithuania's Klaipeda', *Baltic Times*, 8 January 2020.

8 Nikers, Olevs et al., 'Defense and deterrence: Expert assessment, in Nikers, Olev and Tabuns, Otto (eds.), *Baltic Security Strategy Report* (Washington, D.C: Jamestown Foundation, 2019), p. 2–17; and Mehta, Aaron, 'Does major joint military procurement really work in the Baltics?', *Defense News*, 27 October 2019.

9 Stoicescu, Kalev and Järvenpää, Pauli, *Contemporary deterrence: Insights and lessons from enhanced Forward Presence* (Tallinn: International Centre for Defence and Security, 2019), p. 8–9; and Estonian Ministry of Defence, 'Headquarters Multinational Division North inaugurated in Latvia', 11 March 2019.

10 Kaldoja, Evelyn, 'NATO general: battalions have been developing like three puddles', *Postimees*, 12 August 2019.

11 Lithuanian Ministry of Defence, 'Baltic Ministers of Defence signed an agreement on strengthening joint airspace surveillance in Brussels', 24 October 2019.

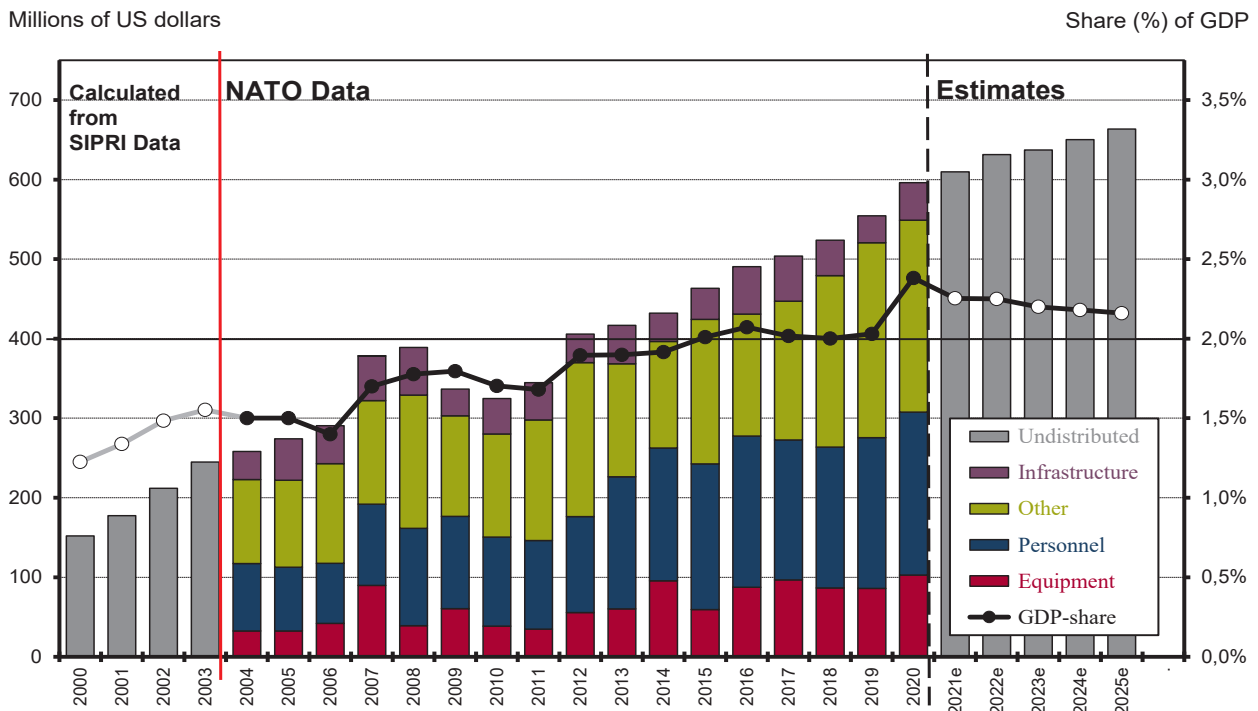


Figure: The military expenditures of Estonia 2000–2025: Millions of US Dollars/2015 prices (columns) and as share (%) of GDP (curved line)

Source: Bergstrand, Bengt-Göran, *Nato military expenditures*, Working Document (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency – FOI, October 2020).

NB: Estimates based on budget data for 2021 and on the assumption that Estonia will spend around 2.2% of GDP on defence in 2022–2025.

defences to utilise, should the need arise. Equally, if budgets allow, future cooperation on coastal defence is possible.

