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Russia's Armed Forces Two Years After the Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine

Anna Maria Dyner

Despite the losses suffered in the war with Ukraine, Russia has consistently pursued plans to increase the capacity of its armed forces. However, as part of the so-called “Shoigu reform”, its military is encountering difficulties related to, among other things, the insufficient production capacity of the arms industry. At the same time, the militarisation of society and the importance of ideological factors, such as imperialism and anti-Westernism, in its foreign policy is growing. For NATO countries, this means not only the need for stronger support for Ukraine, but the implementation of other measures that take into account the growing Russian threat.

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Decisions taken by the government in 2023 showed that Russia succeeded in overcoming the crisis in the conduct of military operations in Ukraine.

Decisions taken by the government in 2023 showed that Russia succeeded in overcoming the crisis in the conduct of military operations in Ukraine and initiated wide-ranging changes in the armed forces. During an extended meeting of the Russian Defence Ministry College held on 19 December 2023, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu

focused on planned reinforcements, including equipment purchases and the construction of new military units.¹ Among the most important tasks for 2024, he identified the achievement of the designated goals of the so-called special military operation (SMO, the aims of which include the “demilitarisation” and “denazification” of Ukraine), the continuation of efforts to “restore peace” in Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh, and preparations related to the “threats” posed by NATO’s “eastward expansion”. Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin² and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, in recent speeches, clearly identified NATO states, especially the United States, as Russia’s main adversary.³

Capacity Enhancement and Implementation of the Shoigu Reform

The start of the full-scale war with Ukraine in February 2022 and initial setbacks forced Russia to make systemic changes to its armed forces. Therefore, in December 2022, Defence Minister Shoigu inaugurated reform of the armed forces,⁴ which included an increase in manpower to 1.5 million and the dissolution of the Western Military District (MD) and the reconstitution of the Moscow and Leningrad MDs in its place. Shoigu also announced the creation of three new motorised divisions, the re-formation of seven mechanised brigades from the Western, Central and Eastern MDs and the Military District of the Northern Fleet into divisions, the creation of two additional airborne divisions, and, in the Russian Navy, the moulding of existing naval infantry brigades into five divisions. He also stressed the need for three new airborne division commands, eight bomber regiments, a fighter regiment, and six Army aviation brigades in the Aerospace Forces. These statements indicated that Russia wanted to increase its capacity to conduct long-term military operations using large ground units. Moreover,

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The Russians proceeded to implement the reform immediately. In 2023, according to the Ministry of Defence, it was possible to form two Combined Arms armies,⁵ one air corps, and 50 other military units of various levels, including four divisions, 18 brigades, and 28 regiments. The Pacific, Black Sea, and Baltic Fleets were

transferred to the direct command of the Navy. In turn, the Air Force and Air Defence Forces ceased to be subordinated to military districts and were placed under the direct command of the Russian Aerospace Forces. In addition, the naval infantry ceased to function under the brigade system, and

¹ “V Moskve pod rukovodstvom Verkhovnogo Glavnokomanduyushchego Vooruzhennymi Silami Vladimira Putina proshlo rasshirennoye zasedaniye Kollegii Minoborony Rossii,” Russian Ministry of Defence, <https://structure.mil.ru>.

² “Vystupleniye i otvety na voprosy SMI Ministra inostrannykh del Rossiyskoy Federatsii S.V.Lavrova v khode press-konferentsii po itogam deyatelnosti rossiyskoy diplomatii v 2023 godu,” Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 18 January 2024, <https://mid.ru>.

³ “Plenarnoye zasedaniye Vsemirnogo russkogo narodnogo sobora,” President of Russia, 23 November 2023, www.kremlin.ru.

⁴ For more, see: A.M. Dyner, “The Next Reform of Russia’s Armed Forces: Is It a New Threat or Just for Appearances?” *PISM Strategic File*, No 6 (127), March 2023, www.pism.pl.

⁵ Plans for an army corps operating in the Finnish direction were changed to the creation of a full army.

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began according to the division system.⁶ It was also important to add a corps-level command to the land army structure, which involved a shift to a four-tier system: 1) military district, 2) army, 3) corps, 4) division.⁷ All these measures were intended to improve the existing command and control system and adapt it to the needs of conducting a major conflict in several regions simultaneously.