MILITARY EXPENDITURES

There are large similarities between both economic and military developments in the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The financial crisis in 2007–08 hit the three countries severely, with GDPs falling 15 to 20 per cent and leading to drastic cuts in government spending, including defence. The Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 compelled them to revise their policies and rapidly increase their military expenditures; each of the countries now allocate more than 2 per cent of their GDP to defence.

Until 2008, Estonia, as illustrated by Figure 5.1 steadily increased its defence budget, from USD 152 million in fixed 2015 prices and a GDP share of 1.2 per cent in 2000, to USD 389 million and a GDP share of 1.8 per cent in

2008. In 2010, Estonia reduced its defence budget by 17 per cent, to USD 325 million in 2010, before increasing anew in 2011. Since then, military expenditures have again been rising steadily. In comparison with Latvia and Lithuania, Estonia’s defence budget was less severely impacted by the financial crisis, and during a shorter period.

In a long-term perspective, the reductions following the financial crisis are consequently more of a dent on a trend line of steadily increasing expenditure. Estonia reached NATO’s two per cent target in 2014–15. Since then, the country has spent at least 2 per cent of its GDP on defence. In 2020, Estonia used 17.4 per cent of its military expenditures for equipment purchases.

Estonia has an explicit policy, reiterated in several policy documents, of allocating at least two per cent of GDP for defence, including the coming years.¹² The graph gives the future Estonian defence budgets in years 2020–2025 and the projections for 2021 are based on Estonian defence

12 Defence ministers from the three Baltic countries also issued a joint declaration in June 2020 that, even though they are suffering from the corona pandemic, they will maintain and not reduce their defence allocations. See Baltic Times, ‘Baltic states commit to not reducing defence spending’, 16 June 2020.

budget data.¹³ With the decline in the GDP, caused by the coronavirus pandemic, military expenditures as a percentage of GDP will increase to higher levels in 2020–2021. The projections for the following years are therefore based on the assumption that the expenditures as a share of GDP will gradually decline during 2022–2025, and lie at a level which on average is more comparable to the situation before the pandemic but still well above 2 per cent.

ARMED FORCES

The Army and the National Guard heavily dominate the Estonian armed forces. The Navy and Air Force primarily hold supporting roles, tasked with surveillance and enabling Allied reinforcements. The Commander of the Estonian Defence Forces, with support from the General Staff, commands operations.¹⁴

Army

The Estonian Army contains 1500 professionals and some 2400 conscripts. It is organised around two brigades.¹⁵ The 1st Infantry Brigade's headquarters are in Tapa. The unit is currently undergoing partial mechanisation through the introduction of CV9035 infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) in the Scouts Battalion, and the transfer of the existing Patria armoured personnel carriers (APCs) to its other infantry battalions. The personnel of the subunits are a mix of professionals, conscripts and reservists, with the exception of the fully professional Scouts Battalion.¹⁶ The brigade's wartime tasks include securing Tallinn and defending against aggression in the Narva area, north of Peipus Lake, and amphibious landings along the Gulf of Finland.¹⁷

The eFP Battlegroup is integrated with the 1st Brigade and reportedly has a credible role in the Estonian defence plan. Compared to other eFP contingents, the British-led unit is the least multinational, which probably reduces issues related to interoperability and national caveats.¹⁸ As

with all eFP units, their main function is deterrence, but the unit also contributes high-readiness units and some high-end capabilities, including tanks, IFVs and self-propelled howitzers.¹⁹

The 2nd Infantry Brigade's headquarters are located in Tartu and its peacetime units, an infantry battalion and a combat service support battalion, are located in Võru. This reserve-based brigade is motorised and contains the same type of units as the 1st, with the addition of an extra infantry battalion and an extra artillery battalion. While the brigade is not yet fully developed, it is operational with regard to main combat equipment and personnel. Tasked with defending against incursions south of Peipus Lake, it is mainly intended to perform defensive actions, as opposed to the nascent manoeuvre capabilities of the 1st Brigade.²⁰ Estonia aims to have a fully operational motorised light infantry brigade by 2026.

Defence League

The Estonian National Guard, the Defence League (*Kaitseliit*), forms a vital part of national defence. The organisation consists of some 26,000 volunteers, of which about 15,000 make up military units under the command of professional army officers. There are 15 battalions, one in every Estonian county, and some of them include high-readiness companies. About half of the Defence League has wartime tasks corresponding to those of the regular army, whereas the other half performs traditional territorial defence tasks, such as protecting critical infrastructure and ensuring mobilisation, and supporting Allied reinforcements. Since 2013, the Defence League's equipment has been modernised to resemble the regular army's, including the integration of new systems, for example anti-tank missiles (Javelin). Equally, a larger share of personal equipment is now stored in members' homes, increasing the organisation's readiness.²¹

13 Postimees, 'Estonian parliament approves 2020 state budget', 11 December 2019; ERR News, 'Defense spending to rise to €645.4 million in 2021', 30 September 2020; and Baltic News Network, 'Estonian military funding planned to reach 2.29% of GDP', 30 September 2020.