However, in 2023, the Western MD has not been disbanded, although Minister Shoigu announced on 3 July that the command structures of the Leningrad and Moscow MDs had been established. The

According to Russian plans, the Leningrad MD is supposed to secure Russia against potential NATO actions.

date for their commencement has been postponed several times, and the latest information indicates that this will not happen earlier than March this year. This suggests that the operational units from this district (the 6th and 20th combined-arms armies and the 1st Guards Tank Army) suffered such heavy losses during the fighting in Ukraine that, without at least partial restoration of their potential, it was not possible to establish the two new MDs.

This is all the more important because, according to Russian plans, the Leningrad MD is supposed to secure Russia against potential NATO actions. Its potential should therefore be large enough to have a negative impact on security in the region and the best trained and equipped military units should be stationed there. The main objective of the Moscow MD, on the other hand, is to counter threats emanating from the Ukrainian direction, which also had consequences for the way it was set up related to the need to strengthen its structures and the military units subordinate to it.

According to data published by Estonian intelligence, the 6th Combined Arms Army will be stationed in the Leningrad MD, the 14th and 44th Army Corps are being formed near the border with Finland, and the 11th Army Corps will operate in the Kaliningrad region. On the other hand, the Moscow MD will be subordinated to the 1st Tank Army and the 20th Combined Arms Army.⁸ This shows the importance that the Russian government attaches to securing the western strategic direction and creating challenges to neighbouring NATO countries.

Russia has consistently increased the size of its armed forces. In 2021, 900,000 line soldiers and officers were serving in the army. In August 2022, Putin signed a decree increasing the armed forces by 137,000, and in December 2023, raised the

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number of posts by 170,000 to 1,320,000. Official Russian figures show that 490,000 people joined the country's armed forces in 2023, more than half of whom (around 277,000) were conscripts. One of the incentives was financial, both for the soldiers, for whom the minimum amount of pay in 2023 was RUB 210,000 (about \$2,300), and recruiters. In addition, in March 2023 Russia inaugurated a broad campaign to encourage service in the army. This avoided the need for another round of partial mobilisation and thus an increase in public discontent. The increase in the size of the army has allowed for the slow rebuilding of capabilities lost as a result of the fighting in Ukraine (the Ukrainian side estimates Russian irrecoverable losses at 408,000; British intelligence puts it at 350,000) and allowed for an increase in the Russian military contingent stationed in the occupied territories of Ukraine, which at the beginning of 2024 numbered 470,000 troops.⁹

Russia has also increased its arms expenditure. In 2023 it increased spending by 36%.

Russia has also increased its arms expenditure. In 2023, compared to 2022, it increased spending by 36%. Russia has allocated 32% of state spending on munitions and equipment, which was around

⁶ R. Kretsul, B. Stepovoy, "Okruzhnoy dorogoy: kak reformiruyusya rossiyskiye vooruzhennyye sily," *Izvestia*, 2 January 2024, <https://iz.ru>.

⁷ "Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service public report 2024," Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service, www.valisluureamet.ee, p. 16.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 17-18

⁹ J. Watling, N. Reynolds, "Russian Military Objectives and Capacity in Ukraine Through 2024," RUSI, 13 February 2024, www.rusi.org.

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6% of GDP (in 2021, it was 4% of GDP). It also plans to spend 6% of GDP in 2024-2025, the highest figure since the collapse of the USSR. In 2024, the budget reserves of RUB 14.2 trillion (about \$160 billion) for security needs, which will consume 38.6% of all state spending. Moreover, RUB 3.3 trillion (\$35 billion) will be allocated directly to the armed forces. According to the assumptions of the budget bill, this sum is expected to be sufficient to cover the costs of conducting military operations, but with a high probability based on the course of operations so far, this amount may be increased. The draft budget for the following years envisages the allocation of RUB 11.8 trillion (almost \$127 billion) in 2025 and RUB 10.8 trillion (\$116 billion) in 2026 for strengthening security.

The reform was forced by the consequences of the mistakes made by the Russian Armed Forces during the first phase of the full-scale aggression against Ukraine.