14 Republic of Estonia Defence Forces, 'Kaitseväe juhataja', 24 November 2020.

15 International Institute for Strategic Studies. *The military balance 2020* (London: IISS, 2020) p. 100.

16 While conscripts are not used for readiness tasks, it is not unfeasible that they would be utilised for guard duties.

17 Gustafsson, Jakob, Granholm, Niklas and Jonsson, Michael, *Färdplan för tillväxt: Erfarenheter för Sverige från arméstridskrafternas tillväxt i Litauen och Estland*, FOI Memo 6832 (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency – FOI, 2019), p. 16.

18 Stoicescu and Järvenpää, *Contemporary Deterrence*, p. 2, 9; and Clark, Robert, Foxall, Andrew and Rogers, James, 'United Kingdom as a framework nation', in Lanoszka, Alexander, Leuprecht, Christian and Moens, Alexander. *Lessons from the Enhanced Forward Presence, 2017-2020*, (NATO Defense College, November 2020), p. 28

19 Szymański, Piotr, *The multi-speed Baltic states: Reinforcing the defence capabilities of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia* (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies, 2015), p. 23.

20 Nutov, Mirjam, 'Kolonel: et 2. jalaväebrigaad poleks lihtsalt piiritulp, on ressursse juurde vaja', *Estonian Public Broadcasting*, 18 February 2018.

21 Latvian Information Agency, 'Estonia: Kaitseliit's Saaremaa district to stage antitank exercise, 26 October 2018; and Estonian Ministry of Defence, *Foreword of the Ministry of Defence Development Plan 2021–2024*.

Table: Personnel and materiel in the Estonian Armed Forces

Personnel/Materiel	Numbers in 2020	Planned reforms towards 2025
Personnel		
Regular forces	3500	~3800 by 2026 ^a
Conscripts	3200	3800 by 2024 ^b
Territorial defence forces	15,800	
Reserves	12,000	
Materiel		
Tanks	-	
Armoured combat vehicles	44 IFVs (CV9035) 136 APCs (56 XA-180 Sisu, 80 XA-188 Sisu)	
Heavy artillery pieces	24 FH-70 (155mm, towed) 18 D-30 (122mm, towed)	18 K9 self-propelled howitzers
Attack helicopters	-	
Surface combatants	-	
Submarines	-	
Combat aircraft	-	
Transport aircraft	3 (2 An-2 Colt, 1 M-28 Skytruck)	
Air defence	Man-portable: Mistral, ZU-23-2 guns	

NB: a. Interviews, Tallinn, April 2019. b. Estonian Ministry of Defence, Foreword. Originally, Estonia planned for 4000 conscripts per year from 2022, but this target is unlikely to be met. See Kund, Oliver, 'Increasing the number of conscripts hits a glass ceiling', *Postimees*, 30 May 2019.

Navy

The small Estonian Navy's main task is sea surveillance and mine countermeasures. Some 200 professional sailors and 100 conscripts serve in the Navy. Modernisation, including upgraded navigation and command and control systems, of the three *Sandown*-class minehunters started in 2018. The Navy is to receive two patrol boats and a mobile sea surveillance radar before 2024.²² All the Baltic states' mine countermeasures vessels are slated for decommissioning around 2025. This has fuelled discussions on possible cooperation regarding capabilities beyond minehunting, including minelaying, unmanned vehicles, anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and coastal defence.²³

Air Force

The small Air Force is fully professional and consists of some 400 personnel. Its primary tasks include air surveillance and operating Ämari Air Base. The air base hosts the Estonian echelon of NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission. It operates around the clock and in a crisis situation

would play a significant role in enabling reinforcements to Estonia. The Estonian air defence battalions are organised by the Army; there are no such units in the Air Force. These units provide short-range air defence via man portable missiles (Mistral) and anti-aircraft cannons (ZU-23-2), both systems being integrated with Saab Giraffe AMB radars. Procurement of longer-range air defence, currently a key vulnerability, has been discussed for years. However, a comprehensive air defence system is complex and expensive. A possible solution might lie in a concerted effort from the Baltic states to develop the necessary infrastructure for integration with NATO air defence systems. Estonia exercises forward air control and close air support capabilities with allies such as the UK and the US.²⁴

Personnel and materiel

The Estonian defence forces rely heavily on conscripted personnel between the ages of 18–27. Every year, some 3200 conscripts, or about a third of the annual male cohort, are trained for either 8 or 11 months, depending

22 Naval Technology, 'Babcock completes upgrade work on Estonian Navy minehunter', 4 February 2019; and Estonian Ministry of Defence, *Introduction to the Military Defence Action Plan 2020–2023*.

23 Lange, Heinrich et al., *To the seas again: Maritime defence and deterrence in the Baltic region* (Tallinn: International Centre for Defence and Security, 2019), p. 30.

24 Harper, Christopher et al., *Air Defence of the Baltic states* (Tallinn: International Centre for Defence and Security, 2018); and Royal Air Force, 'Coningsby Typhoons train in Estonia, 3 November 2017; and Lotz, Matthew, 'Estonian JTACs take lead in historic training', U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa, 15 November 2014.

on category. In 2019, 43 per cent of the conscripts were volunteers.²⁵ With the dire demographic numbers looming over all Baltic countries, representatives worry about future manning levels. The lack of lower-grade officers, NCOs and specialists, as well as forthcoming retirements, represent further challenges.

Traditionally, Estonia procures used equipment on government-to-government contracts. This trend is visible in most recent procurements, including the 44 CV9035 IFVs, 18 K9 howitzers and Javelin anti-tank missiles. The initially ordered 12 K9 howitzers are scheduled for delivery in 2020–2021.²⁶ In 2019, Estonia procured Spike-LR anti-tank missiles to complement its current stock of Milan, Javelin and Carl-Gustav anti-tank systems.²⁷

The modernisation of the 1st Brigade has brought about considerable acquisitions of advanced equipment. However, critics claim that the implications and costs for infrastructure, storage and maintenance were underestimated and will strain resources in the years ahead.²⁸ Apart from big-ticket items, Estonia has given priority to personal equipment, such as flak jackets and night-vision aids. Importantly, EUR 75 million were spent on ammunition in 2019, with a further 172 million planned for 2020–2023.²⁹

ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY CAPABILITY

The main priorities in Estonian defence modernisation are mechanisation, readiness, infrastructure and ammunition. Storage, maintenance facilities, campgrounds and exercise areas have expanded to accommodate the newly acquired equipment and the expanded force structure, including the allied presence. The focus on readiness is particularly evident in the emphasis on intelligence and early warning and the efforts to fully man and equip the force structure.

Since 2014, Estonia has doubled the average number of national exercises and has been participating more frequently in international exercises.³⁰ Facing the inherent trade-offs between a mobilising army and short-notice readiness, these exercises have in recent years included several snap exercises, to test the effectiveness of mobilisation. Some exercises entail 24–48 hours' notice. Reportedly, a 2019 snap exercise involved an infantry battalion's mobilising, moving and reaching tactical positions in less than 40 hours. Additionally, Exercise Siil (Hedgehog) tests the reserve system at large. In 2015, it included the mobilisation of the entire 1st Brigade and, in 2018, the mobilisation of large parts of the Defence League. NATO Allies have been part of both iterations.³¹

Given a week's notice, the Estonian army should be able to mobilise the 1st Brigade and parts of the still-forming 2nd Brigade. Roughly, this amounts to one mechanised and two motorised battalions, supported by a battalion of towed artillery from the 1st Brigade, and 1–2 reduced light infantry battalions lacking armoured transportation and an artillery battalion equipped with older, towed artillery from the 2nd Brigade. All battalions, except for the mechanised, are reserve-based. Their quality, however, benefits from soldiers' having undergone training recently, as conscripts are part of the 'rapid response capability' of wartime units for up to four years after completing their education. Equally, units educated together enter the reserve as one.³²

The eFP Battlegroup is probably the only unit capable of offensive actions and, until Estonia integrates its K9 howitzers, the only unit with modern artillery. While all eFP-framework countries in the Baltics express that they are combat-ready and would act together with local forces if the need arises, the nations may have different caveats and political constraints that extend lead times.³³ In that

25 See Estonian Ministry of Defence, 'Estonian National Defence Development', 2020.

26 Wright, Helen, 'Paper: More military equipment to be bought from South Korea', *Estonian Public Broadcasting*, 3 October 2019.

27 Whyte, Andrew, 'Estonia signs \$40 Million anti-tank weaponry procurement', *Estonian Public Broadcasting*, 21 June 2019.