The reform was forced by the consequences of the mistakes made by the Russian Armed Forces during the first phase of the full-scale aggression against Ukraine, which necessitated the withdrawal of Russian forces from outside Kyiv and, in the following months, enabled Ukraine to carry out successful counter-offensives in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions.¹⁰ One of the main challenges for the

Russians proved to be the inadequate training of soldiers. Learning the lessons of the war, Russia is to spend RUB 16.5 billion (\$177 million) a year on training between 2024 and 2025. The country is expanding its networks of preparatory centres for soldiers and officers (operating, among others, at universities), and is also using three such centres set up together with Belarus. It also partially benefits from the experience of officers operating on the frontline in Ukraine, for example by developing instructional materials, but there is no system for engaging veterans for training purposes. This demonstrates the realisation that simply increasing troop levels through conscription and partial mobilisation will not contribute to a qualitative change in the Russian Armed Forces¹¹ in the short term, but will in a few years' time increase the number of well-trained soldiers, which may raise the level of the army's capabilities. More funding has also been allocated to the needs of

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military recruitment and reservist training units. In addition, Russia has improved the conscription system after the partial mobilisation carried out in autumn 2022¹² revealed many shortcomings in this area.

Changes to the command structure, on the other hand, show that the Russian government has decided to return to the concept of a mass army. This is not only a complete reversal of the army reform initiated in 2009¹³ but also a sign of Russia's determination to continue military operations in Ukraine and to prepare for a possible conflict with NATO.

Challenges for the Defence Industry

Due to the nature of the fighting in Ukraine and the equipment losses suffered, Russia significantly increased its war production. It also aimed to provide the necessary capability to influence NATO. One of the most important tasks of the Russian

Due to the nature of the fighting in Ukraine and the equipment losses suffered, Russia significantly increased its war production.

¹⁰ A.M. Dyer, "The Military Situation in Ukraine as of the Middle of September," *PISM Spotlight*, No. 119/2022, 13 September 2022, www.pism.pl.

¹¹ A comparison of *The Military Balance* data from 2023 and 2024 shows that, despite the high losses in the war in Ukraine, only the size of the Land Forces decreased by 50,000 soldiers, the Navy (by 5,000), the Airborne Forces (by 5,000), and the number of Airborne Forces, Strategic Forces and Special Operations Forces remained unchanged.

¹² A.M. Dyer, "Russia Introduces Partial Mobilisation," *PISM Spotlight*, No. 122/2022, 21 September 2022, www.pism.pl.

¹³ The so-called "Serdyukov reform" envisaged, among other things, a shift from a divisional to a brigade system, professionalisation of the armed forces, increasing their mobility and modernising their equipment and armaments.

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Ministry of Defence became the arming of soldiers fighting in the SMO in Ukraine. In December 2023, Minister Shoigu stressed that since February 2022, Russia had increased the production of tanks by 5.6 times, armoured personnel carriers by 2.6 times, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) by 16.6 times, and artillery ammunition by 17.5 times. He added that the capacity of military repair facilities had increased by 1.5 times. Deliveries of new sets of individual protective equipment for soldiers, which are designed to protect 70% of the body's surface from shrapnel, also began in 2023. However, the information regarding the intensification of production of certain types of armaments production may only be the result of accounting treatments and the fact that it was reduced in the years preceding the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Official Russian figures indicate that in 2023 the armed forces received new and modernised units: 1,530 tanks, 2,518 infantry fighting vehicles and armoured personnel carriers, 100 aircraft, 150 helicopters, four multi-purpose submarines, 3,500 drones of various types, and 16.5 million "means of destruction", most of which are missiles of various types.¹⁴ In addition, according to the defence minister's announcements, the Russian Armed Forces are to receive four submarines (including one nuclear submarine), 11 surface ships, and two upgraded Tu-160M strategic bombers in 2024. There are also plans to increase production of hypersonic missiles, notably the Kinzhal and Zircon.

Other production priorities identified by the Ministry of Defence include communication systems and reconnaissance equipment, which the Russian military had problems with, especially at the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine. The production of UAVs (Russia plans to produce 6,000 of them by 2025) is also indicated as a key priority, as they have become an important element of the battlefield, providing, among other things, additional reconnaissance and artillery fire-control capabilities. It is also to be very important for the Russian Armed Forces to continue modernising their nuclear forces and introducing modern equipment into their armaments, including Sarmat ICBMs, which are the basis of Russia's policy of deterrence and exerting pressure on opponents.¹⁵ However, this programme is significantly behind the original plans.

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Most of the armaments plants have significantly increased employment and moved to a 24-hour working system. Some are also researching improvements suggested by the military and the Ministry of Defence. As indicated by Estonian intelligence, Russia has managed to significantly increase its munitions production. While in 2021 Russian plants were producing and refurbishing around 400,000 artillery shells per year, in 2023 it was already 3.5 million units, and 4 million units were planned for 2024.¹⁶ However, by the middle of 2023, Ukraine estimated that the Russians were using 25,000-30,000 rounds per day, which means that if this level is maintained, current production will not meet its needs and Russia will have to source ammunition from other sources.

Russia is also developing radio-electronic warfare capabilities and is rebuilding its command and control systems and improving the coded communications system between command posts and military units (however, this has not been established at the battalion level or below, hence soldiers still use open communication channels).

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¹⁴ "V Moskve pod rukovodstvom Verkhovnogo Glavnokomanduyushchego Vooruzhennymi Silami Vladimira Putina proshlo rasshirennoye zasedaniye Kollegii Minoborony Rossii," *op. cit.* See also: R. Kretsul, J. Leonova, "Rost nomer odin: rossiyskiy VPK kratno uvelichil obyemy proizvodstva," *Izvestia*, 29 January 2024, <https://iz.ru>.

¹⁵ A. Kacprzyk, "Russia Sharpens Nuclear Signalling Towards NATO," *PISM Bulletin*, No. 85 (2204), 30 June 2023, www.pism.pl.

¹⁶ "Estonian Foreign Intelligence Service public report 2024," *op. cit.*, p. 20.

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production and fully fulfilling the 2023 state orders, they are not able to cover the losses Russia is incurring in its fight against Ukraine. Since the beginning of the full-scale aggression, according to the Oryx portal, the Russians have lost more than 2,700 tanks, some 1,200 combat vehicles, 400 armoured personnel carriers, 670 pieces of self-propelled artillery, 350 multi-propelled rocket launchers, 102 aircraft, 135 helicopters, and 21 ships.¹⁷ The losses have forced the modernisation of equipment that has remained in storage for years and a significant increase in ongoing repairs.¹⁸ This is a significant challenge for the Russian military industry, mainly due to the lack of sufficient necessary materials and spare parts as a result of, among other things, international sanctions.¹⁹

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Nonetheless, Russia is capable of conducting further intensive military operations in Ukraine using its previous stockpiles of heavy equipment, increasing production and acquiring the necessary weaponry (including unmanned systems, tanks, artillery) and ammunition from partners such as Belarus, Iran, and North Korea,²⁰ and dual-use technology from countries such as China.²¹ In this way, Russia will also attempt to rebuild its military potential in the western strategic direction.

At the same time, Russia will have to take into account factors limiting its resources, including the lack of qualified personnel because of an inefficient education system and dwindling of resources, mainly financial. International sanctions are preventing the purchase of some materials and technology for the arms industry. Without the sanctions regime, Russia would be able to allocate many more resources to the conduct of military operations by, for example, borrowing on global markets, which is currently impossible and forces it to draw on its own financial reserves.

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The Importance of the Ideological Factor in the Militarisation of the State

For Russia, achieving its goals in Ukraine and preparing for a possible military confrontation with NATO are mainly strategic and ideological.

For Russia, achieving its goals in Ukraine and preparing for a possible military confrontation with NATO are mainly strategic and ideological. In this way, the Russian government seeks to secure for Russia the superpower status that the USSR had and to force concessions from other participants in international relations. Therefore, the

institutions of the Russian state have taken steps to militarise the society, which has become one of the essential elements of Russian policy.

On 28 November 2023, at a meeting of the World Russian People's Council, Putin *de facto* indicated that the war with Ukraine was deeply ideological. He stressed that the disintegration of the "triune nation" of Russians,

On 28 November 2023, at a meeting of the World Russian People's Council, Putin *de facto* indicated that the war with Ukraine was deeply ideological.

¹⁷ "Attack On Europe: Documenting Russian Equipment Losses During The Russian Invasion Of Ukraine," *Oryx*, 24 February 2022, www.oryxspioenkop.com.

¹⁸ As an example, the number of basic tanks in storage, according to *The Military Balance* in 2023 and 2024, has decreased by 20%, and some types, such as the T-55A tanks produced from the 1960s to the 1980s, have been put back into service.