28 Interviews, Tallinn, April 2019.

29 Estonian Ministry of Defence, *Introduction to the Military Defence Action Plan 2020-2023*.

30 Roughly, the average number of national exercises 2009–2013 was 7. From 2015–2018, the average was 17, with the 27 exercises held in 2018 as an outlier. Regarding international exercises, the average increased from 43 to 74 during the same periods. See Estonian Ministry of Defence, 'Estonian National Defence Development'.

31 Herem, 'Estonian chief'; and Peek, Kuno, "'Hedgehog," Estonia's biggest military exercise of all time – does every quill really count?', *International Centre for Defence and Security Studies*, 9 March 2015; and Cavegn, Dario, 'Large-scale military Exercise Siil starting Wednesday', *Estonian Public Broadcasting*, 2 May 2018.

32 Estonian Government Information Portal, 'Reservist trainings', 18 December 2019.

33 Stoicescu and Järvenpää, *Contemporary Deterrence*, p. 9.

sense, Estonia benefits from hosting the least multinational battlegroup and, probably, from London's being less likely than others to impose restrictions on its forces.³⁴ Equally, some 10–15 territorially-bound reduced battalions of the Defence League would augment the regular army.

Taken together, and if given time to prepare terrain, mining and other fieldwork, these units should be able to disrupt, delay and inflict losses on an enemy, especially as Estonian planners are likely to have a good understanding of possible angles of attack. The confined terrain north of Peipus Lake is well suited for delaying actions and anti-tank warfare, where both regular army units and the Defence League have a number of capable systems. The 2nd Brigade is less mobile than the 1st, likely reducing its tasks to static defensive positions south of Peipus Lake. Lacking adequate protection, it is vulnerable to artillery and long-range strikes.

The lack of air defences, other than man-portable systems, constitutes a key vulnerability for all ground units, their mobilisation and movements. It is thus vital whether Western airpower will have started operations. Equally, if so, Estonian units can strive to channel enemy forces into

appropriate targets and provide target data.

Within a week, the Estonian Navy can likely muster two mine countermeasures vessels. The Air Force would concentrate on keeping Ämari Air Base operational, but be vulnerable to long-range strikes, given the lack of air defence capabilities.

Given three months, the overall picture is roughly the same for the Navy and Air Force. Regarding land forces, the entire 2nd Brigade and the Defence League would likely be fully mobilised. Furthermore, three months of extensive preparations of terrain and combat training would improve the quality of units and their chances of staving off aggression.

In 2025, Estonia will have received K9 howitzers, markedly increasing the Army's firepower and range. The 2nd Brigade will have come further towards full operational capability. As the largely reserve-based army is vulnerable to rapidly emanating threat, it is likely that the number of professional or high-readiness units have been or will be expanded to address this. Equally, plans for coastal defence are taking shape, with Estonia looking for joint procurement with regional partners.³⁵ ■

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³⁴ For example, in 2020, the Lithuanian Chief of Defence pointed out that London and Berlin see some things differently, and that this is reflected in military decisions regarding the eFP battlegroups. See Kaldoja, Evelyn. 'Commander of the Lithuanian Armed Forces: Abolition of compulsory military service big mistake', *Postimees*, 30 January 2020.

³⁵ Sprenger, Sebastian, 'Estonia moves to fortify its coastline with missiles and sea mines', *Defense News*, 1 October 2020.

Table: Force structure of the Estonian Armed Forces

	Organisation 2020 ^a	Planned reforms towards 2025	Assessment of forces available at short notice
Joint	Headquarters Special Forces Military Police Support Command Logistics Battalion Cyber Command		
Army	1 mechanised (light) brigade ^b (1 mechanised battalion, 2 motorised battalions, 1 artillery battalion, 1 combat engineer battalion, 1 combat service support battalion, 1 air defence battalion, 1 reconnaissance company, 1 anti-tank company). 1 motorised brigade ^c (same structure as above). 15 territorial defence battalions	1 additional infantry battalion, 1 additional artillery battalion by 2026	1 mechanised (light) brigade 1–2 light infantry battalions 10–15 reduced battalions
Navy	Mine countermeasures squadron	Undergoing modernisation	2 mine countermeasures vessels
Air Force	Ämari Air Base unit ^d Air surveillance wing Transport squadron Transport helicopter squadron		

NB: a. If not stated otherwise, see IISS, *The military balance 2020*, p. 100–101. b. All units except the mechanised battalion are reserve-based. c. Reserve-based. d. Republic of Estonia Defence Forces, Air Force.

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