¹⁹ E. Kaca, "Dual-Use Items: EU Seeks to Limit Circumvention of the Sanctions on Russia," *PISM Bulletin*, No. 166 (2285), 15 November 2023, www.pism.pl.

²⁰ M.A. Piotrowski, "Assessing the Potential of North Korean Ammunition and Weapons Deliveries to Russia," *PISM Bulletin*, No. 73 (2192), 16 June 2023, www.pism.pl.

²¹ M.A. Piotrowski, "Estimating the Potential of China's Military Assistance to Russia," *PISM Bulletin*, No. 115 (2234), 23 August 2023, www.pism.pl.

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Belarusians, and Ukrainians was a mistake, just as the splitting of the “great empire” was a mistake.²² Thus, the subjugation of Ukraine is not just a political or military issue, rather it means that Russia will continue to pursue this objective regardless of the increasing economic and demographic costs and the significant deterioration in relations with Western countries.

Projects for the patriotic formation of citizens were implemented between 2002 and 2022 in the multi-year programmes.

Projects for the patriotic formation of citizens were implemented between 2002 and 2022 in the multi-year programmes, with a significant increase in funding for these initiatives in 2016, when RUB 1.718 billion were allocated towards them (in the 2011-2015 period, it was RUB 772 million). The 2021-2025 programme is

currently underway (the amount of funding is not known). The Russians have organised a number of initiatives that focus on issues related to the Great Patriotic War and the so-called Great Victory. In recent years, there have also been a number of high-budget films that depict the Great Patriotic War period and celebrate the heroism of the Red Army. A series of marches of “The Immortal Regiment” was also inaugurated in 2007, and an organisation with this name was registered in 2015. As part of this initiative, Russian citizens walk together every 9 May with portraits of family members who fought in the Great Patriotic War.

The Russian state also conducts activities for the militarisation of children and youth. In kindergarten, the patriotic education programme includes special celebrations of Victory Day (9 May), National Unity Day (4 November), Defender of the Fatherland Day (23 February), and Russia Day (12 June). Pre-schoolers are expected to learn, among other things, the canon of patriotic songs. In schools at all 11 levels, a series of lessons entitled “Conversations on Important Matters” was launched in September 2022 to address issues of history and patriotism. Moreover, in grades 10-11 in general and in specialised technical schools, the subject “Introduction to basic military training” was introduced, covering 140 lessons (two hours per week). It includes, among other things, training in weapons skills and first aid during combat operations. In turn, from 2022 onwards, various types of “patriotic classes” have found their way into university courses, the number of which is steadily increasing. Their aim is to influence students and encourage them to serve in the army in the future, among other aims.

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Patriotic education also includes the so-called volunteer movement. On 19 December 2023, Shoigu said that the Young Army, which was established in 2015 as an initiative targeting 8-18 year olds, included 1.5 million children and teenagers, and there are now 261 training centres created for it across Russia. Along with changes in teaching, this shows that Russian government policy is focused on the militarisation of society.

State policy has resulted in support for the actions of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine. According to the independent Levada Centre, 77% of surveyed Russians agrees with these actions.

State policy has resulted in support for the actions of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine. According to the independent Levada Centre, 77% of surveyed Russians agrees with these actions.²³ What is more, in a poll conducted in October 2023, 66% of respondents said they have negative associations with Ukraine, while in January 2014, already in the midst of the Revolution of Dignity and a month before the illegal annexation of Crimea, 65% of those asked reported positive associations.²⁴ Moreover, given the importance that Russian propaganda attaches to the

²² “Plenarnoye zasedaniye Vsemirnogo russkogo narodnogo sobora,” *op. cit.*

²³ “Konflikt s Ukrainoy: otsenki kontsa 2023 – nachala 2024 goda,” Levada Centre, 6 February 2024, www.levada.ru.

²⁴ “Ukraina i Donbass,” Levada Centre, 24 February 2022, www.levada.ru.

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alleged heroism of those fighting in the SMO, the war against Ukraine (also shown as part of the confrontation with the West) will be used by the Russian authorities to consolidate society.

Confrontation with the U.S. and other NATO members is motivated also ideologically and historically. In a poll conducted by the Levada Centre, 82% of the Russians questioned said they rated the Alliance negatively.

Confrontation with the U.S. and other NATO members, whose policies are seen by the Russian government as attempting to block Russia's superpower status, is motivated also ideologically and historically. The identification of the Alliance as an enemy is fostered by public sentiment—in a poll conducted by the Levada Centre in June 2022, 82% of the Russians questioned said they rated the Alliance negatively, 60% thought Russia

should fear NATO member states, and 48% said the situation in Ukraine could escalate into a military conflict between Russia and the Alliance.²⁵

The systemically implemented policy of militarisation is intended to accustom Russians to a state of prolonged armed confrontation. It is also intended to encourage potential recruits to join the army and society to be ready to take up arms. The further militarisation of society will encourage even more confrontation in Russian policy towards NATO countries.

Conclusions and Perspectives

The actions of the Russian government in the sphere of increasing the potential of the armed forces, including the implementation of the “Shoigu reform”, indicate that Russia is preparing for long-term military action in Ukraine and will pursue its policy objectives of subjugating the state, changing the government to a pro-Russian one, and forcing it to abandon integration with the EU and NATO. Admittedly, the chances of this happening in the short term are low, but Russia hopes to exhaust the Ukrainian state with a prolonged war and weaken the political will in the West to provide the necessary support to Ukraine, thus facilitating the realisation of its strategic objectives in the long term.

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Russia is also systemically preparing for a long-term confrontation with Alliance countries, which is demonstrated by the focus on the ideological factor and the increasing militarisation of society, especially among the youth. In the coming years, no change should be expected in the way Russia conducts its foreign and security policy, which will continue to be based on military power.

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At the same time, the next three years will be crucial for the success of these assumptions. This is indicated by, among other things, the structure of the budget, under which arms

expenditure will be kept high until 2026. After this time, Russia may start to feel the effects of economic problems and the Russian military industry will face increasing challenges related in part to the lack of technology, materials, and spare parts.

If Russia succeeds in implementing “Shoigu's reform” and the military action in Ukraine does not cause significantly more losses, the Alliance could face a Soviet-style mass army that is technologically weaker (with the exception of electronic warfare, and long-range strike capabilities), but

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²⁵ “Rossiya i NATO,” Levada Centre, 6 June 2022, www.levada.ru.

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with significant military capability and relatively good training. Hence, NATO and its member states should implement defence plans that take into account the changes in the Russian armed forces, including their size, combat experience, and reserve potential. That is one reason why the development of a joint NATO-Ukrainian centre for analysis, training, and education, to be established in Bydgoszcz, Poland, will be important. Increasing armaments production will also be key, as the amount of assets on hand will be a necessary factor for a successful defensive operation in a potential confrontation with a mass army. Growing the credibility of a potential NATO response should also involve political-military signalling, including the organisation of a series of exercises that incorporate the specifics of Eastern Flank defence, for example along the lines of this year's *Steadfast Defender*. In addition, individual NATO countries should consider expanding their presence on the Eastern Flank.

Russian calculations regarding a potential confrontation with the Alliance will be influenced by the course of the war in Ukraine.

Russian calculations regarding a potential confrontation with the Alliance will be influenced by the course of the war in Ukraine, including the need to maintain significant forces and resources there. Thus, assistance to Ukraine is of direct relevance to the security of NATO countries. Particularly important will be the transfer to

Ukraine of systems that will give it an advantage in the confrontation with Russia and enable it to take counter-offensive action, such as aviation, communications, radio-electronic warfare systems, and drones. It will also remain crucial to help train as many Ukrainian soldiers as possible to make appropriate use of Western armaments, to support the overhaul of military equipment, and to increase arms production. Also very important will be the bilateral agreements announced by the G7 and at least 25 other countries (already signed by the UK, Germany, and France) with Ukraine increasing the chances of maintaining long-term support for the country.²⁶

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In turn, in order to weaken the potential of the Russian military industry, it will be important to maintain sanctions and take measures to counter Russian attempts to circumvent them by strengthening the monitoring and controls of items exported to third countries. This is all the more important since Russia obtains some of its dual-use technologies and products through intermediaries operating in China and Central Asian or Middle Eastern countries.

²⁶ W. Lorenz, "Bilateral Security Agreements with Ukraine Present Opportunities and Challenges," *PISM Bulletin*, No. 32 (2340), 26 February 2024, www.pism.pl.